

Is Chantilly better governed than its twin Epsom?

9 October 2026



Dear Editor,

Thank you for reporting the visit of an Epsom municipal delegation, led by the Mayor, to Chantilly. Their programme sounded interesting and enjoyable.

That Chantilly holds 55 days of racing over 11 months makes racing at Epsom — our major claim to fame — seem rather puny. The Epsom visitors' other entertainments will make the Chantilly visitors' return visit here a bit lacking in local colour and character.

This disappointing comparison leads to three questions, all familiar bones of contention over many years:

1. Is France more or less centralised than the UK? Which country seems to be better governed?
2. Would Epsom do better under a French mayoral system? Our borough built 37 houses, I believe, last year, which suggests a lack of purpose or belief in the future of our borough.
3. How does France maintain its vigorous regional diversity and local character while ours is about to be squeezed to death by local government reform?

Would you be willing to let the Mayor illuminate these issues, drawing on her delegation's experience at Chantilly? It might spark an interesting correspondence.

Yours faithfully,

Edward Clay

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