

# Kinsella Hat trick The Highlight

6 December 2022



Sutton & Epsom RFC Women 39 - Medway Women 7 - Saturday 3rd December - The Sutton & Epsom Women's XV have enjoyed much success in recent years. The impressive performances have continued this season in Championship South East 2 in the third tier of the rugby pyramid. They started the day in second place in the table snapping at the heels of Battersea Ironsides. The Black & Whites were unbeaten at home whilst their opponents, Medway, in contrast had only recorded two wins this season. The match went according to form with Sutton winning in style by 39-7.

On a cold afternoon under lights at Rugby Lane Medway kicked off with S&E playing towards the Cabbage Page. The hosts went in search of the opening score to stamp their authority on proceedings. Stern defence and S&E errors thwarted the early promising opportunities. After 10 minutes a huge clearance by Jayne Meadows was complimented by a superb kick-chase. Sutton turned over the ball and Jayne Meadows glided threw a gap and sauntered home to open the scoring. Though the experienced fly half failed to convert her own try the hosts were leading 5-0. The next try was a sensational solo score by Aegean Leech that demonstrated all the qualities required for a top class back. With great vision she cut back inside, running with balance and speed she evaded numerous tacklers to score. Jayne Meadows added the extras for a 12-0 lead.

As the first quarter was ending Jayne Meadows sublime cross-field kick had the defence scrambling and the ravenous Sutton chasers forced the turnover. The initial opportunity was wasted but this was just a temporary stay of execution. A burst from Jo Evans broke the line and Rachel Kinsella, left with plenty to do, finished superbly in the corner despite a thunderous covering tackle. The touchline conversion fell short as the Surrey women stretched their lead to 17-0. The visitors stormed back with a surging run from full back Katie Young. Encouraged by this the forwards took over and pressed hard to open the Medway account. Prop Hannah Lee powered her way over from close-range for a well-deserved try. Jemma Thrupp's sweetly struck conversion bisected the uprights to reduce the deficit to 7-17.

As the interval approached winger Lucy Hoad was only denied a try by a fine cover tackle. The ball was swung back to the opposite side of the pitch and Jo Evans perfect pass put away by Rachel Kinsella for her second try of the afternoon. Jo Evans, taking over the kicking duties, failed to add to the 22-7 score. However, Sutton had suffered a significant loss in personnel as Jayne Meadows was forced to retire with a hamstring injury. The fly half had oozed class all game, orchestrating the attack with prodigious territorial kicking, thoughtful distribution and the opening try. S&E reshuffled the deck as Jo Evans moved up from 15 to 10 and replacement Abby Wynne slotted in at full back. In the dying moments of the first period Lucy Hoad was again thwarted by a tremendous tackle and soon after the referee blew for half time with Sutton & Epsom leading 22-7.

Medway needed to score early in the second period to try to turn the tide. They responded with great spirit and were soon pressing on the Sutton line. The Black & White defence was up to the challenge and having cleared the danger introduced Emily Grainger and Isabelle Keith off the bench to replace Rachel Balcombe and Natalie McCall. The Priestfields outfit were enjoying their best passage of play as they encamped in the host's half but try as they might they could not add to their score. Indeed it was the Rugby Lane team that were next to cross the whitewash. A dominant scrummage provided the platform to spin it wide. Rachel Kinsella was denied her third score but was able to offload to Aegean Leech for the easiest of tries. Jo Evans added the conversion for a 29-7 lead.

The game entered the final quarter with the team from Rochester determined to add to their solitary try whilst Sutton hoped to exploit any gaps that might appear. The game swung from end to end as a try-saving tackle Abby Wynne denied a deserved score for the visitors. Moments later Rachel Kinsella was again thwarted by Katie Youngs' tackle.

Perhaps it was fitting that the best team try of the afternoon concluded with Rachel Kinsella completing her hat trick. A clean line out ball was advanced by the forwards, the ball was released to the backs and a perfect pass by Aegean Leech was gathered by the flying winger who finished with aplomb. Sutton & Epsom missed the conversion but had stretched their lead to 34-7. Perhaps the frustration of being denied the additional score that their efforts warranted led to a bit of frustration in the Medway ranks. The Kent team conceded a penalty and one of their number was deemed too loquacious for the referee's tastes and they were marched back an additional 10 metres. With five minutes left of the clock the hosts added a seventh and final try. It was the turn of replacement Abby Wynne to demonstrate agile footwork to weave her way to the line to make it 39-7. Though there were no additional scores the visitors showed great spirit in trying to add to their account.

Nobody watching would have begrudged them a try as their second half performance and effort deserved more than they got. The referee blew the final whistle and Sutton & Epsom had maintained the pressure on the Battersea Ironsides who also had an impressive win at Canterbury, 36-15.

The Black & Whites thoroughly deserved their win. It was an excellent performance from all of the squad. The front row triumvirate of Jones, Forsyth and Styan maintained the solid platform from the scrummage. The back five provided a constant stream of quick ball for the back division. Sutton have considerable pace in the three-quarters with Zoe Smith spreading it wide to the creative hub in the centres Olivia Lambe and Aegean Leech. Wingers Rachel Kinsella and Lucy Hoad got the ball with time and space and on this occasion it was the former who took the glory with a tremendous trio of tries. In addition Jo Evans coming into the line from full back is another potent weapon. Medway fought hard to the bitter

end and were competitive from the first to the last minute with the pack providing territory and possession but they could not convert pressure into points.

#### Sutton & Epsom

Jo Evans, Lucy Hoad, Aegean Leech, Olivia Lambe, Rachel Kinsella, Jayne Meadows, Zoe Smith, Tia Jones, Harriet Forsyth, Caroline Styan, Alex Parker, Rachel Balcombe, Alice Clarke, Bernadette Rees & Natalie McCall.

Replacements: (all used) Emily Grainger, Isabelle Keith & Abby Wynne.

#### Medway

Katie Young, Marisa Gould, Alisha Coulson, Naomi Quinn, Aimee Haslam, Jemma Thripp, Emily Stalley, Hannah Lee, Zoe Gardiner, Gemma Duncan, Alex Davis, Caroline Jordan, Anna Saunders, Chloe Sedge & Corinna Griffiths.

#### Replacements

Michelle Darby, Ann Robertson & Ellie Warren.

## Sutton and Epsom RFC denied at the death

6 December 2022



BANBURY 12 SUTTON & EPSOM RFC 12 - Saturday 3rd December - saw the start of the reverse fixtures and for both clubs, who are struggling at the bottom of the table, it was a vital encounter. The occasion was shrouded in sadness for Sutton due to the most unexpected and tragic passing of their President during the week. Robert Knight was a magnificent ambassador for the club, an ever-present supporter not only at home but also away and, above all else, a wonderful man and excellent friend to all who knew him. He will be much missed.

The hard fought contest, before a large crowd swelled by the Christmas lunch and the importance of the match, ended honours even, 12-12. S&E gave a debut to Lawrence Elliott at 15 and Brad Meeson had his first outing this campaign since his recent nuptials. On a cold but sunny afternoon on a heavy pitch Jamie See set the game in motion following the minute's silence. The hosts included in their ranks Soane Tonga'uiha, the 40 year-old former Tongan and Northampton prop, who made a predictable impact in the set scrum. With the Black & White pack shunted into reverse and conceding a penalty the early advantage was with the hosts. Indeed they opened the scoring after 10 minutes with an impressive catch and drive as prop James Leonardi was ushered over the line. Scrum half Ed Phillips missed the conversion but Banbury led 5-0.

Sutton and Epsom's riposte was immediate as they stormed into the Oxfordshire team's 22. The ball was spun wide and Angus Findlay passed to Brad Meeson who tried to squeeze in at the corner. The despair was short-lived as the whistle blew and the referee brought it back for an earlier penalty for the visitors. Sadly, Sam Hurley slipped on his approach and the penalty struck the upright. Kyren Ghumra, whose arrival had been hindered by car troubles, was brought onto the wing to replace Angus Findlay. The Black & Whites, with Rob Hegarty and George Drye carrying with great effect, pressed hard to get on the scoreboard.

Another back move concluded with debutant Elliott's grubber rolling into touch by the try-line flag. Though the Bulls cleared their lines Sutton's next attack was successful. A line break by George Drye followed by a floated pass found Brad Meeson who scored in the corner. Sam Hurley's immaculate touchline conversion meant S&E now enjoyed a narrow 7-5 lead. The Bulls went for an immediate response and it came through their sizeable pack and another line out.

As the home crowd urged their pack ever onwards from halfway they were awarded a penalty. The ball went wide and twice Ben Tame's thunderous tackles stopped the hosts. The half ended with S&E in the ascendancy as Kyren Ghumra was twice close to glory. The first time an inside pass from scrum half Austin Bell was adjudged to be forward as the winger was homing in on a try. The second was the final play of the first period as the ball went down the line the last pass went awry and ended in touch rather than being touched down.

The referee concluded the first half with the visitors enjoying a slender 7-5 advantage. The game continued with an instant reminder of the powerful pack of the hosts. Driving Sutton off their own put in on the S&E's 22 they unwisely opted for the boot and did not benefit from the advantageous position. In contrast Sutton threw away three points when under the posts and 5 metres from the Banbury line. The Black & Whites were awarded a penalty that was reversed for an off-the-ball infringement after the whistle.

The Bulls came close to rubbing salt into the wound with an interception but the referee called play back denying an almost certain try. As the heavy home pack tired on the claggy surface space began to appear that S&E looked to exploit. The half back combination of Bell and See both enjoyed a couple of stunning breaks. It was from one of scrum half Bell's bursts that evergreen Sam Hurley broke into the 22. Will Lloyd exploited the blind side and supplied a perfectly timed pass for James Caddy who finished with style with his expertly angled run to the line. Though the conversion drifted wide Sutton led 12-5 with 15 minutes to play.



The visitors pressed for another score to create a cushion that would mean Banbury would need to score twice. Jamie See's burst with the supporting James Caddy put the Black & Whites in prime position. But all came to nought after winning their scrum ball and a couple of phases from the forwards they lost control of the ball with the line at their mercy. Then the Bulls were given a lifeline with a penalty near halfway. A superb kick spiralled towards the corner but Lady Luck smiled upon the visitors as it crossed the touchline in the in-goal area resulting in a 22 drop out. However, the Oxfordshire men soon had their hands on the ball once more and forced a line out 20 metres from the try-line.

Another perfect catch and controlled drive saw the Bodicote boys roll relentlessly ever onwards. The forwards were stopped on the line but in an instant James Miller was presented with the ball and he supplied the finishing touches. Ed Phillips held his nerve to add the extras to level the score at 12-12 as the game entered time added on.

There was enough time for a few anxious moments but it ended honours even. A result that neither side wanted but one that favoured the hosts as S&E stayed in the bottom two. Banbury enjoyed a significant advantage at the set scrum for a substantial period of the game and their two tries came from formidable forward work with catch and drives.

On reflection one might have expected them to have carved out more opportunities to have added to their account. Despite struggling for a solid platform to attack, Sutton & Epsom created enough chances to have won the game but faltered at the crucial moments. For the visitors the back row trio of Tame, Hegarty and Caddy were superb. Austin Bell had arguably his best game at 9 whilst Jamie See rolled back the years with his breaks from 10 and with a promising debut from Lawrence Elliott there were many positives for S&E if not enough points taken from this encounter.

The action returns to Rugby Lane next Saturday when Sutton & Epsom host Camberley RFC for the first time since September 2012. When the clubs met in September this year at Watchetts Recreation Ground the hosts won 43-21 with Josua Lewan scoring a first half hat trick. The visitors will be keen for a repeat as they are in second place in the table in hot pursuit of leaders Wimbledon. The match kicks off at 2pm.

Sutton & Epsom: Lawrence Elliott, Angus Findlay, Stefan Cooksammy, Brad Meeson, Sam Hurley, Jamie See, Austin Bell, Tom Boaden, Chris Farrell, Will Lloyd, George Drye, Josh Glanville, Ben Tame, Rob Hegarty & James Caddy. Replacements: (all used) George London, Jack Howes & Kyren Ghumra.:

Banbury: Thomas Gray, Alex Garbett, Quinten Blythe, Matt Goode, Jack Anderson, James Miller, Ed Phillips, James Leonardi, Ian Isham, Soane Tonga'uiha, Louis Tooth, Jacob Turner, James Hibbert, George Ding, Callum Horne. Replacements: (all used) Peter Boulton, Alex Nicholls and Dan Kirwin.

## Are you listening?

6 December 2022



**Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper**, established in 1974, give three cheers for long-serving Volunteers! 'In recognition of long service and invaluable contribution to volunteering for the Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper and the visually impaired community within the Borough of Epsom & Ewell.'

Time flies when you are enjoying what you do in life and it has certainly flown, say many of the wonderful people who have volunteered their services to help produce the Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper for a decade or more - some of them for up to an incredible 25 years!

On Thursday 1st December EETN's Chairman **Judy** was delighted to welcome the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** and the Mayoress, Mrs. Mary Woodbridge, to Bradbury Lodge in the grounds of **Swail House**, for a very special Long Service Award Presentation, organised by Volunteers including News Editors **Tricia** and **Julie** and EETN Office Manager Heather. "We are giving long overdue recognition to the fifteen volunteers who have been committed to this special charity for ten years or more," Judy began. "Two of those wonderful people, Gabrielle and Heather, have been with us for over 21 years and Penny has given 25 years of service."

Judy raised much laughter when she explained that in the early days of EETN, which started in 1974, cassette recordings were made in a corridor outside a kitchen in Epsom's Swail House. One of the long-serving Volunteers, she said, still remembered the smell of cabbage as she was recording. "The recording 'venues' changed several times over the years, but in 1997 our current bespoke studio here at Swail House was opened - and here we are 2341 issues of EETN later," she said.

In a brief resume of how the Talking Newspaper operates, Judy explained that many skill sets were required to deliver a quality service to the Listeners. These, she said, included Sound Recordists, News, Magazine and Supplement Editors, Readers with clear voices, the all-important Backroom Team - and our essential Social Media Manager who spreads the word so effectively about our fantastic service. "Without the whole team of Volunteers, EETN would not exist. Everyone plays an integral role in delivering this Free service to visually impaired people."

Among the invited guests and volunteers were **Robert Lahai**, Swail House Manager, who organised the room for the presentation, **Eamonn McNamee**, Manager for Central Surrey Voluntary Action, who kindly read the citations and **Serena Powis**, from EEBC Community and Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer.

The Mayor, Councillor Clive Woodbridge welcomed hearing the background history of EETN, saying “The fact that the 15 volunteers we have honoured today have amassed a staggering total of over 200 years of volunteering is truly humbling. I am tremendously honoured to be the President of the organisation, continuing a tradition going back to 1991.”

After listening to the citations, which gave a brief insight into the role each volunteer had played over the years, the Mayor expressed his thanks, saying ‘We are truly blessed to have so many selfless, good people who give up their time freely in the community.’

Photos with the Mayor marked the occasion as certificates were presented, but the wonderful group shot perfectly captured the warmth and sincerity of the team with their Chairman Judy, herself visually impaired, and husband Amer. Amer’s vital contribution to EETN was also warmly recognised for the invaluable support he has given Judy in her role as Chairman for the last 11 years.

With formalities successfully completed, Judy then invited all the guests and Volunteers to enjoy some light refreshments while having a catch-up with each other and a jolly get-together.

The Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper is a free, regular audio service presenting local news, magazine articles and general features which are recorded and distributed on a memory stick to local residents who are blind, visually impaired or have difficulty reading smaller text.

For more information about this free service visit: <https://eetn.org.uk>

To contact EETN about becoming a Listener or a Volunteer email [admin@eetn.org.uk](mailto:admin@eetn.org.uk)

Or call: 01372 721519 and leave a message with your name and phone number.

**Jan Collier**

Ed: In accordance with “For the community, by the community”, Epsom and Ewell Times shares its content for free with EETN.

## Mole Patrol captures pollution

6 December 2022



River Wey and River Mole fail to meet acceptable criteria for four out of five pollutants monitored in new report.

In one of the largest national people-powered scientific studies of its kind six different pollutants – nitrate, nitrite, phosphate, total coliform, pH, heavy metals – have been monitored across 48 sites in England and Scotland. At a national level, **all sites but one (98%) failed to meet acceptable criteria for at least one of five pollutants monitored, while over half, 52%, of sites failed on three or more parameters**, according to Planet Patrol’s *What Lies Beneath Report 2022*.

Image: River Mole near Box Hill Dorking. Credit: Johan J.Ingles-Le Nobel

**River Wey near Sutton Green and River Mole near Dorking** were amongst the worst for water quality, both failing to meet acceptable levels of nitrate, phosphate, total coliform and pH levels. River Dart in Devon is the only site tested to pass across five parameters.

The report highlights the devastating outlook of the state of UK waterways and urgently warns the Government and polluting industries to take transformative action to reverse the destruction of our freshwater environments.

The *What Lies Beneath Report 2022* is one of the biggest datasets yet, with 57 citizen volunteers having conducted 1,229 water quality readings and 1,178 metal concentration readings.

Additional insights from the report include:

- Nearly half, 46%, of sites showed unacceptable levels of nitrates
- 69% of sites failed to meet acceptable concentration of phosphate
- Over 90% of sites tested positive for total coliform bacteria
- **Over a quarter, 26%, of sites failed to meet recommended PH range due to high levels of acidity.**

The causes of these pollutants are many and go beyond sewage contamination. From growing urban development to

farming practices, increased diversity of chemicals and pharmaceuticals used by society, and pollution pressure from transport, addressing the UK's invisible water quality crisis needs a whole systems approach.

The launch of this report follows the latest data from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which shows that no progress has been made on a key water pollution pledge made four years ago to ensure that 75% of rivers and other bodies of water achieve a "good" ecological status by 2027. The figure remained at 16% in 2021, unchanged since 2017. In response to the Environment Agency's plans to 'amend' this target, Planet Patrol has launched a petition calling on the Rt Hon Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Thérèse Coffey, to reject plans to weaken the legislation.

**Lizzie Carr MBE, founder of Planet Patrol**, says: "Through our growing community of citizen scientists we've started to uncover what lies beneath to highlight a stark reality: the widespread, poor condition of our freshwater environments. The results have been disturbing and distressing but only by building evidence to illustrate the true scale and extent of a problem, can it be accurately understood, communicated and acted upon.

"We urge the Government to honour its pledge to ensure that 75% of rivers and other bodies of water achieve a good ecological status by 2027. This target is both a major driver of public and private investment into cleaning up our waterways and a vital tool to hold industries with permits to pollute - which include much more than just water companies - to account over water pollution."

As well as rejecting plans to amend this pledge, Planet Patrol, the environmental non-profit, is highlighting four other key policy recommendations:

- DEFRA to bring forward the enforcement date for the increase in Variable Monetary Penalties for polluting water companies to 1st February 2023
- DEFRA to strengthen the effectiveness of the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan (SODRP) - specifically, reduce the maximum achievement date on all SODRP targets to 2035 versus 2050, and prohibit water companies from increasing water bills to fund the critical infrastructure investment required
- The Environmental Agency to accelerate the speed at which citizen science is integrated into formal data collection activities for developing evidenced-based policies
- Use funds raised from the increase in Variable Monetary Penalties for polluting water companies to increase the criminal prosecution rates of those who damage water quality.

**Dr Thomas Stanton, a freshwater scientist from Loughborough University** who analysed the data, says: "UK waterways are vulnerable to a number of societal pressures, including pollution, water abstraction, and modifications to river courses. But they are also compromised by weak policy and legislation. Despite its political greenwashing, the environment continues to be an issue that the UK government does not take seriously. Nature is in crisis, but current efforts to fully understand the extent of this are shackled by politicians whose short-sighted priorities lie elsewhere, and who fail to recognise the significance of environmental action today for the lives of those who will outlive their political tenure."

**Read the full report here: <https://planetpatrol.co/water-quality-report/>**

## World Cup injury time knocks Epsom and Ewell out of local cup

6 December 2022



Dorking Wanderers B 2-1 Epsom & Ewell FC - Southern Combination League Division One Cup - Second Round - Saturday 3rd December 2022.

A controversial 97th minute winner from Ben Aubrey secured passage through to the Quarter-Final of the Division One Cup for Dorking Wanderers B and denied our boys the chance to repeat their run to the Final from last season.

I'm not sure what it is about these two teams, but they seem to bring out the worst in each other! Although a neutral might well have enjoyed this match; played at speed, full of commitment, heavy challenges and erratic refereeing, this was a frustrating encounter to witness as an Epsom supporter.

To me, it seemed like these teams always cancel each other out and this contest had very few real chances of note within the ninety minutes before the home side scored a late winner, that numerous sources told me was offside in the build up.

It was clear from the starting line up that our Management had chosen to give a few of our regulars some time off for this cup tie. Before this match three players had taken part in all of our previous twenty matches, yet none of them even took the field for this contest. Both Ryan Smith and Zach Powell missed their first starts of the season, with Powell not even on



the bench and Brad Peters also sat this one out with the subs. I had posed the question in my preview as to how important this match was, and the answer was clear, and understandably so. However, it was important for Camrun Zain who finally made his debut in goal after performing well for us in pre-season. He also became the first player in our club history to have a surname beginning with Z!

That said, there was still enough quality on the field to win this match. Josh Alder started ahead of Jamie Byatt, while Ben Bauchop, Oliver Thompson and Kevin Moreno-Gomez made their first starts for the club and all contributed well. We then got off to a fine start in the tenth minute when Jaevon Dyer's square ball in from the right was well dummied and Alder ran onto it and smashed the ball low past Joshua Wilson from twelve yards, although there was doubt about the goal for a few seconds as an old issue re-appeared.

Back in December 2018 we scored three goals in four matches where the ball had hit the diagonal stanchion supporting the post and bounced back into play. It had never happened before or since. Until now! At first it wasn't clear that the goal had been spotted by the referee or his Assistant, but thankfully common sense prevailed and the goal was given. Seriously though, who designs goals like this!

Anyway, Alder's goal against his former club had us in control and we continued to hold the balance of play as the half progressed. Bauchop's free kick was blocked before Alder went down in the area, only to then pick up a yellow card for simulation, which, judging by the lack of complaint from the players, appeared to be the right decision.

Alder's shot was saved easily enough by Wilson and Bauchop's next free kick was a couple of feet wide of the post. As we approached the half Alder got a toe to Dyer's ball in, but was at full stretch and was unable to direct it on target. In response the home side showed little except for a couple of long range strikes, one of which Zain had to palm away just before the break.

What we really needed in the second half was to retain a bit more control in the middle of the park, but gradually we found ourselves holding less of the possession and Dorking were level in the 55th minute after a harmless enough looking ball was played in to Mark Soares, who then lobbed the advancing Zain who watched the ball drop down and bounce up into the net for the equaliser.

The home side sent a free kick wide but we were soon back on the attack and just after the hour Alder was put through again. He cut back onto his right foot and sent a curling strike towards the far corner where Wilson made an excellent save at full stretch to tip the ball over. From the corner Dyer shot wide after the original delivery was punched clear and we then brought on Byatt and Athan Smith-Joseph in an attempt to force the win.

In reality though, neither were able to stamp their authority on proceedings and a succession of injuries and niggly fouls ensured that the contest would become broken up and lead to quite a few minutes being added on. And in the seventh minute of injury time with penalties looming, a crossfield ball over to the right wing was squared low into the six yard box where Aubrey was there to knock the delivery past Zain. There were protestations from our boys over the offside claim and the game ended with a lot of heated discussion between players and even Management as some from the home team had run on to the pitch after that late goal.

But it was too late to do anything about it and it is Dorking Wanderers B that now progress to a Quarter-Final at home to Arundel, while we still haven't won a competitive match at the new Meadowbank Stadium in six attempts. We will of course have another chance soon as we return here on 2nd January for a far more important League match.

Epsom & Ewell: Camrun Zain, Gideon Acheampong (c), Johnny "Sonic" Akoto, Nick Wilson, Aaron Bogle, Oliver Thompson, Jaevon Dyer, Ben Bauchop, Josh Alder, Gavin Quintyne, Kevin Moreno-Gomez

Subs: Athan Smith-Joseph for Quintyne (73), Jamie Byatt for Alder (73), Josh Owen for Bauchop (84)

## Fight fires in Surrey from home

6 December 2022



Marking the retirement of Surrey's first female firefighter the Fire and Rescue Service is recruiting firefighters who can respond from home.

**Paula Hartwell** joined Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in January 1993 as the services first female firefighter, and after 30 years she's hanging up her helmet.

Since joining the service as a firefighter at Chertsey Fire Station, Paula went on to become a Leading Firefighter, followed by a Watch Commander in fire stations as well as fire safety and prevention departments. She then became a Station Commander at Woking Fire Station. After a short time within the Operations Assurance Team followed by Community Intelligence, Paula returned to Woking to finish her career.

**Paula spoke of her career, she said:** “I have enjoyed being part of the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service team – helping the communities which we serve and every day trying to make a difference.

“It has been both challenging and rewarding, I have learned many skills over the years and have great memories. I have loved my career immensely and hope that many more women take on the role.

Since joining the service, Paula has also welcomed three daughters with her other half Tony.

**Dan Quin, Chief Fire Officer, said:** “What a fantastic legacy Paula leaves behind here in Surrey – our first female firefighter paving the way for many more females after her, showing fire and rescue as being a successful career option. I am privileged to have worked with Paula for over 20 years and I know she will be greatly missed. Thank you, Paula.”

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is currently recruiting on-call firefighters and Joint Fire Control operators. On-call firefighters respond via pager from their home or work. Joint Fire Control operators take emergency calls and mobilising for Surrey, West and East Sussex – the first person residents speak to in an emergency. Join a life-saving service and find out more by visiting [www.surreycc.gov.uk/firecareers](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/firecareers).

Surrey County Council News

## Low turnouts see political changes in Surrey

6 December 2022



The Liberal Democrats have taken two seats off the Conservatives in Surrey County Council by-elections. Winning by just 15 votes, a vote in the Sunbury Common and Ashford Common division took place on Wednesday November 30), with the Liberal Democrats beating four other candidates to be elected.

Harry Boparai got 735 votes, with the Conservative candidate Naz Islam in second place with 720 votes. The by-election was held following the death of Councillor Alison Todd, which was announced in September. With a turnout of 17.5 per cent, the votes for each party broke down as below:

Harry Boparai, Liberal Democrats 735 (elected)  
Naz Islam, Conservative 720  
Khalid Mustafa, Labour Party 383  
Rory O’Brien, Reform UK 144  
Helen Couchman Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition 63

Councillor Todd’s death following a terminal lung cancer diagnosis in 2021 was announced in September. Colleagues on the council described the county and former Spelthorne borough councillor as a “strong and determined” councillor who wanted to use her own experiences to “make the world a better place”.

In May 2021, Cllr Todd was elected for the Conservatives with 1,509 with the second place Liberal Democrat getting 610 votes.

The result represents a 17 per cent swing to the Lib Dems, with no Green or Independent candidates standing, as there was in the 2021 election.

The Liberal Democrats took another Conservative council seat in Surrey after a by-election on Waverley Borough Council.

Dave Busby won the Chiddingfold and Dunsfold by-election on Thursday (December 1) with 652 votes, with the second place candidate getting 297 votes.

The Conservative candidate for Chiddingfold and Dunsfold, Ian Mitchell, was suspended on Monday (November 28) and stood as an independent, though ballot papers had already been issued listing him as a Conservative. A spokesperson for the South West Surrey Conservatives said an investigation was pending regarding a social post “that could be considered to be an inappropriate use of social media”.

The association said in a statement: “Given this, we have suspended Mr Mitchell from the Conservative Association pending an investigation into his conduct that may potentially lead to disciplinary proceedings being taken.”

No Green candidate stood in the Waverley by-election, and the result represents a 43 per cent swing to the Lib Dems since the 2019 election.

The borough council's Lib Dem leader Cllr Paul Follows (Godalming Central and Ockford) said: "I am ecstatic by the result, further strengthening the progressive coalition at Waverley Borough Council that I have the honour of leading with the addition of a fantastic, local, and hard-working new councillor.

"This is also a huge win and swing in a part of our borough in which the Conservatives have long just assumed the vote was theirs."

The election took place following the death of Cllr John Gray, who died in September, having been a councillor since 2015.

The full results were as follows:

Dave Busby, Liberal Democrat: 652 (66.6 per cent) Elected

Ian Mitchell, Independent: 297 (30.3 per cent)

Rebecca Aitken, Labour 30 (3.1 per cent)

There are now 16 Liberal Democrat councillors on the county council, of a total of 81 seats.

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## Surrey schools energy hikes

6 December 2022



Surrey schools are being advised to plan for increases in gas prices of more than 129 per cent.

Along with this, council finance teams are telling schools to plan for a 73 per cent increase in electricity prices, according to a cabinet member on Surrey County Council.

Councillor Claire Curran (Conservative, Bookham and Fetcham West), the county council's cabinet member for education and learning, described the rises as "very significant increases".

At a meeting of the authority's cabinet on Tuesday (November 29), Cllr Curran said the school finance team had been working with schools on budget planning and sharing recommendations.

She said utilities generally accounted for around two per cent of a school's budget, while the largest part of their budget goes on staffing costs, adding: "Even though there's enormous pressure, it is for a relatively small amount of their budget."

Many schools are on annual fixed contracts, meaning they were likely protected from the immediate pressure of increasing prices, which Cllr Curran called "a comfort for some".

She told the meeting: "I don't think anybody or any organisation is immune from the pressures of gas and electricity costs."

She said the council was "comfortable" that schools were "not in immediate danger of runaway electricity or energy prices".

Cllr Curran also highlighted the pressures faced by the county's smaller schools, which had fewer pupils and were seeing falling birth rates in their areas.

She said schools in rural areas in particular, mostly concentrated in the south of Surrey, were under "very significant pressure" because of the way school funding is allocated on a per pupil basis.

There are 29 schools across the county with fewer than 90 pupils and 73 schools with less than one form of entry.

Cllr Curran said: "That just goes to show that when schools are funded on a per pupil basis we can understand why they're under pressure."

The Department for Education is increasing schools funding nationally by £1.5billion in 2023/24 with minimum (average) per pupil funding levels being increased from £4,265 per primary pupil to £4,405 and from £5,525 per secondary pupil to £5,715.

ENDS

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## Twisting out a little more for Xmas?

6 December 2022





Surrey children on free school meals will receive food vouchers over Christmas in what one councillor described as “an absolute lifeline” for some families.

The scheme, which will give families a £30 voucher per child, was confirmed by the council’s cabinet member for education and learning on Tuesday (November 29).

Councillor Clare Curran (Conservative, Bookham and Fetcham West) said the vouchers would be issued to children who were eligible for free school meals to be used over the holiday, and that the “wheels were already in motion” on the scheme.

She said: “I know they are an absolute lifeline for very many families.”

The vouchers can be spent in certain supermarkets, and with some conditions in place on what they can be spent on – covering food and other essential items only.

England footballer Marcus Rashford piled pressure on the government during the coronavirus pandemic, forcing a u-turn on the policy not to provide help for struggling families during the school holiday.

The authority’s cabinet meeting also heard about measures being taken to help residents with the cost of living crisis, including a directory sent out to residents to signpost support organisations and funding available.

Meeting documents said: “Whilst the majority of Surrey residents are not in crisis situations at the moment, many are beginning to make cutbacks.

“It is also important to note that there are some residents in crisis already before the full effects of inflation and the winter months are felt.”

Council statistics showed that more than 500 new clients had registered with Surrey Citizens Advice between April and June with more than 1,600 issues being raised particularly around benefits, debt, housing and foodbanks.

Particular groups in the county accounted for the increased demand, with 66 per cent of claimants identifying as having a disability or long-term health condition, and two-thirds of clients identifying as female.

Figures also showed a 300 per cent increase in demand at some foodbanks across Surrey.

Council leader Tim Oliver (Conservative, Weybridge) said the authority would continue to lobby government over energy prices and support for households after April, when the energy price guarantee ends.

Cllr Oliver said: “I hope that residents see what this council is doing, and see that we are genuinely trying to do whatever we can, in whatever way we can, to help support them through what I know will be a difficult period for many people.”  
ENDS

## Great expectations on Surrey’s tax?

6 December 2022



Surrey County Council’s leader says he has “no expectation at all” that council tax will be put up by the full amount allowed despite a £14.4million budget gap at the council.

Upper tier authorities, such as the county council, can increase council tax by up to five per cent without a referendum, since Jeremy Hunt’s autumn statement on November 17.

Presenting a draft budget for 2023/24 to his cabinet on Tuesday (November 29) Councillor Tim Oliver (Conservative, Weybridge) outlined that the council was required to produce a balanced budget each year, and that he was “confident” the gap could be closed before it came back to cabinet early next year.

The budget will then need to be signed off by full council in February, while all 11 districts and borough councils across the county will also confirm how much they expect to raise their part of council tax by as they approve their budgets.

The county council’s budget currently assumes a 1.99 per cent increase of the county council’s part of the council tax, less than the five per cent it could be increased by, made up of a three per cent raise plus a two per cent precept for adult social care.

Cllr Oliver said: “I have no expectation at all that we will need to increase by 5 per cent.”

He also said the budget would be dependent on the settlement payment given to councils by central government, due to be confirmed on December 21.

Speaking before the meeting he said that around 80 per cent of the council's revenue funding came from council tax, and that the authority was not "blessed with considerable sums of money from government".

As such Cllr Oliver did not think the draft budget would be "significantly impacted" by the settlement announced by central government, but did say the council may need to use one per cent of the possible raise for adult social care, which could take the total increase to 2.99 per cent.

Of a total budget of around £1billion, Cllr Oliver said in the meeting he was "confident" the council would have found a way to close the budget gap of £14.4m and said the authority was in a much better position than in 2018.

He said after two years of the coronavirus pandemic, a cost of living crisis and rising inflation the council was not in the "easiest of times" but had a strong financial base to work from.

He added; "It is fair to say that we haven't had the most consistent of approaches from central government over the last few months, so we are hoping that in that context, things will settle down."

The council's cabinet member for finance and resources, David Lewis (Conservative, Cobham), also highlighted a forecasted full year deficit of £24.5m from figures released from the halfway mark in September.

The overspend is made up of a £32.5m forecast overspend, offset by £8m of savings identified at the council.

Cllr Lewis told the meeting two areas of largest impact were around children's services, including a £15m overspend on home to school transport, and in adult social care.

The meeting agenda said: "The current level of projected overspend remains significant.

"It is imperative that this reduces before we reach the end of the year, otherwise there would be a material negative impact on the level of the council's reserves at a time when the level of external financial risk is extremely high."

*Image: Tim Oliver - credit Surrey Live*

## Any more trees please?

6 December 2022



**The Woodland Trust is urging schools and community groups across the south east of England to get their free tree-pack applications in quickly with just over a month left until the spring delivery closes.**

Applications for spring, for delivery in March 2023, are currently open, but only until 11 January.

The last round of the ever-popular free tree-packs scheme was the Woodland Trust's biggest-ever single send-out, with 4,625 organisations across the UK taking advantage of the scheme.

A total of 643 schools and community groups in London, Greater London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex took delivery of their trees from the end of October to 11 November.

**In the south east of England, 88,155 trees were sent out to 643 organisations:**

- 16,380 Trees to 168 organisations in London
- 9,690 trees to 87 organisations in Greater London
- 26,535 trees to 157 organisations Kent
- 14,070 trees to 101 organisations in Surrey
- 21,480 trees to 130 organisations in Sussex

The figures for the south east of England were part of a bumper autumn delivery which saw 740,970 saplings finding homes the length and breadth of the UK, bringing the annual total to a record-breaking 1.3m trees for 2022.

Woodland Trust senior project lead Vicki Baddeley said there is no time like the present to sign up and take advantage of the scheme.

"With Christmas looming and National Tree Week upon us, now really is a good time to get those applications in and ensure you don't miss out," she added.

"We still have lots of trees available but with schools breaking up before you know it, and the hectic holiday period around the corner, it makes sense to get organised nice and early and avoid a last-minute rush in early January.

"Planting trees is such a simple action, but the collective impact can make a huge difference. It's a great way for schoolchildren and community groups to learn about nature and the environment and, at the same time, embrace a

“Green Christmas”.

“Planting trees has so many benefits, from combatting the effects of climate change, helping support wildlife, to greening up local spaces and boosting well-being.

“The desire to plant trees is growing all the time and I fully expect demand to reflect that in the coming weeks, so I would advise any interested groups to apply sooner rather than later.

“The application process to secure your saplings is quite straightforward, just visit <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/> to get started.”

The Trust’s tree packs have been generously funded by lead partners: Sainsbury’s, Lloyds Bank, OVO Energy, Bank of Scotland and Sofology.

Baddeley added: “As ever, the support and generosity of our funders is invaluable and we simply couldn’t do this without them.

“The help each and every one of them provides is hugely appreciated and helps to ensure we can provide and deliver our saplings in such huge numbers.”

#### **The Woodland Trust’s autumn delivery:**

- England: 615,720 trees to 3,982 schools and community groups
- Scotland: 77,940 trees to 428 schools and community groups
- Wales: 47,310 trees to 215 schools and community groups

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

For more information please contact the Woodland Trust press office on 01476 602993, Owen Phillips on 07958 066 766, or email [media@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:media@woodlandtrust.org.uk) or [owenphillips@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:owenphillips@woodlandtrust.org.uk)

#### **The Woodland Trust**

The Woodland Trust is the largest woodland conservation charity in the UK with more than 500,000 supporters. It wants to see a UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.

The Trust has three key aims:

1. protect ancient woodland, which is rare, unique and irreplaceable
2. restoration of damaged ancient woodland, bringing precious pieces of our natural history back to life
3. establish native trees and woods with the aim of creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife

Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering approximately 29,000 hectares. Access to its woods is free so everyone can benefit from woods and trees.

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

#### **Free trees for schools and communities**

The Woodland Trust is giving away hundreds of thousands of trees to schools and communities to make sure everybody in the UK has the chance to plant a tree. To apply, or see terms and conditions, visit: [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/freetrees](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/freetrees)

#### **National Tree Week**

National Tree Week takes place from 26 November to December 2022. It is the UK’s largest annual tree celebration. Each year, the country’s conservation sector, volunteer groups and tree-lovers come together to plant thousands of trees to mark the start of the annual tree planting season.

*Courtesy: The Woodland Trust*

Images: **The Woodland Trust | Flickr & People Planting | Flickr**

## **MP’s housing solution for Epsom and Ewell**

6 December 2022



Epsom and Ewell and indeed the whole country has a real shortage of homes. We cannot go on with a generation of young people who aspire to home ownership but have little hope of achieving this. And we must have more affordable homes locally.



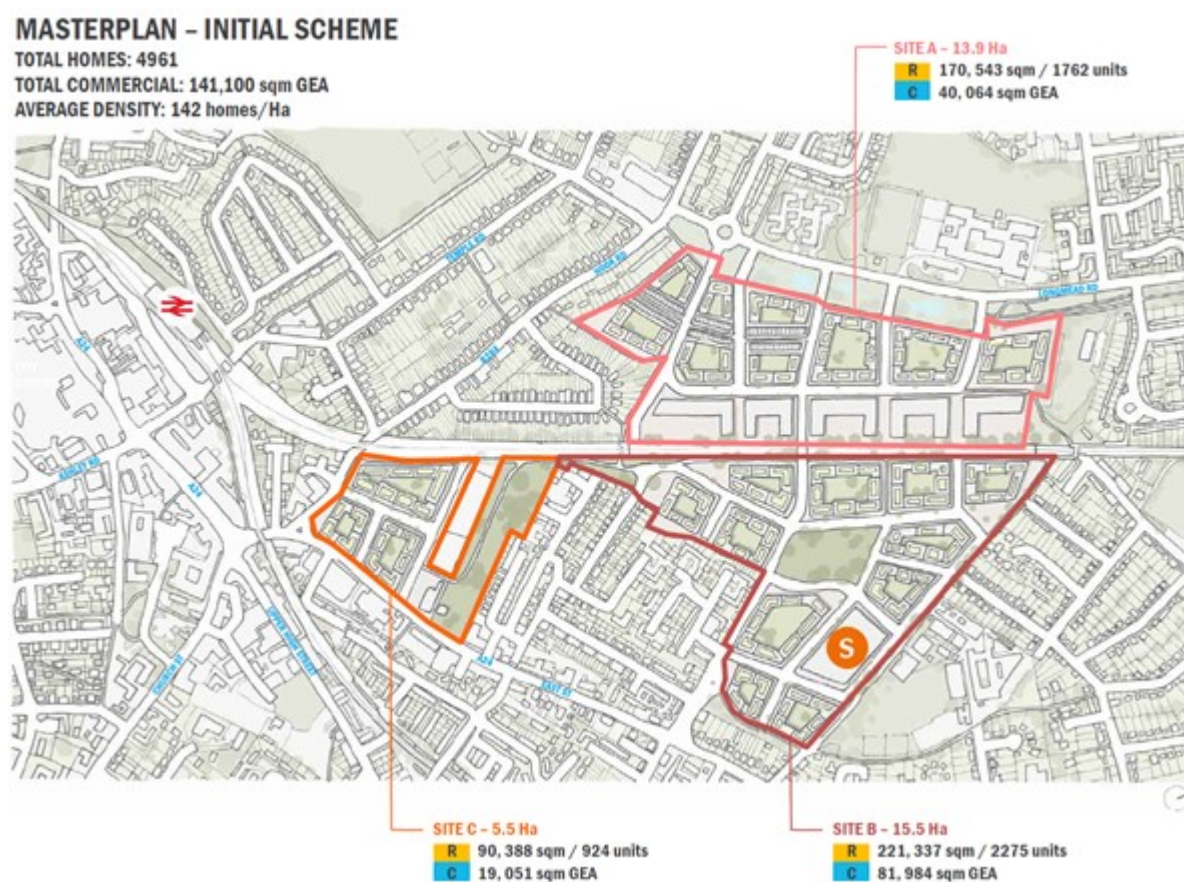
As a country we are already now building more homes than at any time for decades, but there is still more to do. Locally precious little has happened in recent years. Four years ago, just before the local elections, the Borough Council was due to publish its plan for housing and for the area for the future. It was postponed then, and only now is the Council in the process of publishing and developing its local plan for the area for the next 10-15 years.

Every local authority is obliged to do this, and to explain how it will meet housing need, look after its local economy and protect its local environment.

Each council has also prepared an assessment of local housing need, based on national guidance of how to do this. The housing assessment for Epsom and Ewell is though impossibly high - as it is in some other places. It would mean building more than 10,000 homes locally, and inevitably would mean much of our green belt disappearing.

That is why on a national level I have been saying to Ministers that there has to be more flexibility for Councils based on the reality in their areas.

But here we do need to do all we can to meet the housing need and not nearly enough has been done on this locally in recent years. That's why I have proposed a comprehensive redevelopment of the **Kiln Lane** and **Longmead** areas to achieve this without building all over our green belt.



My plan, which has been developed together with a leading firm of architects, involves the construction of a mixed use area of well-designed developments, with businesses on the lower floors and flats above, with some terraced housing on the site as well. This kind of mix is typical of what is being done elsewhere. The buildings would be no higher than those already in and around the town centre.

The scheme provides a similar amount of commercial space to the present plus nearly 5,000 homes. The plan would be to have car showrooms and parking areas built upwards rather than at ground level across large areas of land. But over time I would expect the commercial space to attract more creative businesses, given the presence in Epsom of the **University of the Creative Arts** which is now one of the country's leading institutions of its kind. It would also aim to provide more homes for younger people, meaning more could afford to stay locally and work here, rather than simply building more executive homes for commuters on open land.

And being close to the town centre, I hope it would provide a much needed boost to the businesses there.

I hope that as the local plan develops the Council will adopt this plan. I think it's the best way forward for our area.

## Hard-hitting critique from new LibDem PPC

6 December 2022



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Will Epsom's Foodbank ever end?

6 December 2022





A Gala fundraising dinner was held recently to recognise 10 years of Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, with guests encouraged to sign up to the new '**End Poverty Pledge**'. Nearly 200 people attended the Gala dinner to mark a decade since the doors first opened in October 2012, offering emergency food parcels to those in need.

Image: Jonathan Lees speaks at the 10 year Gala in the Queen Elizabeth II Stand Epsom Downs

Now ten years on, the food bank has five centres in Surrey and is incorporated into Good Company (Surrey) charity, which includes Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network, support services as well as Epsom Pantry which opened this year.

Good Company's mission is to create a community free from poverty and the newly launched End Poverty Pledge aims to build a movement of people and organisations committed to doing what they can locally to reduce poverty.

One of the food bank founders - **Jonathan Lees**, said Epsom & Ewell Foodbank was started after he was told of a similar initiative in Kingston and heard of a family struggling to feed themselves in Epsom. It opened with one centre in Epsom and one in Ewell, adding Leatherhead and Tadworth in 2013 and Banstead in 2014.

Jonathan Lees said: "I remember putting the first tins on our first bit of racking in one of our little rooms in the office with founding volunteer Jackie McKee. I think we counted 10 tins of baked beans. Now we have more than 10 crates of baked beans in the store. Never did we think that 10 years down the line we would still be here. We still have the mission to close the food bank and end poverty in our community, but that is not going to happen this year.

"So, while we are still here, we will challenge what is happening and support local people to rebuild their lives and have hope for the future. To recognise the impact of what we have done we held the fundraising event and this saw the launch of the **End Poverty Pledge**, as we believe everyone in our community can do something to improve the lives of those experiencing financial hardship.

"It is definitely not a celebration but a mark of appreciation of all that has happened, all we do and the invaluable support of so many people in our community who donate food, resources and funds, especially our group of amazing volunteers who are our lifeline and keep it all going."

Good Company (Surrey) is a Registered Charity no. 1197494  
Good Company Hub Ruxley Lane Epsom KT18 0JG

Since they opened, the Epsom & Ewell Foodbank have helped feed more than 50,000 people. As the foodbank grew, so came the realisation that emergency food aid was not a long-term answer to poverty so in 2019, the **East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission** was launched to raise awareness of the drivers of poverty and ensure that those affected by poverty are central to decisions about how to tackle it. Phase 2 of the ESPTC will start in 2023.

Jonathan Lees said: "As we look ahead after 10 years, our vision is now focused on tackling the root causes of poverty and the hope of a future without the need for food banks."

For more information and to take the End Poverty Pledge please visit  
<https://goodcompany.org.uk/end-poverty-surrey/>

Courtesy Epsom and Ewell Foodbank.

## True and Fair View?

6 December 2022





Gina Miller, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom and Ewell, Leader of the True & Fair Party, writes for the Epsom and Ewell Times:

The typical property price in Epsom and Ewell is more than £625,000, nearly 50% higher than the national average, according to GetAgent.co.uk. This is happening at a time when interest rates are on the march, rising from 0.1% to 3% in less than a year as the Bank of England struggles to control spiralling inflation.

Little wonder a survey commissioned by the True & Fair Party last month found that rising mortgage and rental costs are the main housing concerns among nearly half – 46% – of Epsom and Ewell residents. This research, carried out by Find Out Now, also found that 21% of residents are worried by the lack of housing supply in the area.

That's one of the simple truths behind the housing crisis – the UK does not have enough homes. Epsom and Ewell residents clearly understand this. That's what makes it even more shocking that Chris Grayling backed a Conservative backbench amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill that will scrap mandatory local housing targets, making them advisory only. This will further restrict supply and increase prices.

Seemingly unwilling to recognise the extent of the crisis before them, around four dozen Tory MPs signed this parliamentary amendment to scrap mandatory local housing targets for councils. Homebuilding experts everywhere were horrified. Robert Colville, director of the Centre for Policy Studies, renamed this the 'Destroy the Planning System and Make the Recession Worse Amendment', arguing it could reduce already low levels of homebuilding by up to 40%. If passed into law, it will certainly worsen the already unfair inter-generational economic and social housing gap.

Carol Lewis, property editor at The Times, was excellent in skewering the self-serving political rationale behind the rebellion. "Those that support the amendment talk of handing control to local people who are uniformly perceived as anti-development," she wrote. "However, the reason isn't because nimbys are blocking development. Planning permission has been given for more than 300,000 homes each year since the target was set in 2016. The problem is they [homes] simply aren't being built."

In other words, Westminster politicians should be looking at other issues, such as understaffed planning departments and greedy developers sitting on sites. While aiming to address the issue of inappropriate developments, the rebels have thrown the baby out with the bath water in thinking that abandoning all housing targets will fix the issue worrying their constituents. It will not and their plans will only make a dire situation worse for those they represent. Lewis pointed to the dictum of the great management theorist Peter Drucker, who said: "What gets measured gets managed." Very true and, if we end up scrapping targets, it is inevitable we will see a sharp reduction in the number of affordable homes. Yet another generation will be condemned to a lifetime of high rents and no home to call truly their own.

The root cause of this political miscalculation is a failure to understand people's concerns. It is not nimbyism to be concerned about playing fields or historic areas being demolished for housing development. Nor is it nimbyism to understand that the greenbelt is a vital environmental buffer between towns and the countryside. As a group of small business owners told me at a meeting off Epsom High Street last week, they are opposed to urban sprawl, not more homes.

What most of us want is for housing to be properly planned, built with sustainably sourced materials, revitalising our communities and providing affordable homes that will be within reach for our children and grandchildren. Preventing people from taking their first steps on the housing ladder or sending their mortgages skyrocketing is not an answer to Epsom and Ewell's housing needs.

That's the simple truth.

Establishing targets focuses the minds of planners, developers and local politicians. Setting clear guidance for where housing can and cannot be built forces them to think how best to meet those targets, rather than just lazily vacuum up land around the edges of urban areas.

Sadly, Rishi Sunak looks set to cave in to the ill-conceived and damaging amendment, having already pulled a vote on the Bill for fear of upsetting his backbenchers. The misjudgement of the local MP and the weakness of our Prime Minister can only hurt Epsom & Ewell and other constituencies.

**Gina Miller** PPC for Epsom and Ewell for the True and Fair View Party

## Top teams level at the end

6 December 2022



Epsom & Ewell 1-1 Shoreham Southern Combination League – Division One Saturday 26th November 2022.

Two very late goals after 85 minutes of attritional combat ensured that the best two teams in the League couldn't be separated on Saturday. However, as a spectacle, this match won't live long in the memory, with exception of a deserved

98th minute equaliser from our boys, which may turn out to be an extremely important goal in the grand scheme of things.

Shoreham were the visitors to Fetcham Grove and although they kicked off in third place in the table, they represented the largest threat to our title hopes, sitting six points behind us but with two games and boasting an unbeaten record. They also held a 100% away record in the League.

We made just the one enforced change from our win at Wick as Nick Wilson had to sit this one out after accumulating five bookings; he was replaced in the starting eleven by Gavin Quintyne, and that gap on the bench was filled by Tre Trowers. We made a bright start and had a half chance in the first thirty seconds when Johnny “Sonic” Akoto got down the right wing, but his pull back was skied by Athan Smith-Joseph.

We had another opportunity after Smith-Joseph was fouled around 25 yards out and Ryan Smith’s set piece cleared the bar by around a foot, while in response Shoreham also had a couple of free kicks of their own, but without major threat. In reality this was to be a match with a number of half-chances, but very few really good ones.

There was no shortage of fight from both teams as the players knew that this was an extremely pivotal encounter. Neither team were getting very close to goal and we had another Smith free kick that just cleared the bar before Jaevon Dyer’s ball in from the right was just ahead of Jamie Byatt. Brad Peters headed a Smith corner goalwards, but the danger was cleared, while at the other end Akoto headed a Shoreham effort on target clear from the goal line. As the match meandered towards half time Dyer tried his luck from twenty-five yards and Lewis Sheppherd in the Shoreham goal just about kept the ball out, while at the other end a misdirected header from Zach Powell was met by a wayward shot from the visitors from just outside the box.

The second half continued in a similar vein but with arguably even less chances. The game was a little niggly at times and the play was often stopped. We did have a very good chance in the 48th minute after Josh Owen won the ball and found Byatt who sent a great pass over to Smith-Joseph, who then cut back in, beat his man and saw his shot beaten away by Sheppherd, with the loose ball being fired at goal from Byatt but blocked by a defender.

Kane Charles had to punch away an Alex Fairs free kick from wide out and Harry Heath and Danny Jones picked up yellow cards for cynical fouls as the game degenerated. Charles then required treatment after appearing to get another knock that looked like it was also fairly deliberate before Quintyne picked up a yellow of his own and the game looked to be heading towards an uninspiring goalless draw. Until the 88th minute that is, when a visiting player got beyond Akoto who chased him but then brought him down needlessly for a penalty. Jones stepped up for the penalty, but Charles produced a good save, only for Marcus Richmond to nip in and fire the loose ball into the net from close range before our defenders could clear the danger.

This wasn’t in the script! With just two minutes of normal time remaining we were in danger of losing our second home match in a row, but responded well. and got the ball forward a bit more frequently as time began to run out. As Shoreham players suddenly started to require treatment for injuries we tried to push them back. However, a Dyer free kick that went over the bar was all we could show for it as the clock ticked deep into injury time. Fortunately redemption was coming and it arrived in the 98th minute, Owen chased a ball into the far corner, retrieving it before delivering a great cross with his left foot. The ball was flicked on by one of our substitutes Ben Bauchop and was met at the far post by the outstretched leg of Smith-Joseph who found the net from about five yards out to secure the equaliser.

The match finally concluded after almost nine minutes of injury time and with the Shoreham bench saying that “this wasn’t the World Cup” but looking back, there was quite a bit of injury time required in this half. Smith had required treatment before limping off, while injuries to Charles, Dyer and Smith-Joseph also took a while out of the forty-five, so maybe the extra time was justified in this case, although it did seem a tad generous.

Was it a fair result though? Absolutely! To lose this match would have been extremely harsh on our boys who were at least as good as our opponents. However, it must be said that we were not great and have played far better this season. Of course, the importance of the occasion almost ensured that this would be a tight encounter with neither team wanting to give anything away. It was just a shame that the match wasn’t very well advertised by the club who seem to think that one tweet, repeated a few times in the week is sufficient. It clearly isn’t, as an attendance of 94 counted by two different sources (inclusive of a few from Shoreham) testifies, although the club advertised it as 107. Maybe they were all inside the club house watching the World Cup instead!

This contest marked the halfway point of our League season and we have now completed both of our matches against Shoreham, failing to win either. However, we have a better looking run in and have nine of our remaining sixteen matches at home. Under the circumstances, I believe this point was better for us than for Shoreham, but only time will tell if that is the case. One thing is for certain in my opinion, which is that these are the best two clubs in the division and the title will go to one of them. However, it wouldn’t surprise me if this battle goes all the way to the final day and this late equaliser from an otherwise forgettable match, may prove to be one of the most important we will score all season.

Epsom & Ewell: Kane Charles, Johnny “Sonic” Akoto, Zach Powell, Ryan ‘Butch’ Smith, Brad Peters (c), Gideon Acheampong, Athan Smith-Joseph, Gavin Quintyne, Jamie Byatt, Josh Owen, Jaevon Dyer

Subs: Ben Bauchop for Smith (63), Josh Alder for Byatt (71) Kevin Moreno-Gomez for Powell (82)