EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
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3rd September 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Two years on: Helen Maguire’s record as Epsom and Ewell MP

4 July 2026

Helen Maguire marks two years as Epsom and Ewell’s MP today, having won the constituency for the Liberal Democrats at the General Election on 4 July 2024.

Her victory, by 3,686 votes, ended the 23-year Commons tenure of Conservative Chris Grayling and made her the first Liberal Democrat and first woman to represent the seat.

Two years later, her record combines a continuing Westminster front-bench role, a highly visible constituency operation, claims of progress on local health and transport issues, and an unusually public breakdown in relationships with leading local Liberal Democrats.

From Defence lead to specialist health brief

Maguire’s first major Commons appointment came quickly after her election. In September 2024 she became the Liberal Democrats’ spokesperson for Defence, placing her at the head of the party’s Commons work on defence policy, service welfare, veterans and the Armed Forces.

She took part in detailed scrutiny of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill and has remained active on military accommodation, veterans’ compensation and support for bereaved service families.

In October 2025, she moved to the Liberal Democrat front-bench role of spokesperson for Primary Care and Cancer. She remains a front-bench spokesperson, but the change altered her place within the party’s portfolio structure.

Her Defence post was an umbrella departmental brief. Her current role is a specialist health position within the wider Liberal Democrat Health and Social Care operation, headed by Helen Morgan MP.

Maguire’s focus has since included GP access, pharmacy provision, cancer treatment, NHS dentistry, women’s health, hospital services and patient access to care.

Hospitals, health and primary care

Healthcare has become one of Maguire’s most prominent local themes.

She has repeatedly raised the condition and future of St Helier Hospital, including in her maiden speech and an abseiling adventure at St Helier Hospital. Her office says that, following a sustained campaign involving meetings with hospital stakeholders and parliamentary pressure, St Helier has secured £57 million for its A&E department.

The office also highlights £12 million in funding for Epsom Hospital. It says Maguire has secured commitments to improve endometriosis services after constituents raised concerns about their treatment, including increased clinical capacity, enhanced surgical provision, improved follow-up and stronger administrative oversight.

Her office further says she has supported the national pharmacy funding package in connection with Horton Pharmacy, visited local dentists while pressing for better NHS dental provision, and promoted neighbourhood health centres intended to bring services closer to residents.

At Westminster, she has used her new health role to raise issues including cancer medicines, primary care, breast cancer, patient access to treatment and the impact of NHS policy on people facing complex health conditions.

Rail services, access and local infrastructure

Rail services have been another major local campaign.

Maguire has pressed South Western Railway over reduced train frequencies since the pandemic and argued that passengers in Epsom and Ewell should have greater influence over future timetables. Her office says SWR is expected to launch a formal public consultation on a new timetable, describing this as a step towards restoring services closer to pre-Covid levels.

Accessibility at Ewell West station has also featured. Her office says that, following discussions with SWR, two additional Blue Badge spaces were created alongside a painted pedestrian route, zebra crossing and dropped kerbs providing a step-free route to the station entrance.

She has also raised accessibility issues in Parliament, including concern that some disabled and visually impaired

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ISSN 2753-2771

passengers can be disadvantaged by ticket-machine systems and reduced staffed facilities.

Other local campaigns listed by her office include pavement parking, Thames Water sewage discharges, electric-vehicle charging infrastructure and persistent dust and noise complaints connected with the Chalk Pit.

Casework, community activity and local presence

As with any MP, much of Maguire's work is carried out through individual constituency cases rather than Commons speeches.

Her office says more than 17,000 constituents have received casework, campaign or policy responses over the past two years. That figure covers different forms of contact and assistance, rather than necessarily 17,000 separate individual cases.

Examples cited by her office include help with Personal Independence Payment claims, SEND cases, passport and visa delays, taxi licensing, Blue Badges, housing-association repairs and other departmental or local-authority problems.

The office says she has held regular surgeries and meetings across Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead, alongside visits to schools, clubs, businesses, health providers and community organisations.

Among the examples highlighted are meetings over the Bridge Youth and Community Centre, the cost-of-living crisis and violence against women and girls; police walkabouts in Epsom and Leatherhead; engagement with the local Hong Kong community over BN(O) visa changes; visits to local dentists and independent businesses; support for sports clubs and park improvements; and activity around Chamber Mead wetlands and the release of water voles.

Armed Forces, veterans and international work

Maguire's military background remains visible in her parliamentary and constituency activity.

Her office says she has helped press for improved housing standards for service personnel and their families, campaigned for free rail travel to remembrance events for bereaved military families, and maintained links with the local Armed Forces community through Remembrance and Territorial Army events.

She also retains an international profile. Her parliamentary interests include Ukraine, Russia (which has sanctioned her), conflict prevention, humanitarian demining and the impact of explosive weapons on civilians. She has held roles in cross-party groups addressing explosive weapons and conflict-related humanitarian concerns.

Registered interests and comparisons with predecessors

Maguire's Commons register of interests contains 18 current entries. These include campaign and constituency-event support, hospitality, overseas visits, former rental-property interests, shareholdings held jointly with her husband and an unpaid directorship.

Her register does not show current paid outside employment or a second job. That is a different profile from her two predecessors.

Chris Grayling, now Lord Grayling, has a House of Lords register focused principally on paid advisory roles and rental income. Before him, Sir Archibald Hamilton developed a reputation in the 1990s for holding a large number of outside interests. Contemporary reporting placed him among the Conservative MPs with the highest number of paid external roles.

The comparisons are imperfect because disclosure rules have changed substantially over the decades. But Maguire's register is materially different from the paid consultancy and directorship profile associated with Hamilton. Her entries are mainly donations, hospitality, travel, shareholdings and historic property interests rather than paid outside work.

All such entries are published under parliamentary disclosure rules and do not in themselves imply wrongdoing.

Local Liberal Democrat rupture

The most difficult political aspect of Maguire's first two years has been the breakdown in relationships within the Epsom and Ewell Liberal Democrat organisation.

Cllr **Julie Morris**, the long-serving College Ward councillor and now Deputy Mayor, resigned from the Liberal Democrats Group she led and became an Independent. She was later followed by Cllr **James Lawrence**, her successor as leader of the Liberal Democrat group on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, who also left the party to sit as an Independent.

Their departures reduced the Liberal Democrat group on the Borough Council and strengthened the Independent group.

Lawrence was explicit in linking his resignation partly to Maguire. He said he believed the MP had become too focused on "leafleting and electioneering" rather than meaningful national policy change. He also referred to concerns about the effect of her approach on volunteers who gave time to the Liberal Democrat Party.

Morris likewise referred to difficulties within the local Liberal Democrat organisation and the MP's political operation as part of the background to her own decision.

A later episode during the East Surrey Unitary Council election campaign added to the political controversy.

At the count on 8 May 2026, Epsom and Ewell Times reported that Helen Maguire's communications officer directed newly elected Liberal Democrat candidates not to speak to the media and said journalists should instead seek interviews with Maguire.

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ISSN 2753-2771

Maguire publicly disputed EET's account at a Westminster reception. However, in subsequent correspondence her communications officer, Esther Holland, accepted that a restriction on media engagement had been in place, while denying that Maguire herself had imposed a "gag".

The explanation given was that, though on a Parliament sanctioned salary, Holland was also acting as East Surrey Liberal Democrat communications officer and that the temporary restriction was for electoral purposes. Maguire's office said she knew of the arrangement but had not personally directed it.

The episode did not establish that Maguire herself ordered the media restriction though she was an integral part of its workings and presumably agreed with it. But it became politically significant because it reinforced criticism from former Liberal Democrat councillors that messaging and decision-making were being tightly controlled from the MP's wider political operation.

Maguire has rejected that overall characterisation. She has defended regular canvassing, community visibility and campaigning as essential ways to identify residents' problems and take them into Parliament.

A busy and politically mixed first two years

Maguire's first two years have been active and politically consequential.

She has maintained a high local profile through surgeries, campaigning, site visits, community meetings and casework. Her office identifies progress or claimed successes on hospital funding, rail accessibility, pharmacy provision, sports facilities, local infrastructure and individual constituent cases.

At Westminster, she has remained on the Liberal Democrat front bench throughout, although her role has changed from leading the party's whole Defence brief to holding a specialist primary care and cancer portfolio.

Her critics within the former local Liberal Democrat leadership argue that her approach has placed too much emphasis on political control, campaigning and messaging. Her supporters will see an energetic MP using visibility and local contact to pursue practical outcomes.

The next stage of her parliamentary term will test whether the activity of the first two years turns into durable local gains: more reliable rail services, improved hospital provision, better primary-care access, effective action on environmental and infrastructure concerns, and stronger support for residents dealing with SEND, housing and public-service delays.

Sam Jones – Reporter

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Related reports:

Helen Maguire appointed Liberal Democrat Defence spokesperson

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Epsom MP sponsors special youth art in Parliament

4 July 2026

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ISSN 2753-2771

Surrey young people using NHS mental health services have taken their artwork to the heart of government, with an exhibition at the House of Commons offering MPs an insight into their experiences and the support they received.

The exhibition, taking place from 10-15 February, showcases work created by young people supported by the STARS and New Leaf services, part of Mindworks Surrey. STARS supports young people affected by sexual abuse and assault, while New Leaf supports those who are in care, leaving care, adopted or under special guardianship orders.

Young people are sharing their artwork with MPs to showcase how creativity supports young people's mental health and to highlight the positive impact of the services.

The pieces explore identity, hope, growth and recovery, capturing what can be difficult to articulate in words and offering an honest reflection of young peoples' lived experiences of mental health support.

One young person whose artwork is being exhibited said: "STARS has changed my life, I can be me now. I was shocked when I heard my art would be at the House of Commons, I am really proud that people like my picture and what I created."

Rebecca Robertson, Specialist Mental Health and Art Therapist said: "The young people we support have expressed their thoughts and feelings around their life experiences using art materials.

"Art making can provide an important alternative to more traditional verbal therapies and can be a vital part of helping young people to engage in support, particularly when working with trauma."

The House of Commons event was sponsored by **Helen Maguire, MP for Epsom and Ewell**, who attended the exhibition last summer and supported bringing the art to Parliament.

Helen said: "I'm delighted to see this exhibition come alive. It demonstrates the powerful work that New Leaf and STARS do and the importance of young people getting the right care and support for their mental health."

Emina Atic-Lee, Service Manager for STARS and New Leaf services, said: "We are incredibly proud to see the voices of the young people we support take to the stage at the House of Commons. Each piece offers an honest and powerful window into how young people use creativity to make sense of their experiences, express emotions that are hard to put into words, and recognise their own strength.

"To showcase this work in such a nationally significant setting is a truly special moment for them and for everyone involved in the services."

Press release from Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

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Epsom and Ewell's MP champion's Friends of Horton Cemetery mission on "Time to Talk Day"

4 July 2026

On the edge of Epsom lies Horton Cemetery — quiet, overgrown and easy to miss. More than 9,000 people are buried there. Most never had headstones. Many never had visitors. Almost all were patients of the former Epsom Cluster of psychiatric hospitals, men and women whose final resting place reflects how society once viewed mental illness: something to be hidden, managed and ultimately forgotten.

In 2026, on Time to Talk Day, [5th February] Horton Cemetery forces us to ask an uncomfortable question: how far have

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ISSN 2753-2771

we really come?

Horton Cemetery was created to serve what was once the largest cluster of psychiatric hospitals in Europe. At its height, the Epsom hospitals housed thousands of people with severe mental illness, learning disabilities and complex needs. Those who died without family or money were buried together anonymously. This was not ancient history. Horton Hospital closed in 1997. Some of those buried there lived into the late twentieth century — into the era many of us think of as modern and progressive.

Sites like Horton Cemetery challenge us to ask not just whether we are talking more openly about mental health, but whether we have truly confronted the stigma that shaped places like this, and whether we are prepared to protect the dignity of those still buried there.

Today, the cemetery has been sold to a private owner, with hopes of future development. Like many historic pauper burial sites nationwide, it sits under pressure from land values and planning decisions. I have urged the government not to grant exhumation licences at Horton Cemetery and to properly safeguard similar sites as places of remembrance, not obstacles to development. These are not empty plots. They are graves. How we treat them matters, because how we remember the dead reflects how we value the living.

Friends of Horton Cemetery, families, and Professor Alana Harris of King's College London have worked tirelessly through initiatives such as the Lost Souls Project, which seeks to recover the names and stories of those buried anonymously in former asylum cemeteries. Their work is a quiet act of justice — restoring identity where the system erased it, and dignity where stigma once prevailed.

But local efforts can only go so far. That is why there are growing calls for a national memorial to those who lived and died in Britain's historic mental health institutions. Such a memorial would not rewrite history, but it would acknowledge it, signifying that now is the time to talk.

Time to Talk Day is often framed around everyday conversations — a coffee and a chat, a poster on a train reminding us to check in on loved ones. These things matter. They help chip away at silence and shame. Horton Cemetery asks us to go further.

Epsom tells the story of how this country has treated mental illness. It was once the centre of a system built on isolation and control. Today, it hosts the headquarters of the Samaritans — an organisation rooted in compassion and listening. That journey should give us hope. But it also gives Epsom, and Horton, a responsibility. If we are serious about confronting mental health stigma, this is one of the places where that conversation must begin.

Because today, people with severe mental illness still face some of the deepest inequalities in our society. Recent data paints a stark picture: those facing the longest waits for mental health care are now waiting nearly two years — an average of 658 days — more than twice as long as people waiting for elective physical health treatment. The consequences are devastating. Adults living with severe mental illness, including bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, have a life expectancy 15 to 20 years lower than the general population.

These are not abstract statistics. They reflect lives cut short, needs unmet, and a system that still too often talks about people with severe mental illness rather than listening to them.

The Government now has the opportunity — and the responsibility — to show that mental health reform means more than warm words. Safeguarding sites like Horton and recognising the historic mistreatment of people with mental illness would be a powerful signal that dignity is not conditional and remembrance matters. I look forward to discussions with ministers about how we protect Horton Cemetery and similar sites across the country — not as relics of an uncomfortable past, but as places of reflection and learning.

Time to Talk Day should not only ask whether we are speaking openly. It should ask who we are hearing, whose voices are still missing, and whether, finally, we are willing to restore dignity to those whose voices were never heard.

Horton Cemetery is a quiet reminder that stigma thrives in silence. In 2026, are we ready to listen to what it is telling us?

Helen Maguire MP

For further information about the work of the charity The Friends of Horton Cemetery visit their website HERE

Image: Horton Cemetery with former patients photos

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The New Year view from Westminster

4 July 2026

From Epsom and Ewell Member for Parliament – Helen Maguire

The new year often brings a quieter moment. A chance to take stock once the noise and festive chaos of December fades. This year, that moment felt especially important to me.

Politics in Britain feels deeply unsettled right now, and the wider world even more so. One day brings news of geopolitical relationships breaking down in violent and inhumane acts; the next, warnings of democratic fragility from our neighbours across the Atlantic. It can all feel relentless. I don't blame anyone who feels disillusioned, or let down by establishments and leaders that are meant to provide stability and reassurance. I feel that frustration myself at times.

When that sense of turbulence sets in, I remind myself where my focus belongs. My responsibilities are not abstract; they are here. My priorities and primary interest are with the people of Epsom and Ewell, my community. That clarity matters. It keeps my work grounded, and it shapes what my work in Westminster will be this year.

One tangible example of that focus is recent progress on the issue of pavement parking. Residents have raised this issue with me consistently since before my election in July 2024, and for good reason. Obstructed pavements are not just a minor inconvenience; they affect people's safety. Parents with pushchairs, wheelchair users, people with visual impairments, and older residents are often the ones forced into the road just to get by.

After sustained campaigning, both locally and in Parliament, we are finally going to see meaningful change. This month, the Government gave councils new powers to tackle problematic pavement parking. What this means is that councils, not the police, can act where pavements are clearly blocked or unsafe, without long, street-by-street processes every time. Here's what it doesn't mean: this is not a blanket ban. Councils can still allow exemptions on narrow or busy residential streets where pavement parking is genuinely needed.

This is an important change that puts safety and accessibility first. I'm proud of this progress, not just for the outcome, but for what it represents: local voices being heard and practical problems taken seriously. I was pleased to receive recognition of my campaigning in a letter from Lilian Greenwood MP, the Minister for Local Transport, announcing the changes, and this year my priority will be ensuring that this change is implemented properly and consistently.

Another issue that comes up repeatedly is antisocial behaviour. This can take many forms, from vandalism and loud noise to the misuse of shared spaces. These issues can quietly have a real impact on our community and sense of belonging.

One specific concern constituents raise with me regularly is the growing problem of illegal or unsafe e-scooter use. I hear from parents worried that pavements or public pathways are no longer safe, and from older residents who no longer feel confident on their quick walk to the shops. One parent described a moment where their young child was mere millimetres from being knocked over by an e-scooter travelling far faster than it should have been, on a pathway it had no business being on. I dread to think what kind of irreparable damage could have been done if it weren't for just a few millimetres of space.

When e-scooters are used responsibly and legally, they can have a place in society. But reckless riding and a lack of coordinated enforcement create real and costly risks. Last year I worked with campaigners, police and transport partners to push for a more cohesive, joined-up response to the problem. This isn't about targeting young people or stifling new technology; it's about, as with the pavement parking issue, ensuring our public spaces are safe for everyone who uses them.

For anyone doubting just how much devastation an electric scooter can bring to someone's life and family, I would encourage them to read about Jacob's Journey, and the powerful work his mother Carly is doing as a result.

My work as Primary Care and Cancer spokesperson continues alongside my constituency campaigns, and the two remain closely intertwined. I will continue to fight for better healthcare across the constituency, whether that is through better access to GP appointments or timely treatment for cancer patients.

If there is a running thread through my priorities this year, it is a belief in the value of steady, practical action that is tangible for every single member of the Epsom and Ewell community. In the uncertain times ahead, the basics matter more than ever: safe streets, responsive public services, and a more affordable cost of living. I will continue to work hard delivering this for our constituency.

Helen Maguire MP

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ISSN 2753-2771

Local MP comes to our defence?

4 July 2026

In a significant development in UK party politics, **Helen Maguire**, the Member of Parliament for Epsom & Ewell, has been appointed to the frontbenches of the Liberal Democrats. On September 19th, Liberal Democrat leader Sir **Ed Davey** announced that Maguire would take up the role of spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces. This announcement follows the unveiling of the Lib Dems new 33-member frontbench roster, following the party's success in July's general election, where they secured a record 72 parliamentary seats.

Maguire, a former Army captain in the Royal Military Police, brings extensive real-world experience to her new role. She served in Bosnia on a NATO peacekeeping mission and in Iraq, where she assisted the rebuilding of the Iraqi police force. Magiure took to X (formerly known as Twitter) to express her enthusiasm, stating that she is "delighted and honoured" to take on the role, while also highlighting the need for the UK defence budget to reflect the challenging times we face.

A party spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces plays a crucial role in communicating the party's stance on national security, military strategy, and defence spending. Helen Maguire is likely to become more prominent in debates on these issues in the House of Commons, especially in light of ongoing global conflicts and increasing geopolitical tensions.

In an era of emerging threats, the public will increasingly turn to the main political parties to ensure the military is effectively managed, underpinned by competent, transparent, and realistic governance. As global conflicts and tensions continue to rise, trust in the leadership and oversight of the armed forces will become a central issue in upcoming elections, with national security playing a critical role in shaping the public's confidence and the country's future stability.

Maguire faces a challenging task, especially as the Liberal Democrats work to rebuild public confidence. The party is likely to be cautious to avoid over-promising on policies, mindful of the damage caused when they reneged on their pledge to scrap tuition fees during their coalition government from 2010 to 2015, a decision that deeply hurt their voter base.

As the third-largest political party in the UK, the Liberal Democrats are attempting to position themselves for further growth. With Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer's approval rating dipping in recent Opinion polls and ongoing uncertainty surrounding the direction of the Conservative Party, the Lib Dems may believe that they are poised for future electoral gains. The political winds of British Politics are constantly shifting, and as Helen Maguire takes a substantial step forward into the spotlight, her performance on the frontbench might just determine if the Lib Dems can ride the wave of electoral success, or end up washed out to the fringes at the next general election.

Epsom pensioners gather less winter fuel pay this St Stephens

4 July 2026

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3rd September 2026
ISSN 2753-2771

Thousands of pensioners across Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead, and Leatherhead are facing the loss of vital winter fuel payments following cuts by the UK government, sparking fears that many will struggle to keep warm this winter.

Helen Maguire, the Liberal Democrat MP for Epsom and Ewell, has urged the government to reconsider its decision, warning that vulnerable pensioners could be left choosing between "heating and eating" during the colder months. Maguire opposed the cuts when they were voted on in the House of Commons on 10th September, but the measures were passed despite her concerns.

The cuts primarily affect pensioners over the age of 80 who are not in receipt of pension credit. Previously, these pensioners were automatically entitled to an additional £300 to help cover their energy bills in the winter. Now, many will lose this support unless they qualify for other benefits.

Data released earlier this week shows that in Epsom and surrounding areas, 5,788 pensioners aged over 80 who do not receive pension credit are at risk of losing their Winter Fuel Payment. In total, 18,261 pensioners in Epsom and Ewell could be affected by the government's decision.

Last winter, over £3.3 million in support was distributed to pensioners in the constituency, with £1,525,800 going to those aged over 80. These figures are expected to fall significantly this year due to the cuts.

"Thousands of pensioners here in Epsom and Ewell are desperately worried about how they will make it through this winter," said Ms Maguire. "These latest figures are deeply concerning. It is not too late for this government to change course, reverse their plans, and protect vulnerable pensioners here in Epsom."

In response, Chancellor **Rachel Reeves** has defended the government's decision, framing it as part of a broader strategy to stabilise public finances. "We are facing challenging economic times, and difficult choices must be made to ensure the sustainability of our public services," Reeves said in a recent statement. "However, we remain committed to supporting those most in need, and we have maintained targeted assistance for the poorest households."

Reeves also pointed to ongoing support measures, including the Energy Price Guarantee, which she says will help alleviate pressure on households most at risk. "We recognise the importance of protecting our pensioners, and our policies are designed to ensure that no one is left behind. But we must also take steps to manage public expenditure responsibly."

Despite this, charities and local advocacy groups have voiced concerns about the potential impact on older residents. Many fear an increase in demand for services such as food banks and emergency heating grants as pensioners struggle to afford rising energy bills without the additional winter fuel support.

As winter approaches, the situation remains uncertain, with many pensioners hoping for a reversal of the cuts or further government action to protect those most affected.

Image: Richard Peter Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 German

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Our Health Deserves Better

4 July 2026

I want to take this opportunity to thank those who voted for me at the general election. There is much to do to improve our situation in Epsom & Ewell and I am committed to help achieve this for all the residents of Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead.

Having visited Epsom Hospital only this week I reflect on the recent statement by Chancellor Rachel Reeves and find it impossible not to feel a deep concern for the future of our local healthcare infrastructure.

The Chancellor's announcement, which hinted at potential cuts to various infrastructure projects, including the ambitious plan to deliver 40 new hospitals, has left many of us in a state of unease. Among the projects at risk is the new emergency care hospital at Sutton, a critical facility that promises to alleviate the pressures on Epsom and St Helier hospitals. As the newly elected Liberal Democrat MP for Epsom & Ewell, I find this prospect deeply troubling.

Our community has been waiting far too long for this vital investment. The new hospital at Sutton is not just another building; it's a beacon of hope for many. It's designed to be a centre of excellence, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for the most serious emergency cases. Without it, our local healthcare services will continue to struggle with sub-standard conditions at Epsom and St Helier. These facilities, already stretched beyond their limits, cannot continue to bear the brunt of our community's healthcare needs without significant improvements.

The situation is dire. The buildings at Epsom and St Helier are overdeveloped and outdated. They desperately need the relief that the new Sutton hospital would provide. This isn't just about buildings; it's about the quality of care and the well-being of our staff and patients. Our community deserves better, and we cannot afford to wait any longer.

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ISSN 2753-2771

The Chancellor has offered a meeting with the Health Secretary for MPs representing affected constituencies. I eagerly anticipate this opportunity to voice the concerns of Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead, and Leatherhead residents. Our message must be clear and resolute: the Conservative party's economic mismanagement has left our public services in disarray, and we cannot allow their broken promises to cost us our much-needed hospital.

For years, the Conservatives have failed to deliver on their promises, leaving our local health services to languish. The proposed hospital at Sutton represents a crucial lifeline, not just for today but for the future of healthcare in our region. It is a promise of better days, of healthcare services that our community can rely on.

As your MP, I am committed to fighting for this project. We must ensure that the funding for the new Emergency Care Hospital at Sutton is protected. The people of Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead, and Leatherhead deserve nothing less than a healthcare system that meets their needs and supports their well-being. The time for waiting is over. It's time for action, and I will not rest until our community gets the healthcare investment it has been promised and so desperately needs.

Image: *Maternity Unit at Epsom Hospital. Left to right; James Blythe CEO; Liz Cullen, Head of Midwifery; Helen Maguire MP*

Lib Dems' Helen Maguire – "Getting Things Done"

4 July 2026

Epsom and Ewell Times is publishing the appeals of the Parliamentary Candidates standing in the General Election for the constituency of Epsom and Ewell. This is the appeal from **Liberal Democrat** candidate **Helen Maguire**.

My Army training gave me focus, my police work gave me a determination to maintain good order, while being a working mum of three in Claygate taught me a great deal about my local community.

It's these and other aspects of my career that led me to become a Liberal Democrat and to stand for Parliament to serve my local community – and to get things done to make the constituency of Epsom & Ewell a better place.

While there are many issues the Liberal Democrats want to tackle in the next Parliament, there are three big issues in Epsom & Ewell close to my heart. I want to see them fixed. I have been campaigning on these for the last 18 months and I want to take them to Parliament as your local representative and get them resolved.

My first concern is health and social care. Previous Conservative governments have run the NHS into the ground, and as far as Epsom & Ewell is concerned, have consistently failed to resolve one of our biggest issues, which is the overcrowding at Epsom and St Helier hospitals.

Our health care professionals across Surrey came up with an exciting and practical plan to build a third hospital which would be designed to treat the most difficult emergency cases, so that local people could get world class care in an emergency. The building of this new critical care hospital at Sutton would then free up Epsom and St Helier to be upgraded to significantly better district hospitals, caring for all
other aspects of medical care.

The Conservatives have consistently promised to build the critical care hospital, but nothing has happened. As a result, our pressurised NHS workers are having to deal with overcrowding and poor facilities – even getting into Epsom to park can be an issue!

At the most basic level successive Conservative governments have failed on health and social care. So many people can't get to see their GP when they need to. The Lib Dems want to give everyone the right to see a GP within seven days, or within 24 hours if they urgently need to – and we'll train another 8,000 more GPs to deliver this.

Finding NHS dental care can be as difficult as finding hen's teeth. The running down of NHS dentistry is causing great concern and so the Lib Dems will guarantee access to a NHS dentist for urgent and emergency care, putting an end to the dental deserts we see emerging across the country.

Mental health services need shaking up so we will push for mental health hubs for young people. We also must produce better results in terms of cancer survival rates and want to introduce a guarantee that all patients will start treatment for cancer within 62 days for urgent referral.

Successive Conservative governments have promised to do more to resolve the social care crisis, but nothing of any substance has happened. We have come up with a raft of fully costed measures aimed at making people's lives much easier than they are now. We want to introduce free personal care based on the model we introduced in Scotland in 2002, so that provision is based on need, not ability to pay.

We also want to establish a Royal College of Care Workers to improve recognition and career progression and introduce a

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ISSN 2753-2771

higher Carer's Minimum Wage. We want to establish a cross-party commission to forge a long-term agreement on sustainable funding for social care. A subject very close to our leader Ed Davey's heart is to give unpaid carers a fair deal so they get the support they so desperately need, including paid carer's leave and a statutory guarantee of regular respite breaks.

Everyone in Epsom and Ewell will benefit from better healthcare provision, but perhaps even more fundamentally is the need to build a stronger economy enabling us to shake off the cost-of-living crisis. One of the greatest opportunities is in the booming 'green economy' where the Liberal Democrats want to invest in renewable power and home insulation to drive a strong economic recovery, bring down energy bills, and create clean, secure, well-paid new jobs.

This means we need to develop an industrial strategy that will give businesses certainty and incentivise them to invest in new technologies to grow the economy, create good jobs, and tackle the climate crisis. In Epsom & Ewell we need to boost small businesses and empower them to create new local jobs, including abolishing business rates and replacing them with a Commercial Landowner Levy to help
stimulate our high streets.

The mismanagement of our economy and public services by the Tories extends to the inability of government to sort out the water companies who have been for too long polluting our rivers and waterways with raw sewage. Instead, they have pandered to the water companies in whose interests are best served by doing nothing other than the bare minimum about pollution.

I, and my fellow Liberal democrats, will hold the water companies to account by giving them a duty to protect the environment, including banning water companies from dumping raw sewage into rivers, lakes and coastal areas. Trashing our environment is totally unacceptable.

We want to make homes warmer and cheaper to heat. We will introduce a ten-year emergency upgrade programme, starting with free insulation and providing low-cost heating – heat pumps for those on low incomes.

We want to extend this to solar generation by expanding incentives for households to install solar panels. We will invest in renewable power so that 90% of the UK's electricity is generated from renewables by 2030.

All these issues can be resolved providing we plan well for the future and elect politicians whose life experiences are about taking on problems and solving them, this is what I have been trained to do, and I wish to do so to the benefit of everyone who lives in Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead & Leatherhead.

The other candidates:

Conservative who promises to serve "with integrity"

The Green promises

A True and Fair view of the world

Reform candidate for Epsom and Ewell

Mark my words for Labour candidate

LibDem PPC awarded Medal by the King

4 July 2026

Epsom & Ewell Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate **Helen Maguire** received a British Empire Medal (BEM) in The King's Birthday Honours list announced in June.

The honour was given for the contribution Helen has made for services to the community of Claygate, Surrey, where she lives with her family.

Helen, a former Captain in the Royal Military Police who served in Bosnia and Iraq said, "I am absolutely delighted to have had the work that I and others in my local community have undertaken in recent years recognised.

"Our efforts to establish wider facilities for the community to support all ages and particularly young people and sport in the immediate area, while providing new options for others came to fruition with the opening of the Claygate Pavilion. It's therefore humbling to have received such recognition for what was a team effort, so I therefore congratulate those who supported me in establishing our community centre in Claygate.

"My ambition in standing as Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom & Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead, is to extend the sort of work that we have been engaged in in Claygate to this constituency so that all can benefit from the

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sort of improvements that are needed in the area".

Helen served in Bosnia on a NATO multinational peacekeeping mission and Iraq, to help rebuild the Iraqi Police Service while providing on-the-ground counter- insurgency policing support to front line infantry.

She is a nationally recognised fundraiser having secured over £1 million for UK charities since leaving the Army.

Epsom politician backs UK nuclear deterrent

4 July 2026

Epsom & Ewell's LibDem prospective Parliamentary candidate and former Army Captain **Helen Maguire** supports a permanent at sea UK nuclear deterrent. Making a Party conference maiden speech in York she said that while LibDems supported a nuclear free world, the current actions by Vladimir Putin in Ukraine meant that the LibDems position had to change. She said:

"When we last considered the situation (in 2017), the world was in a very different place – there was war but there hadn't been the veiled threats around the use of nuclear weapons nor the potential for World War Three".

"We have now entered an age when a nation, Russia, believes it's ok to invade another country – completely defying the rule of International Law. It's not just Russia, in this volatile age, there are other countries whose intentions we don't yet fully understand – China.

"We want to deter any country/group/enemy from ever considering invading/attacking the UK. It sends a powerful message to those who would do us harm- don't you dare try!

"If we continued the course of medium responsiveness with no continuous deployment then this wouldn't achieve our mission to protect the UK. This would leave us exposed to very real threats and it would weaken our credibility amongst our allies.

"The continuous at sea deterrent provides a 24/7 365 days a year effective defence mechanism for the UK and we need it NOW more than ever before," said Helen Maguire.

The Liberal Democrat's York conference motion to maintain the current UK defence strategy of continuous at-sea deterrence was then passed by the delegates.

Hard-hitting critique from new LibDem PPC

4 July 2026

On 17th November, we saw the Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, give his Autumn Statement. We waited with bated breath to see how it might help us and our families as we try to work out how we're going to pay the bills. The catastrophic verdict was plain to see in newspaper headlines the following day: 'Carnage'– the Mirror; 'Years of tax pain ahead' – The Times; 'From Bad to Worse' – the Guardian. Even the usual Tory safe haven, the Mail, couldn't hold back their view: 'Tories Soak the Strivers'. It was never going to be an easy statement to make after Liz Truss dug a £30 billion hole in the public finances after her disastrous mini budget, but now the Treasury puts the fiscal hole at an eye-watering £60 billion!

This blistering verdict confirms the British public's worst fears. We are being made to suffer increases in tax, bills, and mortgage payments because of this Conservative government's mistakes. Living standards are falling off a cliff and public services are suffocating under the weight of this Conservative chaos and incompetence.

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EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

3rd September 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

What is the cost to you, the hard-working residents of Epsom and Ewell? Two million more people will move into the 40% tax bracket, families paying the price for Tory incompetence. Struggling families who have worked hard for years have had their security stolen. Hunt's Statement confirmed the Bank Surcharge cut from 8% to 3% from April 2023, while increasing taxes on millions of struggling families by extending the freeze in the Income Tax
personal allowance and higher-rate threshold. While non-doms and big banks got off lightly, the already squeezed middle are being pushed to the brink, having to choose between food or heating, mortgage payments or fuel for their car.

The squeezed middle will continue to work as hard as before, but their efforts will be worth significantly less as disposable income shrinks. Every single Conservative MP should be ashamed of this cost of chaos budget, which will leave a legacy of economic turmoil and tax misery as mortgage rates spiral.

OBR Budget documents forecast that mortgage interest payments will double over the next year, rising by 100.5% in the year to September 2023. Lib Dem analysis shows that a typical household with an outstanding mortgage of £236,000 will see their interest payments double to £5,689, or an increase of £2,851 a year. We're calling for a Mortgage Protection Fund for homeowners seeing payments skyrocket now!

In addition, reform of adult social care has once again been kicked into the long grass. Bedding blockages will continue in the unresolved chaos of the understaffed, under-resourced NHS. Boris Johnson came to power on a mandate to reform social care. Where is it? The dementia tax is back!

Other horrors you may not have seen in the budget are:

1. Police cuts: Home Office spending is set to be slashed by £100m in real terms by 2024-25.
2. Crumbling schools: There will be a £1 billion (14%) real terms cut in capital spending on education in 2024-25.
3. Social Housing: New stealth tax on social housing providers will mean lower investment in existing and new social housing.

Hunt is hoping economic growth will save his bacon but the shortage of workers, trading challenges because of Brexit and the lack of investment in renewable energy may not make this a reality. Hunt talks now about investment in green infrastructure and education and skills yet where has this been for 12 years? Schools are on their knees; parents are having to pay for books and children are going hungry.

We have now entered a recession, a spiralling cost-of-living crisis, the biggest decline in living standards in history. The gulf between rich and poor is growing, foodbanks have more demand than supply for the first time ever, nurses have voted to strike, barristers have been on strike, we have the highest rates of taxation in 70 years and a longer recession than we will likely have ever seen.

Since September, we have had three Prime Ministers, and four Chancellors. The Conservatives say they provide stability and continuity. The people are calling for CHANGE! Stability and continuity from this government has delivered a broken economy and made us poorer. Our crumbling hospitals and run-down classrooms are facing savage cuts because the Conservative party crashed the economy to fund tax cuts for the richest companies. The
country will never forgive them for this.

This government is putting off tough decisions with a general election around the corner. This isn't leadership! We are reaping the costs of a long-term failure to grow the economy and a lack of long-term strategy. We all just got a lot poorer and we're in for a long and unpleasant journey on the way back to a sound and stable economy.

Helen Maguire- Liberal Democrat Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom and Ewell

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