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

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Bearing the balls of Derby week in Langley Vale

31 May 2024



Residents of **Langley Vale**, an estate adjacent to the renowned Epsom Racecourse, have expressed growing frustration and concern over repeated incidents of anti-social behavior and vandalism coinciding with the annual **Derby week**. The community's grievances were vividly shared through a series of social media posts, highlighting a range of disturbances and a perceived lack of adequate police response.

One resident described a troubling encounter with three males, one of whom had a cast, yet lamented the police's apparent indifference. "This is serious now, not just knock down ginger, but they don't seem to be taking it seriously. They should be going on site and looking for these culprits. The police should be patrolling this whole area of the downs anyway. They know we get trouble every year; a burnt-out car last year on the downs and theft," the post read.

Another resident voiced their anger over the disruption Derby week brings to the village, accusing the police of failing to ensure community safety. "The whole village gets held hostage this time of year, and the police don't do enough at all to make the residents feel safe," they stated.

The most alarming incident reported involved the shattering of bedroom windows by ball bearings, suspected to have been launched with a catapult, between 10-11 PM. Fortunately, the children's rooms were spared. The attack occurred at the top of Grosvenor Road, near the bridle path. "Reported it to the police, obviously, but if anyone has had similar treatment or saw anything suspicious, can you let me know or report it to 101," the resident urged.

Further reports of catapult and ball bearing damage surfaced within the village, including a patio door destroyed within a half-hour span. The resident noted the impressive accuracy of the attack, considering their home's secluded position next to the woods. They identified a pattern, suggesting the culprits were targeting homes from the bridle path at the top of Rosebery, Grosvenor, and Beaconsfield Roads, areas supposedly under police dispersal orders. "Despite these boys being exactly in the same place three evenings and nights running, no police presence was seen at the top of the village," the post concluded.

As Derby week continues, Langley Vale residents remain on edge, calling for more proactive measures from law enforcement to protect their community from further disturbances.

Inspector **Kelly Clifton-Sinclair**, Borough Commander for Epsom and Ewell, said: "We are aware of reports of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the Langley Vale area. We know that these crimes can have a serious effect on the local community, and I would like to reassure residents that we are investigating all possible lines of enquiry so that we can work to identify those responsible. Since the reports were made to us, we have had officers patrolling the local area, proactively speaking to the local community and those affected, to make sure residents feel safe.

"If you are a victim of crime, or have recently been a victim of crime, please report it to us so that we can investigate it thoroughly. Each report helps us to build our understanding of crime in the area so that we can respond, work to deter crime, and help keep our communities safe. If you have any information that might assist our investigation, please get in touch with us via Messenger quoting PR/ 45240061106."

BBC Question Time Came to Epsom

31 May 2024



Last night, **Epsom College** played host to BBC's **Question Time**, with **Fiona Bruce** at the helm. She opened the programme by highlighting Epsom's famed salts and rich horse racing heritage.

Epsom and Ewell Times will be staging a local "Question Time" for the Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Candidates at the

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Adrian Mann Theatre, NESCOT, Reigate Road in Ewell at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June. All welcome.

The Panel included **Damian Hinds** MP the Conservative School Minister, **Wes Streeting** MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, **Nigel Farag**e, Reform UK President, **Rose Hudson-Wilkin**, Bishop of Dover and **Piers Morgan**, TV Presenter and Former Newspaper Editor.

Here is a summary of some of the questions and responses:

Question: "Is the idea of bringing back national service anything more than a political stunt?"

Damian Hinds: Defended the idea, suggesting it would broaden opportunities and foster a cohesive society, though Bruce noted criticism from senior military figures.

Wes Streeting: Highlighted existing opportunities like local cadets and questioned the government's track record over the past 14 years.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Cautioned against backdoor conscription, referencing existing youth programs.

Piers Morgan: Supported the idea for its potential to instill responsibility, but emphasized the need to address broader issues affecting young people.

Nigel Farage: Dismissed the policy as a focus groupdriven stunt, pointing out its limited scope.

Question: "Labour claims to reduce (NHS) waiting lists by extending working hours and asking doctors to work on weekends. Where will you find the staff?"

Wes Streeting: Explained plans for voluntary extra shifts, while acknowledging current pay and working condition issues.

Damian Hinds: Agreed on the need for more doctors and better technology, but noted industrial action worsened the backlog.

Piers Morgan: Criticized the system's inability to cope with population growth and increased life expectancy.

Nigel Farage: Called for a rethink of NHS funding.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Highlighted the delay in developing a workforce plan.

Question: "Regardless of people coming over on small boats, legal immigration is out of control. What is the solution?"

Nigel Farage: Blamed Labour for opening the door to high migration and called for using Brexit powers to control it.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Advocated for addressing global issues causing migration and warned against political scapegoating.

Damian Hinds: Emphasized the need to welcome contributing migrants but acknowledged current numbers were too high.

Piers Morgan: Warned about the rhetoric used in discussing migrants and criticized the lack of control postBrexit.

Question: "Is it morally right to impose a tax on parents' aspirations for their children?"

Wes Streeting: Defended Labour's plan to remove tax exemptions for private schools, arguing for better funding for state schools.

Piers Morgan: Condemned the policy as envy driven and harmful to aspirations.

Damian Hinds: Questioned the impact and minimal revenue from the tax.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Called for equitable resourcing of all schools.

Nigel Farage: Suggested more scholarships for working class children instead of taxing private schools.

The heated debate at Epsom College will be a night to remember for those lucky to get in and everyone at Epsom College who watched it.

Maraam Nusair

Top Tips for Oaks Day at Epsom Racecourse

31 May 2024



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One of the biggest Flat race meetings of the British racing calendar is upon us as day one of the Derby meeting gets underway at Epsom Downs today.

The seven-race card has more than £1million in prize money up for grabs as the big gun trainers send their stars to Surrey for one of the most prestigious race days of the season.

The £550,000 Group 1 Betfred Oaks is the highlight on day one but not far behind that is the another Group 1, the Coronation Cup, with a prize pot of £445,000 up for grabs.

The Epsom card on Friday gets underway with the Woodcote Stakes (2.00), a six-furlong contest in class two for the two-year-old's. New Charter looked a handy type for trainer Richard Hannon when chasing home a current Royal Ascot favourite at Newmarket a fortnight ago and is taken to go one better at Epsom, but will face stern competition from Teej A, who won her maiden at Chester in fine fashion and will be bang up there once again.

The second race of the day is off at 2.35 and is a class two handicap over the extended mile trip, with 16 runners set to head to the starting stalls. Preference in this one goes Bopedro ahead of stablemate at David O'Meara's yard Blue For You, who finished third and fourth respectively in a handicap at York's Dante meeting earlier this month and both should improve at Epsom.

The first Group 1 on the card is race three at 3.10 – the Coronation Cup – and a small field of five will battle it out for the £252,360 first prize. Defending champion Emily Upjohn, trained by John and Thady Gosden, is back for more in 2024 and is the one to beat over the 1m4f trip once again. Luxembourg, a four-time Group 1 winner for master trainer Aidan O'Brien, rates as the obvious danger but needs to bounce back from a poor showing in the Dubai Turf at Meydan last time out. Feed The Flame is an intriguing runner in this one as well, heading over from France for trainer Pascal Bary having finished third of nine in the Prix Gany at Longchamps and connections opting to throw him into a Group 1 on British debut.

Fourteen runners look set for the start in race four of the cracking Epsom card on Friday at 3.45 – the Nifty 50 handicap – over the 1m2f distance. Ben Brookhouse's I Still Have Faith shaped well on seasonal reappearance at Nottingham after a fine 2023 campaign and is taken to score a fifth career win ahead of two Karl Burke runners in Bolster in Liberty Lane, who both won last time they were on track and will have plenty to say in proceedings.

The Group 1 Betfred Oaks is the feature race on day one at Epsom (4.30) and this year's renewal looks a belter, with £311,905 heading the way of the winner. That could well be Ylang Ylang for trainer O'Brien, who was a promising fifth in the first classic of the season in the 1000 Guineas at Newmarket and should relish the step up in trip here for a yard looking for a seventh win in the race since 2015.

Cheshire Oaks winner Forest Fairy looks to be a main player in the Oaks for trainer Ralph Beckett, who is no stranger to success in this race having won it with Look Here in 2008 and Talent in 2013, while Irish trainer Dermot Weld also has a live chance with Ezeliya, who has two wins from three starts and recently scored in a Group 3 at Navan.

After the big one, there are two more races on the Epsom card for punters to find a winner. The Listed Surrey Stakes (5.10) can go the way of Balmacara, trained by Eve Johnson-Houghton, who was a ready winner at Doncaster just over a month ago in a novice stakes contest.

Finally, the day one card comes to a close at 5.40 with the 12-runner class two handicap over the seven furlong trip and preference in the finale goes to the Roger Varian-trained Mission To Moon, who returned from a seven-month absence to score in fine style at Goodwood a month ago and is bred from a family who gets better with age.

Epsom selections – Friday (via **Royal Ascot odds**)

2.00 – New Charter

2.35 – Bopedro

3.10 – Emily Upjohn

3.45 – I Still Have Faith

4.30 – Forest Fairy

5.10 – Balmacara

5.40 – Mission To Moon

Copy provided by BoyleSports

Picture this house in the centre of Epsom!

31 May 2024

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After much anticipation, **Epsom Picturehouse** — a six-screen cinema, café, and bar at the heart of Epsom Square — will be opening its doors on Saturday 01 June.

The latest addition to the Picturehouse Cinemas family, Epsom Picturehouse is set to encompass all the best that the world of film has to offer. Tickets are on sale now for Furiosa, George Miller's epic Mad Max prequel starring Chris Hemsworth and Anya Taylor-Joy, and film lovers will be able to book soon for new releases including the horror thriller A Quiet Place: Day One and Marvel Studios' Deadpool & Wolverine.

There'll also be chances to catch this year's wonderful family titles, Inside Out 2 and Despicable Me 4 – and don't forget to ask for the discounted Family Ticket! Film fans can also catch up with a wide range of classic movies from directors such as the Coen Brothers and Stanley Kubrick – perfect to revisit on the big screen.

The fun doesn't stop there: we're pleased to announce our Summer Outdoor Cinema season. Enjoy alfresco cinema under the stars as our pop-up screen comes to Bourne Hall in Ewell from Friday 05 July. Bring a blanket for the perfect way to spend a summer evening, with crowd-pleasers like Mamma Mia, Twilight, and Back to the Future!

Find out more at: picturehouses.com/epsom

Clare Binns, Managing Director of Picturehouse Cinemas, says: "We're thrilled to be opening the doors and welcoming the people of Epsom into Picturehouse's 28th cinema – at long last! Our cinemas are shaped by their communities, and with six screens, a bar and a restaurant, this beautiful new venue will be a perfect space for bringing people together to relax, enjoy delicious food and drink, and soak up all the magic of the big screen."

Book a private screening to give your clients, colleagues, or employees a big-screen experience that blows them away, or enjoy a night of gaming in our specially-created event screen.

As part of our nod to local history, we've even dedicated one of our screens to Epsom's first-ever cinema, The Electric Theatre, which opened its doors to the neighbourhood's cinema lovers in 1910. We're proud to continue its legacy by honouring this jewel in the community, where people queued up for hours for silent films, newsreels, and live piano accompaniment.

Epsom Picturehouse Founder Membership is on sale now. The first 1000 customers who purchase an annual Membership for the new cinema will get their names installed in the building, on a specially commissioned Founder Members' Wall. The Memberships will also include an additional 2 free tickets to use when the cinema opens its doors. Learn more and sign up at picturehouses.com/epsom-membership.

About Picturehouse Cinemas:

Picturehouse is an award-winning UK film company incorporating cinema, distribution and home entertainment, formed in 1989 to challenge the multiplex model. Its flagship cinema Picturehouse Central is situated in the heart of London's West End, with the rest of its 28 venues located across England and Scotland.

Picturehouse's architecturally unique cinemas sit in the heart of local neighbourhoods and cater to a diverse and wide-ranging audience. They provide bespoke food and drink offerings across their cafés, bars, restaurants and members' bars. The programme is curated to champion films made for all ages and backgrounds, from quality mainstream film through to foreign-language and documentary features, as well as live event cinema and in-person events and Q&As when available.

Follow the latest news on Ealing Picturehouse on social media:
Twitter: @Epsom_PH
Instagram: @EpsomPicturehouse
Facebook: @EpsomPicturehouse

Picture House press release.

A Surrey council resists green-belt housing

31 May 2024

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A contentious plan to build dozens of affordable homes in Surrey was rejected by councillors who prioritized protecting greenbelt land over addressing the area's housing shortage.

Developers had wanted to build up to 135 homes, of which at least half would have been sold at affordable rates, at Grove End between the A30 and A322, in Bagshot.

The outline planning application was rejected by Surrey Heath Borough Council's planning committee on Thursday May 23.

Early indications suggested there would have been at least 68 affordable homes, including 17 set aside as affordable first homes and 51 social affordable or intermediate rented properties. The developers said they would be willing to increase those numbers but the application itself had to be determined on those figures.

The committee was advised that permitting the plans would be a departure from its developing local plan and undermine the council's aim of only developing on brownfield sites in the near future – these are abandoned or underused former industrial land.

Councillor Kevin Thompson (Liberal Democrat, Lightwater) said: "Often we talk about this need for affordable housing and we talk about numbers and we talk about statistics, but I think it's important that we think about what that actually means.

"We have a situation where the people that teach our kids, who look after us in hospital, can't afford to live in this borough and they have to commute in, because we don't have the affordable housing we need. We need to look at this very carefully because [this proposal] does provide us with a significant amount of affordable housing."

The land, between the A322 dual carriageway linking the M3 with Bracknell and Windlesham Golf Club had been considered for redevelopment as the council looked for sites as part of its local plan. It "discontinued" the idea however as the borough could demonstrate it had enough brownfield land to meet its housing targets.

Developers tried to argue the land, next to the A30, was not the idyllic rolling Surrey countryside that people think of as greenbelt because the main road had an "urbanising" affect on the site. Speaking on behalf of the application, the agent added: "The borough unfortunately has a major and sustained issue with failing to meet affordable housing needs as demonstrated."

Cllr Shaun MacDonald, said: "We need to be extremely careful before we give up any green belt. I do accept the comments that this is not the most unique piece of green belt we have but it does form a barrier to the other areas adjacent and if we start allowing creep we will soon have all of the Green Belt gobbled up between Bagshot and north Windlesham. If this space was on the other side of the A322 I suspect we would be having a very different conservation about the feasibility and viability."

Access was another issue raised during the meeting with one Bagshot resident, who had lived in the area for 56 years raising safety issues for any young families would could move there. He said: "This particular site to my mind has a very serious problem attached to it with regards to access."

He said in recent years there there had been a need to build 1,752 affordable homes, and so far it's delivering just 39 a year. This development, he argued, would provide two years of affordable housing on a single site.

He added that they needed to look at the quality of green belt in the borough as otherwise there would never been any development.

Image: Bagshot planning (SBC planning portal)

Should the Epsom Derby go back to Wednesday?

31 May 2024



The first Wednesday of June used to be for many an unofficial bank holiday. Office, retail and factory staff parties filled

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Epsom Downs enjoying a day off and the annual **Epsom Derby** flat-race. The Epsom High Street shops used to close.

Of course, this year the Epsom Derby will take place on Saturday 1st June and the shops will remain very much open.

In a bold statement aimed at reviving the charm and prominence of the Epsom Derby, retired jockey **Dane O'Neill** has suggested returning the event to its traditional Wednesday slot. This proposal comes in light of apparent declining attendances and the Derby's diminishing distinctiveness against competitors like Royal Ascot.

O'Neill was speaking to Boyle Sports, who offer the latest odds for the Epsom Derby event, said "I think they have messed things up by moving it around a lot, and as a result has lost its identity for the wider public. We have seen it under several different guises. For the aficionado it is always going to be the Epsom Derby, one of the mainstays of English racing, but they have changed it so much that it has lost its spark."

For much of the 20th century, the Epsom Derby was synonymous with the first Wednesday in June. This midweek scheduling created a unique atmosphere, drawing massive crowds not only for the race but also for a festive day out. Historically, even Parliament would adjourn to allow members to attend, highlighting the event's national significance.

However, in 1995, the race was moved to Saturday in a bid to boost attendances and television ratings, a decision that has since been met with mixed reactions.

The switch to Saturday was intended to increase visibility and attendance, capitalizing on the weekend's leisure time. Yet, O'Neill and other critics argue that this move has diluted the Derby's unique character, making it just another event in a crowded sporting calendar. O'Neill believes that returning to a Wednesday would help restore the Derby's distinctiveness and might reignite public interest by creating a midweek spectacle that stands out on its own.

Epsom's course is renowned for its challenging nature, likened by O'Neill to a rollercoaster ride with its steep climbs and sharp turns, particularly at Tattenham Corner. This distinctive track demands exceptional skill from both horse and jockey, adding to the race's allure and prestige.

The Derby remains a cornerstone of English flat racing, celebrated for its history and the high calibre of competition it attracts.

Do you have a view? Write to our letters page.

Images credit: @EpsomRacecourse

D-Day celebration on Epsom Downs

31 May 2024



A special event to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings is taking place on Epsom Downs on Thursday 6 June, 7–9.30pm. The event is being jointly run by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Go Epsom and Epsom Downs Racecourse.

The D-Day Landings are recognised as the largest naval, air and land operation in history, with more than 150,000 troops landing on five beaches in Normandy and bringing about the liberation of north-west Europe from Nazi occupation. Commemorative events are taking place nationally to remember those who gave their lives during the D-Day Landings.

The public are invited to come down to the Racecourse from 7pm, when the grandstand will open. Refreshments and fish and chips will be on sale, and there will be a range of entertainment on offer. The event is free to attend.

At 9pm, a ceremony will take place at the beacon on Epsom Downs, including a lone piper playing, and at 9.15pm the beacon will be lit. The beacon lighting is part of a national chain of beacons being lit across the country, and along the Normandy coast of France, and is designed to represent the 'light of peace' that emerged out of the darkness of war.

Cllr **Clive Woodbridge**, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee at the council, said:

"The beacon lighting event is an opportunity for the community to come together to honour the thousands of people involved in the D-Day landings. Their brave actions enable us all to enjoy the peace and freedom we have today.

"We look forward to welcoming residents and visitors to this special and important event."

Karen Pengelly, BID Manager at Go Epsom, said:

"Epsom's beacon was erected two years ago to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. It is an absolute honour to be involved in the D-Day 80th commemoration. Epsom, just like many other places, played an active part in World War 2; this is our chance to remember the sacrifices made by so many."

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Tom Sammes, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said:

“We are honoured and delighted to be a part of the D-Day 80th commemoration. The racecourse was a key part of Epsom’s World War 2 response and we look forward to welcoming the community to remember the brave personnel who risked their lives for freedom and peace.”

Background image credit Expert Infantry CC BY 2.0 DEED

Epsom Derby week read?

31 May 2024



A tale of triumph and tragedy, dreams and disasters aptly describes the life of **Bernard Dillon**, as detailed in a new book by **Stephen Fernane**. This captivating biography delves into the extraordinary journey of Dillon, who won the prestigious **Epsom Derby** in 1910 on **Lemberg**. The 2024 Epsom Derby takes place on Saturday 1st June.



Dillon on 1910 Derby winner Lemberg Agence Rol – Gallica Digital Library Public Domain

For the first time since Bernard’s death in 1941, a book captures his astonishing rise to success and his subsequent fall from grace due to heavy drinking. From a talented apprentice to a shrewd professional, Bernard Dillon won the Epsom Derby and the Grand Prix de Paris, epitomizing a life of sporting triumph and human tragedy.

In 1901, at the tender age of thirteen, Bernard left Kerry with dreams of becoming a jockey in England. Remarkably, within three years, he had become the most popular sporting personality in both Britain and Ireland.

Stephen Fernane reveals that his fascination with Bernard’s sporting achievements and the overshadowing sadness of his later years inspired him to write this book. The fact that Bernard’s story is not widely known also motivated him.

As reported in the Irish Independent on 25th May the author said;

“Discovering Bernard’s career and learning about all he achieved is what inspired me to write it. The inner demons that led to his demise in later life are just as fascinating. To think that very little is known about someone as colourful and complex as Bernard Dillon is astonishing,” Stephen said.

The book, titled *The Life and Times of Bernard Dillon: The Narie that Won the Derby*, nods to Bernard’s birthplace at Caherina in Strand Road, Tralee, in 1887.

“I want to bring Bernard home for the book launch. To bring his story back to where it all started, and present it to people who might not know about him. That is the best tribute I can give him. Bernard is a ‘Narie’ for sure, which is why the Kerins O’Rahilly’s GAA Club is the appropriate venue. It’s his spiritual home as he was born only a few yards from the clubhouse,” Stephen explained.

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Bernard Dillon's journey from 1901 to 1911 was anything but smooth as he grappled with celebrity and adversity. Sadly, his downfall included domestic abuse and the mistreatment of his wife, the famous music hall artist Marie Lloyd.

Bernard and Marie met in 1905 and began a turbulent relationship. They were Edwardian England's first celebrity couple, with Marie eighteen years older than Bernard. However, notoriety came at a cost. Bernard's downfall began when he lost his jockey's licence in 1913 over gambling allegations, marking the end of his reputation as a superstar.

Stephen believes it was essential to write Bernard's story due to the fragmented way it exists in the archives. With Marie Lloyd being the more famous personality, information about Bernard's life is usually viewed through the lens of Marie's biographers rather than Bernard's perspective.

"He wrote his memoir in 1922 which has largely been ignored until now. While he does not explain the more violent side to his personality in the memoir, I was able to solve this by reading through many court sittings he appeared before," Stephen said.

"Even though the court charges are upsetting to read, my aim is to show Bernard's opposing sides – not just him as a famous jockey. There are examples of closeness and intimacy between the couple that have never been written about before now," he added.

"There is a chapter about Bernard and Marie being incarcerated at Ellis Island in 1913 because they were unmarried. It's staggering to imagine two of the most famous people in Edwardian England being detained with hundreds of immigrants. "They were the Posh and Becks of their time, for sure. As for Bernard's active service during WWI, a judge accused him of engaging in more violence in London than on the Western Front! Nothing was ever straightforward in Bernard's life from the time he left Tralee in short pants," Stephen explained.

Stephen sums up Bernard's life as 'totally unorthodox' and emphasizes that the book is about more than just horseracing.

"I wouldn't want anyone to get the impression the book is solely about horses. Significant though they are in Bernard's life, there is an undertone to the book that symbolizes a tragic love story between two people trying to deal with fame and infamy," he said.

"This is a global story that started in a quiet Kerry street and extended to far-off places like America, South Africa, and the Middle East. I just felt it was time for Bernard's story to be told in his own words. I think the book is fair to him and shows that no matter how successful we are in life, we are vulnerable to self-destruction," Stephen said.

The Life and Times of Bernard Dillon: The Narie that Won the Derby will be launched on June 6.

The book is priced at €15 and is available at www.buythebook.ie/bernarddillon.

Top image: By Leslie Ward – Published in Vanity Fair, 12 September 1906, as "Men of the Day" Number 1031. Public Domain and background By Hywel Williams, CC BY-SA 2.0

Building bridges across the Borough

31 May 2024



Epsom and Ewell Times welcomes the third Mayor to be appointed since we started. For the year 2024/2025 Councillor Steve Bridger (RA Stamford Ward) has the honour and burden of being the Borough's number one citizen. We wish him and his wife Carol, the Mayoress, a hard-working and enjoyable year. Here is our annual Mayoral interview.

Q. The main thing I want to discuss was charities, I see that you are championing 3 charities in your Mayoral year, could you expand upon why you chose these particular charities?

Mr. Mayor: I am supporting Epsom and Ewell Phab, Puffins and the Ruxley Foundation.

PHAB

We had a disabled son, Richard, who unfortunately was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy when he was 3 and sadly passed in 2018 aged 34. He and his brother Matthew both attended Phab and they thoroughly enjoyed the full integration and raising awareness of disability. This has made Matthew understand disability to become the person that he is by having time for everyone regardless of their position in life.

PUFFINS

Puffins helps disabled people swim and play games and unfortunately the equipment (hoists etc.) were not available in the Rainbow centre when Richard could have attended.

Ruxley Foundation

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During our married life my wife, Carol, and I came upon extreme financial hardship and we are fully aware of the issues and stress that this can create within a family situation and the Ruxley Foundation can at least assist in one area to alleviate some of this.

Q. Next question I wanted to ask was what are your priorities for your year in office?

Mayor: Raise awareness of the Borough and the importance of the selfless roles that numerous residents play in supporting all the charities and associations. Without them the world would be a different place.

Q. What do you think could be improved about the Borough?

Mayor: Whoever you talk to then there is a story of what can be improved and why. Only by listening to the residents in my role as Mayor do you hear of the real areas of concern. I will pass these back to the Officers and Committees to hopefully be able to action some of them.

Q. What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

Mayor: Meeting the volunteers and local small business owners and seeing how these can work together in creating a better environment for everyone and show what a great place Epsom & Ewell is to live.

Q. If you were just named your favourite sport's team's manager, who is the first player you would sign?

Mayor: I do not follow any sports, teams etc. as do not have time!

Q. What hobbies of yours might suffer during your busy Mayoral year?

Mayor: All of them as I put my energy and time into the Mayoral role! – they are DIY, programming, designing web sites, electronics and recycling old items into something useable around the house and to help others. I will miss being part of the Epsom Repair Cafe which I attend every 3rd Saturday each month.

Q. Any other particular message to our readership?

Mayor: I hope that I can live up to and exceed their expectations in my role. I will be pleased if people just come up to me for a chat, I am an ordinary person and have been extremely fortunate to have been offered this position and for that I can thank the residents for showing their trust in the fact that I have shown that I am proud of where I live and will assist wherever and whenever I am able to – I am usually around most days in Epsom unless at an organised event, working at home or meeting!

Please support the many events that my charities have put together and to remember that all monies raised will be donated to charities within the borough. "Local Charities for Local People."

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6 out of 11 Conservative MPs leaving Surrey

31 May 2024



Michael Gove MP for Surrey Heath has brought the total Conservative MP retirees in Surrey to **SIX** out of the **ELEVEN** all present Conservative held **Surrey** constituencies.

On 5th February **Kwasi Kwarteng** the Conservative MP for Spelthorne announced he will not stand at the upcoming General Election.

With Paul Beresford MP for Mole Valley, Dominic Raab MP for Esher and Walton, Crispin Blunt MP for Reigate and Banstead and our own **Chris Grayling** MP for **Epsom and Ewell**, all having confirmed they are not going to run, this leaves 5 Surrey Conservative MPs still standing.

One can expect Jeremy Hunt MP for South-West Surrey, who serves in the Cabinet, to seek re-election. Jonathan Lord MP for Woking, Ben Spencer MP for Runnymede and Weybridge, Angela Richardson MP for Guildford and Claire Coutinho MP for East Surrey are assumed to be still up for the fight.

Epsom and Ewell Conservatives have already put in place their new prospective Parliamentary Candidate, **Mhairi Fraser**, an anti-corruption lawyer.

She will be challenged by **Helen Maguire** of the Liberal Democrats, **Gina Miller** of the True and Fair Party and **Steve Mckenna** of the Green Party and **Mark Todd** for Labour. It is understood a Reform Party candidate will stand but despite asking one of the Party's street canvassers to get in touch with Epsom and Ewell Times, we have heard nothing to confirm.

Related Reports:

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Surrey’s Tory MPs exiting the County

Conservatives adopt new contender for Parliament

Grayling not to contest a seventh election

Esher & Walton up for GRaabs

Surrey’s longest sitting MP to stand-down

Every dog must have their day care centre

31 May 2024



A dog day care centre ‘vital for the community’ has been approved for retrospective planning permission despite officers recommending it for refusal. The application was judged by officers as inappropriate development as it would fail to preserve the openness of the Green Belt which prevents urban sprawl.

Duncan’s Doggy Daycare, on Pointers Road in Cobham, was granted retrospective planning permission by a unanimous vote from Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) on Wednesday night (May 22). Cheers erupted from the gallery from Duncan’s family, friends and customers as the decision was confirmed, marking the end of an almost five year battle and three planning permission attempts.

Operating on the site since 2012, the centre is a family-run business which caters for approximately 120 dogs daily (licensed for up to 150 dogs). Employing 20 full and part time members of staff, the centre runs 24 hours a day and 360 days a year. Rather than renting a field like other dog day care centres, Duncan owns the land and facilities his business is built upon.

In a supporting statement to EBC, owner of the centre, Duncan MacBryde said planning approval is “critical”. He added his family’s “entire livelihoods are hinged on this planning decision” as they would be left without a home or income.

In the recommendation for denial, planning officials determined that fencing, exercise pens and the activity at the day care from dogs, staff and vehicles amounted to harm to the open Green Belt.

Chairing the meeting, Cllr Andrew Burley (Conservative/ Oxshott and Stoke D’Abernon) said there were a “raft of special circumstances” which could outweigh harm to the Green Belt. He commented on the economic benefit the business provided as well as the social service the popular day care was providing.

Speaking to the committee, the applicant’s representative Hugh Sowerby, said that Duncan had “done everything possible whilst maintaining a viable business” since the 2019 application. This included halving the size of the site, taking away two exercise pens, removing five unlawful buildings, removing all dog paraphernalia, and reprofiling and replanting part of the site.

Cllr Alistair Mann (Conservative/Cobham) said he was “struggling to find a better location” than on the site. He reasoned: “if this [business] does not exist here it will exist somewhere else […] if it doesn’t exist on Green Belt, it will exist on Brownfield.” Moving the dog centre to Brownfield sites would prevent building “needed” houses.

The application marks the company’s third attempt for retrospective planning approval. Differences between the 2024 application and the 2023 refusal are that two containers, wooden pen structures and associated waste have all now been removed from the site.

The company has also reduced the site from 1.32 hectares to 0.6, as well as decreasing the number of pens from three to two. Officers acknowledged the impact had been reduced since the last proposal but it would still cause harm and restrict openness

Over 90 letters of support have been submitted to Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC), detailing why it should support a local business which is an “asset to the community”. No objections were received from the public, Surrey Wildlife Trust or Natural England.

Faithful customers of up to 10 years have praised the professionalism and care the company provides for their pets. Ms Tsvetanova said the dog daycare centre has “changed her [daily] life” and her dogs are so excited to come back to the centre.

Mrs Crosse said it would be “absolutely devastating” to her and her family if Duncan’s doggy daycare was no longer allowed to operate. Others commented that they may have to give up their pets if they could not find care for them.

One small business owner said the centre enables her to generate local income for Elmbridge. Another resident, Mrs Sheehan, said: “Duncans Dog Co provides a vital service to local working people to enable us to combine a hybrid working

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and dog ownership lifestyle…enabling [her] to go back to work and contribute to a wider society."

Not only local residents, but patrons from South West London have also commented to support the application. Some expressed they "cannot do their job" without the daycare centre as it allows them to work full-time in central London.

Grayling bids farewell….

31 May 2024



With the date of the General Election confirmed to be the 4th of July 2024 Epsom and Ewell's Member of Parliament since 7th June 2001, **Chris Grayling**, who is not standing for Parliament this time, writes to his constituents.

Dear constituent

As you will know, the Prime Minister has called a general election for 4th July. All Parliamentary activity is now ceasing and there will be no new debates or Parliamentary motions before the election.

I am not standing for re-election and so cease to be an MP when Parliament is dissolved on 29th May. I will, though, remain responsible for urgent constituency case work in Epsom and Ewell until polling day and until my successor is elected.

As the campaign has now started, I will no longer be responding to emails about party or policy issues. However if you have an urgent personal problem which requires my help during the campaign period, please feel free to raise it with me at chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk, which will remain operational until polling day.

Once Parliament has been dissolved my constituency data records will be destroyed, as is required legally. If you contact me for help with an urgent matter please let me know at the same time if you are happy for your issue and data to be passed on to my successor if the your case is still outstanding at the time of the election.

It has been a great honour to represent this constituency, and I send my good wishes to everyone locally for the future.

With best wishes

Chris Grayling

Out of the starting gates in Epsom and Ewell's political Derby

31 May 2024



Today British Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** announced a General Election will take place on July 4th.

Epsom and Ewell Times asked all the known candidates for their reaction to the news:

Mhairi Fraser, standing for the **Conservative Party** responded: "Epsom has been my family home for almost twenty years. The day after the election, it still will be. I have lived here, I have worked here, I have commuted from here; I have a personal interest in the success of Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead, and I know what it takes to deliver that

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success.

From protecting the Green Belt, to tackling crime by securing a more visible police presence, to regenerating our high streets, to improving our transport links – I have a plan, and I have the commitment to deliver on it. And throughout it all, I promise to run a clean campaign, as I have from day one. I have built my career over the last decade as an anti-corruption lawyer, and I will bring the same integrity to our politics. That is the first of many promises I will make to you, but not the last I will deliver on."

Helen Maguire PPC for the **Liberal Democrats** said: "Hard-working families in Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead, and Leatherhead are sick of the same old unfair and divisive two-party politics which is currently tearing our nation apart. They are looking for real change and a positive future, which I am committed to working to bring. Our community have had enough of this Conservative government refusing to help them through the cost-of-living crisis, whilst also allowing our local NHS hospital and local schools to crumble, and sewage to be poured into our rivers.

This Conservative government is out of touch and out of time, and this announcement is long overdue. I am honoured to be fighting on behalf of my local community to rid Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead of the Conservatives, who have taken us for granted for years. In Epsom & Ewell, it's a clear choice between a fair deal with the Liberal Democrats or more chaos with the conservatives. Enough is enough, this community needs change now."

Gina Miller, leader of the **True & Fair Party**, said: "The decision to call a general election on 4th July is a concession to the inevitable, acknowledging that the time has come to face the electorate's scrutiny. This summer, we are casting our votes to end this dismal chapter of our nation's history and begin a new era with leaders who truly represent us. As I stand for election in Epsom and Ewell, I am ready to bring the voices of our community to the forefront and demanding a government that prioritises the wellbeing of its people above all else."

Mark Todd, Chair of the **Labour Party** (a Labour candidate is yet to be confirmed) said: "At last, the country has got what it wants. Now it's time to choose between more decline under the Tories or a greener, brighter future with Labour. Your local Labour party is here to serve you and we promise that if our candidate is elected they will serve the community with all their heart. They'll be open, accessible and always try to help."

Stephen McKenna of the **Green Party** said: "Like the vast majority of the population I am delighted that the official end date of this Conservative Government has been announced!

Greens everywhere are hoping for a transformation of national politics in this election, a turning point which will resolve the cost of living crisis, introduce innovative new policies for the environment, for a new greener economy, for net zero retrofitting of our homes and a programme of new social housing as well as better public services. This is a time for real change in our society."

In the run up to the election the Epsom and Ewell Times will be interviewing the candidates and staging hustings.

Doubtful Henry VIII would have permitted

31 May 2024



The decades-long planning battle to build almost 100 homes and a hotel opposite Hampton Court Palace will soon be decided with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport set to rule on the matter once and for all.

The government department is calling for new information and evidence over proposals from Network Rail Infrastructure and Alexpo to build 97 homes and an 84-bed hotel, together with shops and new access space around Hampton Court station in East Molesey.

The former Jolly Boatman site lies next to the River Thames and overlooks the palace. Elmbridge Borough Council originally rejected the plans but their decision was later overturned on appeal.

The original application received more than 1,800 objections and 131 letters of support and was refused due to "excessive height and bulk" and "harm to numerous heritage assets".

Hampton Court Rescue Campaign (HCRC) argued it would spoil views across the river of Hampton Court Palace.

It is now in the hands of the Secretary of State because the law states developments within half a mile of the historic home of King Henry must be approved by the senior minister.

A spokesperson for HCRC wrote: "For over 100 years, Hampton Court Palace has benefited from the unique protection of the Act, which has successfully restricted developments over 50 ft in height in the environs of the Palace.

"In the Council's Development Brief for the site there is a requirement that any scheme must categorically be below 50 feet."

Permission was granted after the planning inspector ruled it would fit with the surroundings while the hotel, retail units

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and riverside restaurant would make life better for visitors.

Furthermore, the inspector said the plans would support the rest of the town.

People using the station, the inspector added, would have improved access to the bridge.

They said: “Taken together, these features of the design would result in a place that would be accessible and easy to move around.”

On height, the inspector said: “The distinctive treatment of the upper level, together with the depth and width of the podium gardens, would break up the mass of the built form.

“Whilst they would clearly be seen as part of a larger scheme, I do not think that they would be perceived as a single mass, either in views from the park or in longer views from the north bank of the River Thames.”

They added:”Some parties sought to criticise the design on the basis that it would not be sufficiently eye-catching or innovative.

“I agree that this is not a design that seeks to make an assertive architectural statement. However, in this case I do not regard that as a negative.

“I consider that the design would result in a calm, well-ordered scheme with sufficient presence to hold its own in the street scene.”

The consultation includes an open text box for people’s views and space to attach documents and is available via the department’s website or by searching Hampton Court consultation.

Image: Jolly Boatman development viewed from across River Thames. Credit Alexpo. Henry VIII clipart cactus cowboy

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Not loving it in Cobham

31 May 2024



A proposed new McDonald’s is “the last thing Surrey needs”; that’s according to residents living near the proposed site.

The fast-food giant has published plans to takeover the former Loch Fyne restaurant in Portsmouth Road, Cobham, but some people living nearby are not loving it – and want it turned into a community hub instead.

The vacant Locally Listed Building has fallen into a state of disrepair with McDonald’s saying a Cobham branch would “bring it back into active use as a restaurant to ensure its long-term viability.”

While the village of Cobham was recently named one of the most affluent communities in Surrey, residents have said that the Northfield Estate, where the restaurant is proposed, is one the lowest socio-economic area in the county.

Residents said they were “concerned” over the impact a fast food restaurant could have on people’s social, mental and emotional wellbeing – and have started a petition calling for a rethink.

“The area needs a community hub, promoting social, mental and emotional wellbeing for residents, McDonald’s is the direct contrast of that,” the petition read, adding ‘ the Northfield Estate is the lowest socio economic demographic in Cobham, and one of the lowest in Surrey.” The petition pointed to research which highlights a strong link between obesity and deprivation.

Burger giant has said it has received relatively balanced feedback with people welcoming new job opportunities

Other residents concerns include the site’s proximity to schools and the number of students who would be passing it on a daily basis. Many of the 391 signatories fear the restaurant, which would have space for 60 diners and car parking for 33 vehicles, would have on a significant impact on what was already a traffic hotspot.

The Portsmouth Road site is near the roundabout and Sainsbury’s petrol station, shortly before the road leads on to the A3. The petition says: “The Painshill roundabout is already extremely busy, with queues forming regularly to enter or leave Cobham; additionally it can be challenging to enter or leave the petrol station.”

One person wrote: “The last thing Surrey needs is another McDonald’s.” Another added: “I feel a McDonald’s would be detrimental to the village of Cobham.”

Plans for the site, which would be the group’s 15th branch in the county, are still in consultation stage ahead of being submitted to Elmbridge Borough Council for consideration.

McDonald’s has said it would “sensitively restore” the disused site and create “at least 120 new jobs”. The Cobham

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branch would also “address an identified demand”. A spokesperson for McDonald’s said: “We are encouraged that nearly 500 people have engaged with our consultation so far for a new McDonald’s in Cobham.

“To date, we have received relatively balanced feedback in response to the proposals, with local people welcoming the creation of new job opportunities, the diversified food choice in Cobham and the sensitive restoration of the vacant and under-utilised site.”

Image: harry_nl CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 DEED

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