



Woking up to Surrey face recognition cameras

Formal protests have been lodged against Surrey Police's use of facial recognition technology that scans the faces of every adult and child in a bid to identify known suspects. Surrey Police was given two live facial recognition vans from the Home Office in November and has since put them to use in Redhill and Woking. The surveillance cameras record the images of everyone who walks across their paths to see if they are a match for people on their watchlist. The force says it deletes anybody who does not match to "minimise the impact on their human rights", with watchlist images deleted within 24 hours. The police said there were known issues in the past with facial recognition technology, including potential gender and ethnic bias, but that developments and new AI-driven algorithms have reduced this.

Now, a group of 25 cross-party Woking Borough Councillors have written to the force demanding the cameras are mothballed until meaningful consultation with residents and their elected representatives takes place over how, or whether, they are used. The letter says that fundamental questions of governance and human rights should have been resolved before any decision was made - including accountability for wrongful stops or arrests from misidentification, whether cameras record continuously or selectively, and how and when data is processed, shared, stored and deleted. A resolution has also been passed by Woking Borough Council's Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee calling on Surrey Police and the Crime Commissioner to join its January 20 meeting to answer questions about the use of live facial recognition cameras in Woking. In the meantime, councillors want the cameras' usage suspended immediately, pending full consultation with residents, with a focus on young people and those from ethnic minority backgrounds and community groups, as well as a full independently led equality and human rights impact assessment.

Chairing the Tuesday, December 2 committee was Councillor Tom Bonsundy-O'Bryan. He said: "They were deployed in Woking on November 26 and in Redhill on November 13. They scanned the faces of more than 8,000 members of public; 99.9 per cent of those scanned were not arrested. Of the individuals explicitly flagged as alerts by the technology in Redhill, 60 per cent were ultimately not arrested; only two arrests were made. There are serious questions about the proportionality of this. Imagine the police standing down the road, and asking to see everyone's passport, checking their ID, just in case they are a criminal. It would be a ludicrous thing, we wouldn't stand for it, it would be outrageous, and that is effectively what this technology is doing. It scans the face of anyone, child or adult, walking down the street and compares it to a watch list. Everyone wants the police to stop criminals, to find and arrest the people responsible for crime, but is this technology really proportionate in being deployed here in Woking?"

A spokesperson for Surrey Police said: "The introduction of live facial recognition technology, which is already being used successfully by other forces in the UK, is a vital tool to help us investigate crime thoroughly and relentlessly pursue criminals. We meticulously planned the rollout of the technology to ensure our use is appropriate, proportionate, and that we are operating with transparency. As part of this, we appropriately engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders and have ensured all information, documentation and policies are publicly available on our website. Since the launch on November 13, we have successfully completed a deployment in Redhill where officers arrested a 69-year-old man for breaching his sexual risk order and conducted condition checks for a sexual harm prevention order and a stalking protection order. On a further deployment in Woking, a 29-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of rape and shoplifting and two women were issued community resolutions for shoplifting."

Police added that the technology has been extensively tested by the National Physical Laboratory and that the algorithm used "shows no statistical bias towards gender or ethnicity (as tested nationally)". They said officers are briefed before each deployment regarding any potential disparity relating to race, age and gender, and that "extra corroboration" is required before any action is taken. "It is our responsibility to use every tactic and innovation available to us to keep the public safe, deter criminal behaviour, protect people from harm, and locate the most serious of offenders - and the live facial recognition technology has helped us to do exactly that."

Police and Crime Commissioner Lisa Townsend said: "I want to make sure our communities are as safe as possible for Surrey residents which is why our police officers must have every tool at their disposal to track down criminals operating in our midst. I do understand that people may have concerns which is why it is important that the debate on policing technology reflects the facts, the safeguards in place and the clear benefits to public safety. These vans will be used proportionately and it is important to stress that law-abiding members of the Surrey public going about their daily business have nothing to fear by their use. The cameras will help our policing teams identify and detain those on a pre-determined watchlist such as violent criminals and sex offenders."

Chris Caulfield LDRS

Related reports:



Live facial recognition policing comes to Surrey

Young Surrey volunteers help shape new neuroinclusive travel app

Young people in Surrey have helped test a new travel-planning app designed to make public transport less stressful for neurodivergent passengers. Members of ATLAS, Surrey Youth Voice's participation group for young people with additional needs and disabilities, spent three days trialling *Aubin*, a free app that takes a different approach to journey planning.

Unlike standard apps that prioritise the quickest route, *Aubin* focuses on reducing anxiety and supporting users who may find travel overwhelming. The app allows travellers to tailor their journey according to personal needs, rather than simply finding the fastest option. ATLAS members used it to plan and carry out trips across North, East and West Surrey, assessing how effectively it helped with independence and confidence.

Aubin functions as both a route planner and a "travel companion". Alongside directions, it offers practical tools to support users in moments of uncertainty. These include grounding exercises to help regulate emotions during difficult points in a journey; a type-to-speech feature for anyone who may struggle to speak when stressed; and an editable Autism Card that allows travellers to explain needs quickly and discreetly to staff or fellow passengers. Users can also set preferences that shape the route suggested, such as avoiding busy interchanges or long waits.

ATLAS has long advocated for more accessible, neuroinclusive transport options, arguing that navigating public transport is essential for young people to reach education, work and social opportunities. Members described the trial as a chance to influence a product that could help reduce isolation and build independence for others with similar needs.

At the end of the pilot, ATLAS met with *Aubin*'s co-founder and product manager, Corinna Smiles, to give detailed feedback. Suggestions included adding journey-sharing options so a trusted contact can follow someone's progress, communication prompts for stressful situations, and a checklist to help users prepare before leaving home. *Aubin* welcomed the recommendations and said they would incorporate them into future updates.

Ms Smiles said the pilot was a valuable example of user-led design and thanked the group for helping shape the app. ATLAS members have since given *Aubin* their "seal of approval", encouraging other neurodivergent young people to try it.

ATLAS member Emily said taking part "felt empowering" and that knowing the group's input would help autistic travellers made the experience worthwhile: "I feel honoured to have been part of shaping this app, which I'm sure will give many people the tools to travel with confidence."

Councillor Helyn Clack, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, said the collaboration showed the importance of designing tools with "the voices of the community they serve", and that the app has real potential to improve accessibility.

Aubin is free to download from app stores.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Image – Surrey County Council news



Surrey fast to introduce slow speed limits?

20mph speed limits could soon be introduced across three Surrey neighbourhoods, with residents now invited to give their views.

Surrey County Council is consulting on new slower-speed zones in Barnsbury and Bonsey Lane in Woking, the Goodwyns estate in Dorking, and the Parsonage Road area of Cranleigh. The aim, the council says, is to make streets safer and more pleasant for people travelling on foot, bike and especially children heading to and from school.

Speed surveys carried out by the council show drivers in all three areas are already mostly respecting limits, meaning the new rules could be brought in without speed bumps or chicanes. In Woking, some “light-touch” measures such as vehicle-activated signs or painted roundels could be added on Bonsey Lane as an extra reminder to keep speeds down.

If approved, the schemes would each cost around £20,000 from a budget specifically set aside for 20mph zones. Details on the council’s website highlight that money cannot be spent on potholes or other road maintenance, which is funded separately.

Residents may spot a few extra road signs, though council officers say they will only install what’s needed and will make use of existing posts wherever possible to avoid cluttering pavements.

Currently, there are no plans for police to step up enforcement. Instead Surrey said the new limits must “self-enforce” and remain credible to drivers. Information online stressed that action should not wait for someone to be hurt: slower traffic means fewer crashes, and those that do happen are much less severe.

The consultation website read: “Research suggests 20 mph schemes do not increase air pollution. Slower vehicle speeds support a shift to more walking, scooting and cycling and then fewer polluting vehicles on the roads. 20 mph schemes can also encourage a smoother driving style with less acceleration and deceleration between junctions and pedestrian crossings.

“The amount of fuel a vehicle uses is mainly influenced by the way we drive – driving at a consistent speed is better than stopping and starting. Accelerating up to 30 mph can take twice as much energy as speeding up to 20 mph.

“Some people are concerned that 20 mph may lead to increased journey times. However, most of the delays that occur for motor vehicles in built up areas are at junctions, rather than the roads between junctions.”

Plans and maps for each scheme are now available online, and residents living in or near the affected roads are being encouraged to take part in the consultation and share their feedback.

Emily Dalton LDRS

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I want to resist 20mph speed limits

Image: 20mph sign. Picture taken by LDR. Permission for use by all partners.

The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell meets local climate volunteers

The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, **Cllr Robert Leach**, met with members of the Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network (EECAN) to hear about the community projects they are mobilising over the next six months, including the borough’s first Library of Things. EECAN, which was marking its first anniversary, was founded by residents concerned about the environmental and social impacts of climate change and has grown steadily into an active network of volunteers leading initiatives that encourage climate-friendly actions, build resilience and support sustainable choices across the borough.

The volunteers explained that the Library of Things will allow residents to borrow items such as DIY tools, gardening equipment, sewing machines, pressure washers and even party or camping gear. For many households, the cost of purchasing these items outright can be prohibitive, and for others it simply isn’t necessary when the item might only be used once or twice a year. EECAN believes the scheme could help cut waste, save families money and encourage the communal sharing of resources.



The project is currently in the planning stage, with the group sourcing donated items and recruiting volunteers ahead of a planned launch in April 2026. During the meeting, Cllr Leach expressed strong support for EECAN's work, welcomed its potential benefits for local residents, and even signed up as an early supporter while taking an interest in how the project might expand once established.

Past and ongoing EECAN initiatives include November's successful Bike Amnesty event, which collected around 70 bikes for the Surrey Bike Bank to refurbish and redistribute, and regular Climate Conversations held on the second and fourth Monday of each month. Both projects have attracted increasing interest from residents wanting to learn more about sustainable living and community-driven solutions.

EECAN founder and chair William Ward spoke about the group's longer-term ambitions, which include expanding outreach, increasing visibility across the borough and eventually achieving official charity registration. Becoming a registered charity would help them access currently unavailable funding streams and deliver larger, more stable projects. In just 12 months the group has grown from seven to 50 volunteers and from two to eight trustees, who are now preparing their application to the Charity Commission.

The meeting concluded with cake-cutting and a discussion about strengthening links between EECAN and the council. The Mayor encouraged the group to continue raising awareness of their activities and said he would share their projects with fellow councillors when appropriate. Volunteers said they hoped the meeting would lead to deeper collaboration and stronger recognition of grassroots environmental initiatives within local decision-making.

As EECAN prepares for a busy six months, the group says it remains committed to promoting practical, affordable and community-led climate action. Residents interested in getting involved or joining the paid Heat Champion team can visit <https://www.eecan.org/home> or email eeClimateActionNetwork@gmail.com. Sign up for the free Home Energy Advice service here: <https://www.zerocarbondgford.org/energy-surveys>

Written by:

Jen Din, from The Epsom Edit (www.theepsomedit.co.uk)

Related report:

Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network launches with community events and initiatives

Epsom and Ewell FC's narrow defeat

Tooting & Mitcham 2 - 1 Epsom and Ewell FC. Saturday 29th November. Imperial Fields, Morden. Combined Counties Premier South League

The Salts slipped to a narrow 2-1 defeat at high-flying Tooting & Mitcham Utd on Saturday afternoon despite playing most of the football that was played. The referee showed 7 yellow cards to the two sides on the pitch (5 to The Salts), as well as a couple of yellows to the management teams and a red card to one of Tooting & Mitcham's assistants. We did wonder if the game would be played due to torrential rain in the Epsom area, but if it did rain in Tooting, the ground played very well. The number of yellows does provide a suggestion of the type of game played out.

We kept the same starting team from last week's abandoned game v Badshot Lea, with only Ethan Charles-Brazier replacing Ryley Merrett on the bench. The game started well for Epsom & Ewell as we went on the attack from the kick-off and Ali Fofahan was on the receiving end of a bad tackle from T&M No. 6 Jordy Ndozid, who found himself in the book in the 1st minute. Unfortunately, nothing came from the free-kick. Fofahan was causing problems on our right and a great ball in found three players at the back post but Aiwone could only head the ball high and wide from close in. Shortly after, T&M No. 10 Simeone played a ball back to his keeper without really looking, but fortunately for him it was just ahead of Robinson, who was just a little too far out to get to it before the keeper cleared.

On 15 minutes a long ball from T&M found its way into the Salts' box and it was allowed to bounce. Unfortunately, it bounced up and hit Nazareth on the hand and even though it was by his side and not in an unnatural position, the referee pointed to the spot, aided by the shouts of the large crowd of T&M fans behind our goal. T&M No. 9 Shay Brennan made no mistake. Tooting & Mitcham 1-0 Epsom & Ewell.

We were still in the game causing lots of problems on our right. Luis Oliveira went on a mazy run and was clipped just inside the box. Deciding to stay on his feet he chased the ball but was unable to cross it. Should he have gone down? I would say if he had,



the referee would have pointed to the spot, but it was still a foul that made him lose control, so really it should have been awarded either way. A few minutes later Oliveira went on another run, the T&M defenders this time not wanting to touch him, but he was unable to get any power in the cross and it went back to McKimm in the goal.

There was very little action for the rest of the half, and just when we thought we would be heading into half-time a goal down, Brennan found his winger Oldham on their right. He quickly moved towards the byline where there didn't seem much danger, but for some reason all three defenders were drawn to the ball and he was able to send a nice ball to the far post where Tariq Mahmoud was unmarked and he slid the ball past Salts keeper Nabbad. We definitely didn't deserve that but on the other side we didn't force the T&M keeper to make a save either.

HT Tooting & Mitcham 2-0 Epsom & Ewell

Two minutes into the second half we nearly gave T&M a third when Nabbad came off his line to clear a long ball but missed it. The T&M forward had to take the ball wide to get it under control. This allowed Aiwone to get back and make a great saving tackle to prevent the ball hitting an empty net. Most of the rest of the game was played with balls over the top or missed passes as both teams tried to take hold of the game. As I said, we were playing the better football but seemed to go for the long pass rather than short, easy balls. Players seemed to want to run with the ball rather than making a quick pass, by which time the recipient was closed down and we invariably had to go back.

Adam Green came off the bench when Tom Collins received a nasty kick on his ankle in the box, and again we believed the ref should have pointed to the spot, but nothing was given. Green, though playing alongside Shane Dunne, started to give The Salts some impetus and control and we looked dangerous. In the 67th minute we got our reward. With some good play on the right, the ball was switched across to Robinson, whose first shot was blocked and the ball fell out to Green, whose shot was also blocked. This time it came back to Robinson who made no mistake. Tooting & Mitcham 2-1 Epsom & Ewell.

On the 72nd minute we made two substitutions with Obasanjo Akinniranye and Karl Bailey replacing Brendan Murphy-McVey and Callum O'Keeffe respectively. Oba was straight into the game, making another good run on our right and getting to the goal line but Herring was unable to put it away, and it seemed he was possibly fouled, but the referee was not giving again and unfortunately a lot of anger from the benches made him come over and book Max Johnson, not for the first time this season.

The referee indicated 9 minutes of injury time, and we tried our best, pinning T&M in their own half. Another run from Oba was defended well and in the last minute a great shot from him just went by the post, ending our last chance of an equaliser.

FT Tooting & Mitcham 2-1 Epsom & Ewell.

The T&M assistant who had been sent off returned to the pitch to "tease" our own management team and this set off another melee in the centre circle as the teams were trying to leave the pitch. Our coach remonstrated with the referee about him getting back on the pitch, which only earned him a very unfair yellow. It's always difficult for the referee when players start play-acting or calling for every tackle to be a yellow or possibly red, but the game certainly lacked any discipline, so it will be interesting to read his report. We stayed in 13th place as the teams around us lost and Tooting move up to 2nd place.

There is a quick turnaround for our next game away at Abbey Rangers on Tuesday evening, KO 7.45pm, and on Saturday we are away to bottom side Guildford City with a 3pm KO. We look forward to seeing you there.

Epsom & Ewell:

Sami Nabbad, Luis Oliveira, Ethan Nelson-Roberts ©, Shane Dunne, Antonios Nazareth, Stefan Aiwone, Callum O'Keeffe, Tom Collins, Tyler Robinson, Brendan Murphy-McVey, Ali Fofahan.

Subs: Green (54), Bailey (71), Herring (71), Akinniranye (71), Brazier (78).

Report and image: Epsom and Ewell FC Media





Toyota prevention of future death report

A senior coroner has warned that more drivers could die because a Toyota braking system failed to stop a woman's car before a deadly M25 crash. Lisa Bowen, 48, died instantly when her Toyota Corolla hit the back of a stationary lorry on the hard shoulder at almost 38mph in January 2022 despite her pressing the brake pedal repeatedly. Senior Surrey coroner Richard Travers said the car's anti-lock braking system (ABS) "operated to reduce the braking effect almost entirely" and was "working in accordance with its design", but the design did not account for what happened when her tyre deflated and detached at speed. He said the outcome was "an unintended effect of the system's design which arose because the specific scenario [...] had not been taken into account in the design process." Mr Travers warned this creates "a continuing risk that future deaths could occur unless action is taken".

The senior coroner said he was noting that a large number of Toyota Corollas on UK roads have the same anti-locking braking system as Ms Bowen's car, and other brands may well be affected too. He also criticised the "catastrophic failure" of the lorry's under-run protection bar saying its strength was "grossly insufficient" under current laws. The coroner said he was concerned that the risk of future death will arise without more stringent requirements for how much force such bars must withstand.

He has issued a statutory Prevention of Future Deaths report to Toyota, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and the Department for Transport (DfT), saying: "Action should be taken to prevent future deaths by addressing the concerns set out above." They must reply by 16 January 2026. A DfT spokesperson said: "Every death on our roads is a tragedy, and our thoughts are with Lisa's family and loved ones. We will carefully review the coroner's findings from this tragic case to determine the appropriateness of further amendments to these requirements."

A Toyota spokesperson [Toyota's HQ is in Burgh Heath, Epsom] said the company was "deeply saddened by this tragic accident" and "acknowledges the findings of the coroner", adding it would "carefully review the Senior Coroner's conclusions."

Emily Dalton LDRS

Toyota HQ Epsom Google

Surrey to get new recycling centre

Bin lorries rumbling through Wentworth, Virginia Water and Chertsey could become a much more common occurrence after plans for a massive recycling plant on former green belt land just south of the Surrey towns was approved. The Kitsmead Lane site in Longcross will be capable of processing up to 100,000 tonnes of recycling each year - with 164 rubbish vehicle 'movements' every day. Most would be the bin lorries carrying recycling to and from the plant with the rest articulated lorries transporting the sorted waste off site.

Once built it would take recycling from the north and west of Surrey. Currently this gets shipped out to Kent, with a small amount dealt with in Leatherhead. The new facility will therefore mean fewer long journeys out of the county, but an intensification in lorries around the site. To minimise the impact, Surrey County Council's planning committee has called for a transport plan to be drawn up, but admitted it would be difficult to actually enforce it. Officers told the Wednesday, November 26, meeting: "Understandably, there still have been concerns about the potential for this to add further vehicles through some of the more sensitive locations. To that end we are also recommending, as part of the travel-plan condition, more details on the exact routes that will be used and what measures are in place to minimise movements through sensitive places."

Sight lines leading out of the plant are also poor, the meeting heard, so the speed limit along Kitsmead Lane would be reduced to 30mph. It's the first new waste recycling plant application approved by Surrey in the last quarter century, due in part to its long-term relationship with Suez. Kitsmead will sort and separate co-mingled recycling collected from residents' household bins and become the county's second recycling plant - with Leatherhead being the other.

In 2026, Surrey County Council and the 11 boroughs and districts will be dissolved and reformed into two huge authorities for the entire region. The new site is expected to take waste from across the two new councils, East and West Surrey, although this has not been formally agreed. The plans were voted through unanimously after hearing the former green belt site was now classified as grey field - and had been designated in the Surrey Waste Plan. Runnymede Borough Council raised concerns over the size of the building and the impact on nearby residents. Its views were echoed in the 21 letters of objection from residents who were worried about the increased traffic, both in volume and scale.

Chris Caulfield LDRS



Former landfill site in Trumps Farm, Kitsmead Lane, Longcross (image Google)

A Canterbury tale of woe for Epsom's Rugby team

Canterbury II 30 Sutton & Epsom RFC 26. Saturday 29th November.

The Pilgrims had belatedly progressed to Level 6 when their glass ceiling was removed by the RFU. After an inauspicious start to their campaign they had shown improved form whilst, in contrast, the emphatic Sutton start to the season has somewhat stuttered. The outcome of the fixture was never going to be a foregone conclusion that a casual glance at the league table might have implied. By the final whistle the Black & Whites had suffered their third loss on the spin whilst the hosts had returned to winning ways, overturning a 21-point deficit to triumph 30-26.

An accident on the M25 threatened to hamper the visitors' preparations but they negotiated the scenic rural route to arrive at a rain-lashed Merton Lane. Fortunately the weather relented by the time the game kicked off under the floodlights. Canterbury welcomed back Harry Sloan, Alfie Orris and Jesse De Vries after lengthy absences, while for Sutton the vastly experienced Steve Munford replaced the injured Laurence Wise at 9 and Tom Boaden moved from the bench to start in the front row. The Kent club kicked off with an effort lacking in altitude that set the tone for a laboured start. If anything, the hosts looked like the team who had endured the more tortuous journey, though traffic in Canterbury at this time of year is far from ideal. It was a red-letter day for Sutton's wing Kyren Ghumra who was playing his 150th league match. The winger celebrated in perfect style with a try in the third minute. Tom Lennard made the significant break and Ghumra ran a scything line to score under the posts. Freddy Bunting added the extras for a 7-0 lead.

Before ten minutes had been played the Black & Whites had doubled their lead and Ghumra's dream day continued with his second try. The forwards provided clean quick ball and Adam Bibby appreciated the overlap, sending the speedster on his way. Bunting bisected the uprights for 14-0. On the quarter hour Sutton turned over the ball in the 22 and advanced through the pack towards the line. After calmness and control came calamity as they fumbled close to glory. After a first quarter monopolised by an S&E side exploiting the sloping terrain, Canterbury awoke from their slumber and journeyed into the visitors' 22 seeking a response. On the half hour Steve Munford's long clearance had the hosts retreating once more to their 22. Things worsened for the home side when hooker Jake Dengate received a yellow card. Sutton immediately exploited the numerical advantage, executing a set play from their lineout and allowing the prolific hooker Sam Lennie to collect try number 13 in his ninth outing of the campaign. Bunting added his third conversion for a 21-point advantage.

For the visiting supporters it was a delightful reminder of early-season pomp but a knowledgeable local sage informed the Sutton scribe that even a four-try cushion was unsafe with this slope. The first period entered its last few minutes and Canterbury finally got on the scoreboard. A simple penalty from Owain Collins made it 3-21, visibly injecting hope and confidence into the Pilgrims. The turning point came on the stroke of half time. A powerful catch and drive put the Black & Whites on their heels and replacement Nathan Morris forced his way over. The conversion erred and the referee concluded the half. Canterbury sought the sanctuary of the dressing room whilst Sutton stayed on the pitch to hear the second-half tactics. The hosts trailed 8-21, hoping the 13-point deficit would not prove insurmountable.

The second period began with great home purpose and an early penalty that, fortunately for Sutton, struck the upright. For the next Canterbury attack Sutton were indebted to Gareth O'Brien whose try-saving tackle and perfect jackal were of the highest defensive order. Five minutes later the hosts were not to be denied as Owain Collins, the talented young ten, surged to within five metres and then brushed aside a mountainous defender to score. He added the conversion for 15-21.

A minute later the Canterbury comeback was complete as fullback Owen Hewett ran in from distance despite a desperate tackle attempt, his momentum carrying him over under the posts. Collins converted for a narrow home lead with 25 minutes remaining, and soon extended it with a penalty after a strike against the head, making it 25 unanswered points. Sutton's early purple patch had faded and it was now one-way traffic for the Kent club whose forwards, led by Divine, dominated collisions and forced penalties. The slope, gentle at the start of the half, now felt extreme.

Sutton's inspiration came from Adam Bibby who chased a kick and made a thunderous tackle, forcing a penalty. Another infringement followed, placing Sutton deep in the Canterbury 22. The forwards controlled the drive and replacement Jack Howes touched down out wide. The missed conversion left Sutton ahead 26-25 with a bonus point secured. Canterbury had ten minutes to respond. Initially they fluffed their lines with an overthrown 5-metre lineout and then conceded a penalty. But third time proved lucky. A catch and drive moved them into the 22 before the backs swept into action. Collins improvised with a basketball chest pass that opened the field and Hewett raced clear to score in the corner. The conversion failed but the hosts led again,



30-26.

Could Sutton launch one last assault? Tension rose as infringements disrupted play. Canterbury, suddenly unable to control the ball, struggled to run down the clock, but their rapid, abrasive defence contained the visitors to halfway. The game concluded when Bunting's penalty to touch failed to reach the 22 and Canterbury kicked the ball out to seal a 30-26 victory.

After a glorious start it had looked an ideal occasion for Kyren Ghumra to celebrate his 150th league appearance. But in recent rounds Sutton have been unable to maintain their early intensity long enough to subdue opponents. Canterbury rose from their early slumber, combining a robust forward effort with pace in the backs. The longer the game went on the better Collins played. The hosts never panicked despite trailing by three goals and dominated the second half. For the Black & Whites Rob Hegarty and Ben Tame refused to take a backward step but the forwards could not replicate the fluency of the early exchanges. There was, for the second Saturday in a row, the consolation of two bonus points.

Perhaps the Pilgrims' progress was predictable. They struggled through the Slough of Despond, stood atop the Hill of Destiny before entering the Valley of the Shadow of Death, overcame the Giant Despair and were welcomed to the Celestial City of victory. Though Sutton & Epsom supporters were disappointed they could not fault the hospitality of the hosts whose welcoming bar and ideally placed viewing area provided perfect shelter from the elements. There was neither hobgoblin nor foul fiend in sight.

Next Saturday 6th December Sutton & Epsom host league leaders Brighton. The Sussex men have had an exceptional start as they bid to return to Level Five. They have one loss at home to Beckenham and a 100% record on their travels. Despite three losses on the trot Sutton & Epsom remain third in the table. Rugby Lane supporters will hope the visit of the early pacesetters inspires a return to early-season form. Kick-off is at 2pm and all are welcome.

Sutton & Epsom

O'Brien, Fitzgerald, Bibby, Bunting (c), Ghumra, Lennard, Munford, Johnson, Lennie, Boaden, McTaggart, Duey, Rea, Tame, Hegarty. Reps: Howes, Finney, Scott.

Canterbury II

Hewett, Masaka, Fielder, Sloan, Orris, Collins, Valladares, Oliver, Dengate, MacMillan, De Vries, Hunt (c), Divine, Evans. Reps: Bull, Morris, Parker.

John Croysdill

Surrey MP intervenes in local prison transgender issue

The Member of Parliament for Reigate has called for biologically male inmates to be excluded from the women's estate at HMP Downview in Banstead. **Rebecca Paul MP** argued that the presence of male-born prisoners in a women's jail placed vulnerable female inmates at risk and reflected a wider policy approach that "put inclusion and ideology above safety and reality". She made the remarks during a House of Commons debate on 24 November concerning the management of transgender prisoners at HMP Downview.

The debate heard that transgender women are placed at Downview primarily for their own protection and are escorted by guards when mixing with the wider prison population. MPs were also told that, since 2019, there had been no recorded case of a trans inmate assaulting a biologically female prisoner. Evidence was cited that transgender women held in the men's estate themselves experience disproportionately high levels of sexual assault.

Mrs Paul said HMP Downview includes a dedicated E Wing "specifically for biological males who identify as women", used for transgender women who, with or without a Gender Recognition Certificate, cannot be safely housed elsewhere in the female estate. She stated that between five and seven such prisoners had been accommodated in E Wing over the past year. Citing Ministry of Justice data, she said: "In 2024, of the 245 transgender males in prison, 151 — or 62 per cent — were convicted of a sexual offence, far higher than the 17 per cent rate for the overall male prison population. A similar pattern can be seen in 2023."

She concluded that "the male transgender prison population poses a much higher risk to women and girls," and urged the Government to "take action and protect women at HMP Downview and across the female prison estate".

Responding for the Government, The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice **Alex Davies-Jones MP** acknowledged that transgender women had specific vulnerabilities, but said the allocation of prisoners required "thought and tact" to ensure fairness and safety. She emphasised that exemptions allowing transgender women into the general women's population are



granted only when there is a compelling reason, such as acute self-harm or suicide risk, and only when there is high confidence that the prisoner poses a low risk to others. No such exemptions have been issued recently.

The Minister noted that more than 95 per cent of transgender women are held in men's prisons and that those placed in Downview are mostly housed on the stand-alone 16-bed E Wing unit, separated from biological women and situated within its own secure compound. The unit, introduced in 2019, was created because transgender women in men's prisons face disproportionate levels of bullying, harassment, self-harm and sexual assault.

She told MPs: "There have been zero assaults and zero sexual assaults committed by transgender women in the women's estate since 2019," adding that she hoped the figures demonstrated the Government's attempt to "strike a balance" in the placement of transgender prisoners.

Chris Caulfield LDRS

HMP Downview (image Google)

Here's some Spring cheer as Winter approaches Epsom and Ewell

Nonsuch Park has been awarded two top honours at the 2025 South & South East in Bloom Awards, taking **Gold** for both *Heritage Park of the Year* and *Large Conservation Area*. The Gold Award is the scheme's highest accolade, reserved for entries judged to have achieved exceptional standards across all assessment categories.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council said the result reflects a sustained programme of heritage restoration and environmental management, including the refurbishment of garden features such as the greenhouse, continued care of its champion trees, and conservation work across the wider landscape. Judges described Nonsuch Park as "an exceptional example of conservation in action", commending its carefully managed habitats, historic setting and community engagement projects.

Councillor **Anthony Froud** (RA Stoneleigh), Chairman of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, said: "This is an incredible achievement and a reflection of the dedication of our volunteers and staff. Local volunteers, the Nonsuch Voles, and the Council's Countryside, Property and Estates, and Operational teams work year-round to protect and enhance this unique heritage landscape for the benefit of wildlife, visitors and future generations. These Gold Awards celebrate their hard work and the deep pride our community takes in Nonsuch Park."

Governance of Nonsuch Park

Unlike most parks in the borough, Nonsuch Park is not managed solely by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council. It is overseen by the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee (JMC), a long-standing partnership between Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and the London Borough of Sutton. The arrangement dates back to the 1930s, when the two authorities jointly acquired the estate to prevent the land from being sold for development.

Under the current structure, the JMC is responsible for strategic decisions concerning the park's maintenance, heritage assets, conservation plans and public access. Day-to-day operations are delivered by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council on behalf of the partnership, with Sutton contributing towards the running costs through an annual financial agreement. Representatives from both councils sit on the committee, ensuring shared oversight of policy, budget and long-term planning.

The Joint Management Committee model is one of the reasons Nonsuch Park has been able to maintain its character and heritage significance. It enables coordinated management across borough boundaries while preserving the historic landscape as a single entity. Local volunteer groups, notably the Nonsuch Voles, play an important supporting role, undertaking conservation tasks, habitat improvement, garden restoration and public engagement throughout the year.

With thousands of visitors each week, Nonsuch Park remains one of the region's most valued open spaces. This year's double Gold Award adds to its growing list of recognitions and underlines its importance as both a heritage landscape and a biodiversity-rich green space for the wider community.

Sam Jones – Reporter

