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Epsom and Ewell candidates dominate Police Commissioner election

16 April 2024



Nominations have closed in the race to become the next Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) with four candidates across the parties lined up. Two of the four candidates are Epsom and Ewell councillors.

The Epsom and Ewell Times has invited all candidates to submit statements to our publication and we hope to publish them in the days ahead.

The PCC role oversees the work of Surrey Police and its Chief Constable and holds them and their decisions to account. They set the strategic direction and aims for the force through the Police and Crime Plan.

In the running on May 2 are Lisa Townsend (the current PCC and Conservative), Paul Kennedy (Liberal Democrat), Kate Chinn (Labour) and Alex Coley (Independent).

Salaries of the PCC are decided on a national basis and vary depending on the size of the force; the commissioner for Surrey will receive a salary of £73,000 per annum.

PCCs are also responsible for all funding relating to policing, including the police precept, and to work with the Chief Constable to set the force budget in line with priorities and deliver value for money for residents.

Providing a link between the police and Surrey residents, the PCC listens to the public's concerns and works with the Chief Constable to create improvements.

Lisa Townsend, Conservative

Looking to get a second term, one of Lisa's major flagships is campaigning to end violence against women and girls. She has been working on various community projects including Safer Streets tackling anti-social behaviour and support services for victims.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Lisa said her immediate priorities are maintaining and growing the police force, as well as working with the Chief Constable on 'back to basics' policing. She said this includes "ensuring Surrey Police do what only they can: investigating and solving crime, not sitting in hospitals."

Alex Coley, Independent

Previously a Digital Lead for the Met Police, Alex said he wants "more bobbies on the beat" in Surrey. Headline policies include petitioning to parliament to change the way police funding is allocated in the country; so that the government contributes more for policing in Surrey than the taxpayer

Since 2018 Alex has been an Epsom and Ewell councillor as well as chairing the Crime and Disorder panel for the borough. The only independent candidate, Alex is campaigning to "take party politics out of policing" and put "pride and professionalism back into Surrey Police".

Paul Kennedy, Liberal Democrat

Hoping to be third-time lucky is Paul- a former barrister, accountant, actuary and Mole Valley councillor. Some of his campaign policies include "bringing back community policing" and combatting offending behaviour through restorative justice, education and support for mental health and addictions.

In a press statement, Paul said: "Like many people I disagree with the idea of PCCs, but we're stuck with them for now. So, let's do the job properly." If elected, Paul said he will work with the Chief Constable to fix the issues highlighted in the December 2023 inspection report.

Kate Chinn, Labour

Councillor for Epsom and Ewell, Kate's policies include refocusing on neighbourhood-based policing and using empty

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shops in the town centre for a police presence. Preventative measures is another concern as Kate aims to increase support services for young people.

Kate has said that she wants to review current training to ensure police have a good understanding of domestic violence, misogyny and sexual assault.

The deadline to register to vote is April 16, which can be done online. Elections take place on May 2, with the result announced the following day.

To vote for your preferred candidate, a valid ID must be brought to the polling station. This can include passport, driving licence, disabled or older person’s Bus Pass funded by the UK Government, and a biometric immigration document. Residents without an accepted form of photo ID can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate (VAC).

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