

# Banding against Surrey's top value homes?

18 November 2022



"Very expensive" houses on private estates in Surrey should be added to new council tax bands to make the collection process fairer, according to one councillor. As part of the Autumn Statement, **Jeremy Hunt** announced more "flexibilities" for local authorities to increase council tax by 5 per cent per year without a referendum from April next year. The rise could mean average council tax bills look increase to more than £2,000 for a Band D home as councils look to fill holes in their budgets.

Councillor **Nick Darby**, (The Dittons, Dittons and Weston Green Residents), the Residents' Association and Independent group leader on **Surrey County Council**, said legislation at central government level could make the system fairer. In what he said would be a "significant change" in the system, Cllr Darby said a threshold could be set on homes worth more than, for example £5million, and two new council tax bands created to get those homes to pay more "as a matter of principle". He added: "I don't mean your average three-bed semi. If you go into areas of Surrey, in the private estates in Esher, Weybridge you've got people with very expensive houses."

He asked if it was fair that those who have "those very, very expensive houses" pay the same council tax as someone in a house with "very much less value". But he said the plans should not impact on those who were "already struggling". He said for people who were "asset rich and cash poor" the payments could be put off until the house was sold, rather than having to pay immediately or be forced to sell their home.

County council's budget "already under considerable pressure". The Surrey Liberal Democrats said people in Surrey were being asked to pay for Conservative errors to fix the economy and oil and gas giants were being "[let] off the hook". **Will Forster** (Woking South), Leader of Surrey Lib Dems said: "We know that the county council's budget is already under considerable pressure and today's announcements will not make balancing the books any easier. It remains to be seen whether the Tory administration decides to use the extra flexibility they will have to set a much higher level of council tax, to help make up the shortfall. We need a fair deal, including support for people unable to afford skyrocketing mortgage bills and rents, and protecting funding for local health services. This could be paid for by reversing tax cuts for banks and a proper windfall tax, instead of imposing years of stealth taxes on ordinary families."

Surrey County Council's leader, **Tim Oliver** (Conservative, Weybridge) is chairman of the County Council's Network, and praised the Chancellor's decision to delay social care reforms until 2025 as a "brave" one. He said postponing these reforms and putting money into frontline care services was welcomed and would protect the most vulnerable also giving councils "vital time to stabilise the care system".

The county council previously warned of concerns that without a delay, the authority could face bankruptcy. With his county council leader hat on, Cllr Oliver said there was much in the statement local government could be happy about. He said investment in schools, skills and research and development would allow Surrey residents to access new, higher-paid opportunities, a priority for the council.

Cllr Oliver added: "Businesses in Surrey will also be pleased to know that they will not see business rates going up next year, while central government will also be ensuring local authorities are not out of pocket as a result. "We were also pleased to see that capital budgets for the next two years will not be cut, meaning we can continue to develop the world-beating broadband and transport infrastructure companies need to grow and thrive." He said the authority would work closely with government ahead of the local government finance settlement due in December and would continue with its own budget setting, soon to be published for public consultation.

Another councillor looking ahead to December's finance settlement is the Guildford deputy leader, Cllr **Joss Bigmore** (Residents for Guildford and Villages.) He was concerned there was not enough support to help local authorities protect frontline services. With an increase of more than £1.5m in energy costs just at the borough's Spectrum leisure centre, he said: "It's all well and good being allowed to increase council tax but it's nothing compared to inflationary pressures."

End

Epsom and Ewell Times adds: **Tim Oliver** was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's PM programme 18th November and said he hoped the Council would not have to raise Council tax by 5%. He said the position was ameliorated by the promise of central Government of £6 billion to finance adult social care. So, a rise in Council tax "probably not, possibly not..." In a Surrey County Council press release issued later in the day Mr Oliver has added:

*"Today's autumn statement contained much that local government can be happy about, helping us ensure no-one is left behind. I am pleased to see that government has listened to our calls for a postponement of the adult social care reforms and for further support for the service. It is also good that the government will be developing a workforce plan for the sector and the NHS, to ensure we have the capacity to deliver these vital services.*

*"Businesses in Surrey will also be pleased to know that they will not see business rates going up next year, while central government will also be ensuring local authorities are not out of pocket as a result. We were also pleased to see that capital budgets for the next two years will not be cut, meaning we can continue to develop the world-beating broadband and transport infrastructure companies need to grow and thrive.*

*“Finally, the new investment in our schools over the next two years, as well as other announcements about skills and research and development, will enable Surrey residents to access new, higher paid opportunities. This is a high priority for us, and will be a key driver to ensuring Surrey continues to lead the country as we seek the growth that will take us through the current economic uncertainty.*

*“We will be working closely with the government over the coming weeks, particularly as we approach the local government finance settlement due in December, to work out the details attached to these measures. In the meantime, we are also proceeding with our own budget-setting process, which we will be publishing for public consultation shortly.”*

## Epsom’s Wells Plan has a hole in it

18 November 2022



Re-opening of an Epsom community centre hits a ‘surveyor-sized’ funding hole. After its surprise closure in 2015, residents served by **The Wells Centre**, Epsom, began a pitched battle to save the community centre from demolition and redevelopment. In spring of 2022, after a seven-year tussle with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC), the residents finally tasted victory as EEBC’s Strategy & Resources committee voted unanimously to grant the residents – now formed into a registered charity, the **Epsom Wells Community Association (EWCA)** – a long term lease of the Wells Centre building and land. But now, seven months on, the work to re-open the centre faces a funding challenge.

### More than a lick of paint

The centre has remained shuttered for much of the intervening time, and lack of use has not been kind to the building’s infrastructure and surrounding land. To refurbish the centre to its former glory (or better, as EWCA hope) serious funding grants are being sought from the likes of Surrey County Council and The National Lottery. To access the six-figure funding to fully realise the site’s potential and EWCA’s ambitions, the funds require detailed surveyor and architectural plans. These plans don’t come cheap, and thousands of pounds are still needed to allow EWCA to get the experts needed.

“It’s a bitter irony that we need funding to get the funding to re-open” says **Vanessa Marchant**, EWCA’s Chairperson. “Once we’re open, the centre will start generating its own income, so the funding becomes less essential. But, to repair the building and put in place all we want to have – such as a welcoming cafe in the heart of Epsom Common – we need grants. And to get the grants, we need a surveyor and architect. And to get them, we need generous donations or a pro-bono offer of help. Re-opening is so tantalisingly close, but just out of reach unless we get help.”

### How you can help

As a charity, EWCA will always welcome donations of all sizes, but for the survey and plans large donations will be needed. Of even more value, would be the donation of time and expertise by local surveyors and architects. Any companies or individuals keen to help with this, should reach out to EWCA directly at [contactewca@gmail.com](mailto:contactewca@gmail.com).

History and unique location The Wells Community Centre is situated on The Wells Estate, a unique residential area within Epsom Common. Surrounded on all sides by woodland, the dwellings are only served by a corner shop and a single access road.

In the heart of the estate is the Wells Centre, a community building serving residents of Stamford Ward and beyond since 1997. A community hall had been on the site since WW2. The centre is just a stone’s throw from the historic Epsom Well; site of the world-famous Epsom Salts and birthplace of the town.

### A place for everyone

EWCA’s ambitions are to run the centre for the community, by the community. A place where everyone in the Epsom & Ewell area (and beyond) can find something that will interest them, whether that’s evening classes, a creche, hall space, or just dropping in for a cuppa after a long dog walk or cycle ride around one of the borough’s most picturesque locations.

To find out more about EWCA’s plans for the centre and story so far, at the EWCA website, on Facebook “Save The Wells Centre Epsom” or Twitter <https://twitter.com/SaveWells>

## Organic growth for Epsom Jazz Club

18 November 2022





### Epsom Jazz Club - Tobie Carpenter Organ Trio - Tuesday 15th November 2022 .

The Tobie Carpenter Organ Trio delightfully entertained the Tuesday night audience with witty and inventive covers of standards including “I’m Gonna Sit Right Down (And Write Myself A Letter)”, “When You’re Smiling” and “Gee Baby, Ain’t I Good To You”, alongside a fabulously clever Beatles medley.

Guitarist **Tobie Carpenter** was on fine form leading the Trio throughout the evening, and **Jamie Safir** was just masterful on the organ and particularly strong during the opening number of the second set, “Night Train”. Drummer **Tim Giles** was clearly relishing being sat between his bandmates as they all traded solos, and within several tunes effortlessly took command of the fluid tempo changes.

The Oaks Room on Church Street has now been established as the monthly go-to venue in Epsom for an evening of quality live jazz. At this Autumn finale concert, the first three lineups for 2023 were revealed.

The Spring season will feature EJC’s first visiting jazz accordionist, one of the most exciting vocalists of her generation, and a finalist in the 2022 BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year competition (the final takes place Saturday 19th November, and is televised the following day on BBC4 at 8pm).

After only five events, Epsom Jazz Club has created something rather special. The intimate 70-seater venue, with each table adorned with a charming cocktail table lamp, is the perfect setting to sit back and listen to some of the very best professional jazz musicians the UK has nurtured.

For more information on the 2023 jazz programme please visit <http://EpsomJazzClub.com> or @EpsomJazzClub on Twitter/Instagram/Facebook – tickets are on sale now.

## Council’s secret strategy on public resources?

18 November 2022



Epsom and Ewell’s powerful **Strategy and Resources Committee** went into secret session on four items of public interest at its meeting Tuesday 15th November. The four items were:

1. INCOME GENERATING OPPORTUNITY
2. COST OF LIVING PAYMENT
3. LAND RETENTION
4. COMMERCIAL PROPERTY UPDATE

In each case the secrecy was justified on the following ground:

“.... the business to be transacted/nature of the proceedings..... deals with information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Committee and third parties and the public interest in maintaining the exemption currently outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

However, the Committee did not close the meeting during discussions on the motion to close. During that discussion **Councillor Eber Kington** (RA Ewell Court Ward) revealed in public that the “income generating opportunity” related to a crematorium.

**Councillor David Gulland** (LibDem College Ward) argued that the proposal “is an interesting development which would benefit from a wide-ranging discussion with our residents ... I feel we’re trying to be too secretive...we should be open with what we’re trying to achieve with our assets.” The Interim Chief Executive, responded that “the reason this is a restricted item is because it’s a commercial opportunity and we need to protect our negotiations...with potential suppliers, etc”. However, **Councillor Kate Chinn** (Lab, Court Ward) agreed with Cllr. Gulland. “Part of making the business case is to see if there’s a need for it in the borough,” she said. “Surely the easiest way to do that is to ask the residents.”

It was at this point that Councillor Kingston made the statement that “I want to get as much as I can out in the open. But what we have here is the Council looking at a possibility of a crematorium.” He went on to defend the proposal to exclude press and public: “ [If this] is a runner, it would have to come back to this committee and it may well be that that will be the time when it will be a public document. We don’t want to give anyone the heads up that this is what we are planning. In most cases, we will put things not on pink paper if we can help it.” [Ed. “Pink paper” is the colour of secret papers.]

The Residents’ Association majority on the committee agreed with Councillor Kingston and excluded press and public from any further details of this and the other three items.

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At the same meeting:

#### VOTER ID LIKELY FOR 2023 - BUT COUNCILS MAY HAVE TO PICK UP THE BILL

Following public consultation, a new polling station is expected to be in operation for the borough elections in 2023. This is to be situated in the arts centre at the newly refurbished Horton Chapel and will serve the residents of the new Horton Ward. This new ward will comprise the four former hospital sites of Clarendon Park, Livingstone Park, Manor Park and Noble Park, plus some roads that are currently in Court Ward around the northern end of Hook Road.

Receiving the detailed report that included this information Councillor **Hannah Dalton** (Residents’ Association, Stoneleigh Ward), asked about the Council’s preparedness for the introduction of voter id at polling stations. “There will be a lot of communication from the government about this,” the council officer replied. But he went to say that it will be a challenge getting it ready because the Council will be able to issue identity slips where people don’t have photo identity.

Councillor **Liz Frost** (Residents’ Association, Woodcote Ward) followed this up by asking about the cost implications of this for the Borough Council. The Interim Chief Executive, stated that “there are discussions going on with government at the moment ... At the moment, the proposal is that local councils will fund ID cards ... It’s an ongoing discussion.”

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## Tadworth Youth Club reduces crime

18 November 2022



A youth club in one of Surrey’s most deprived neighbourhoods is teaching children business skills, getting them birthday cakes and has seen kids queuing out the door to get in. The Friday night club, which can see up to 70 children in a week, also serves food to the kids, has them running their own tuck shop and deciding what to do with the profits, and aims to teach them things they may not learn at school.

Image: Councillors, Surrey Police officers, Surrey’s deputy police and crime commissioner with staff and children at the MYTI Club. (Credit: LDRS)

The **MYTI club** runs each week and during school holidays at the **Phoenix Youth Centre** in Tadworth, and was set up by **Tony Britto** when he pitched to **Surrey County Council** after a call out for people to use the space. The LDRS (*Epsom and Ewell Times’ news partnership with the BBC*) visited the youth club, where police officers were playing table tennis with the children, burgers were served for dinner, and everyone joined in with a rendition of happy birthday for two of the kids.

The deputy police and crime commissioner for Surrey and two county councillors were also there, showing just how much support this project has, as it takes steps towards gaining charitable status to take some of the strain off Tony’s pockets. He’s put a lot of his own money into the club, which costs around £70,000 a year to run, but that’s no longer sustainable and getting charitable status would mean access to more funding streams. ‘Parents can’t believe how confident the kids have become’

Tony’s own past is what has pushed him to want to pass on skills to these young people. After his dad died and Tony was taken into the care system in London, he said he started drinking from a young age and was “up to no good, getting into trouble, fighting”. You had an inkling of something that you shouldn’t be doing, I was probably up to it,” he said. But he stopped drinking nearly six years ago, and alongside working for his own roofing company, is running the club with **Megan Ferguson**, the managing director.

Tony remembers something he was told when he was 13 years old that has stuck with him ever since: “Tell me, I forget; show me, I remember; involve me and I understand.” It’s what makes him want to get the kids deciding what they do with the profits from their tuck shop (they put them back into the club), help them foster good relationships with the police, and teach them the value of things in life.

They also get great feedback from parents, Tony said: “They can’t believe how the kids change, how confident they’ve got.



And if there’s ever an issue, they come to us.”



External view of Phoenix youth club in Tadworth, where the MYTI club is held each Friday and in school holidays. Credit: LDRS

A heat map shared on the club Instagram account (also run by the children) shows a drastic drop in anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the club when its doors are open. Surrey Police could not provide more up to date information at the time of publication.

Kids would be down the ‘wrong path’ without the club. Megan is clear that were it not for the club many of the children would be going down the “wrong path”. The Tattenham and Preston neighbourhood, where the club is, ranks 7th in Surrey for overall deprivation, according to figures from the county council. Nearly 20 per cent of the children in the area are in absolute low income families, which compares to 8.8 per cent in the borough of Reigate and Banstead, and 7.7 per cent in Surrey as a whole.

**Ellie Vesey-Thompson**, Surrey’s deputy police and crime commissioner, said getting the kids in from eight years old is an important factor and praises both the impact on the children and the fact they are “diverted” away from getting drawn into crime and exploitation. But she’s clear that a similar set up wouldn’t work in all parts of Surrey in the same way, even if she did have the budget to do so. She said: “It’s not just about the building, it’s the environment they’re creating. If you put one of these all across Surrey, it wouldn’t have the same effect without having a Megan and a Tony in it.”

Megan not only knows all the kids’ names, having grown up in the area she also knows a lot of their parents too. With young children of her own, she fits the role around her family, and contrasts the difference between what they are running compared to the “dirty, grotty” youth clubs she went to as a youngster. She said her role is not the same as the kids’ teachers or parents, and is happy to remind them that if they don’t want to be there, they should leave. Saying it’s important to teach the kids how much things cost, from bouncy castles the club hires to trips out, she said they start to appreciate how expensive the real world is.

With kids coming from as far afield as Leatherhead, Guildford, Kingston and Croydon, Megan says the space is a “privilege” for the children, and that’s what makes them want to stay. She added: “Some of these kids don’t have a voice in their life, they don’t feel like it but we give it to them and we give them that power. All we can do is guide them along to making the right decisions.”

Surrey County Councillor **Rebecca Paul** highlighted the strong relationship between those running the club and the children there. She said: “This is just a club that the local community feel real ownership for and, as a result, the kids really want to be here. They want to participate.”

## Epsom to help meet children’s homes bed shortage?

18 November 2022



With improvements to be made to existing children’s homes, and **new ones being built in Epsom** and Walton, **Surrey County Council** is addressing a shortage of up to 60 children’s homes beds for young people in the area. High property prices, difficulty securing planning permission and staffing issues, tied in with existing children’s homes in need of repair and children with more complex needs have led to a “real problem” with provision in the county.

Image: Wells House or Karibu, Spa Drive – Surrey County Council Childrens Home

According to **Rachael Wardell**, the authority’s executive director for children, families and lifelong learning, the county

is “quite a long way short” on being able to provide for looked-after children in Surrey, and will need another ten or 12 homes to meet its needs. These would come from both council-run children’s homes and private providers, with the county council currently having nine of its own homes and two new ones being built. She said the priority was always to keep children in Surrey where possible, to keep them near their families and communities.

The authority’s children’s services department was rated “requires improvement” in a January inspection, up from the inadequate rating it was first given in 2015. Asked if the council is playing catch up in terms of provision for young people being looked after by the council, Ms Wardell said it was “quite possibly true”. The executive director, who joined the authority in December 2020, said the county council has fewer children’s homes altogether than many neighbouring authorities, even across both in-house and private providers. She added: “When we look at some of the provision we’ve got for our children, it’s quite a long way short in terms of numbers. It also often looks quite out of date, it hasn’t necessarily been maintained or brought up to date on a regular basis over the years. What I would say is that we’re investing really strongly now.”

Part of that investment is more than £2million put into staffing, including staff achieving qualifications to be on a higher pay grade, and a recruitment drive since April which has seen 95 jobs offered and the council’s residential team fully staffed with managers, deputies and portfolio leads.

With improvements to be made to existing children’s homes, and **new ones being built in Epsom** and Walton, Ms Wardell said she wanted to be able to make children “feel like they’re in a lovely place” with really good staff. Figures from July show that just under 40 per cent of looked-after children in the county were in homes in Surrey, with the authority aiming to increase that number to 80 per cent.

The county council closed one of its own homes in February this year, within 24 hours of an Ofsted report in which inspectors said “significant” management failings left its residents at risk “of significant harm”.

In October, Elmbridge planners rejected an application for a children’s home in a Claygate cul-de-sac, despite support from the county council and a recommendation to approve from council officers.

Ms Wardell said those residents who objected to children’s homes had lost sight of the fact that they would be housing “children who’ve done nothing wrong, who’ve had a really, really tough life, and who need our support more than anything else”. Of the shortage of beds in the county, she added: “It is a real problem. Not being able to develop [homes] ourselves and for other providers not to be able to develop them restricts the choices and opportunities for Surrey’s children.”

She also said she is not the only children’s services director asking for Ofsted inspections that allowed more of a focus on the children and their journeys, as she reacted to an inadequate rating given to one of the council’s children’s homes in a report released last week. Saying regulatory inspections don’t look “in the round” at what is going on in a child’s life, and since inspectors “can’t be in the home every day” they identify problems from months previously that have often since been corrected. While saying she would sometimes want staff to spend time with children rather than updating records, if they had to choose between the two, Ms Wardell also said: “I’m not trying to wriggle out of the responsibility, when homes get that wrong. At the same time, when they’re trying to be very child centred, they’re sometimes doing things with that young person, and maybe not keeping their records as up to date as they should.”

She said being under less pressure with staffing would mean workers could both work with children and on paperwork, and that changes had been made to the system that logs information to make it easier for staff.

But she added that the “bounce” homes made between ratings and after inspections was “really tough” not only on staff but also on the young people living there, who would get a version of the report to read.

She said: “[The report] will say: ‘The thing that you were experiencing as supportive, helping you, getting you back to school and all of the other important things, was something that we don’t think is good enough.’” In small settings, she said a change of one or two key people could make a big difference, describing residential care as “more volatile than the rest of the service” and saying it could move both up and down quite quickly. She added: “Even the inconsistencies [across the county] are a bit inconsistent.”

## July find of rare May fly in Surrey

18 November 2022





The River Thames Scheme (RTS) has discovered a nationally rare mayfly (***Caenis beskidensis***), which hadn't been spotted in the UK for 49 years and has never been seen in the River Thames.

The invertebrate, which was last seen in Herefordshire in 1973, was discovered near Walton Bridge as part of the project's routine survey work. Historically, they have been found in small and medium-sized streams, but have not been seen since 1973, when last spotted in Herefordshire.

This is an incredibly exciting find for the scheme and demonstrates just how important the survey work that the scheme's ecologists do is. By establishing the value of the existing habitats living around the Thames the scheme will be able to put plans in place to protect them during the work and help them thrive for the future.

Speaking on the discovery RTS ecologist Jenny Stephenson said: "It is such an exciting discovery to identify something that hasn't been seen in British water since the 1970's. Now that we have discovered the *Caenis beskidensis* in the River Thames we will be able to monitor it and ensure the colony continues to thrive.

"The discovery of the mayfly, which was found in its nymph stage and part of its aquatic life cycle, represents a major expansion in both the distribution and habitat type the species has historically inhabited. We are confident that with the new habitats that the scheme will create we will encourage these may flies to breed further in the future."



Image of a generic mayfly in its adult form. Please note this is not *Caenis beskidensis* as due to its rarity no image is available.

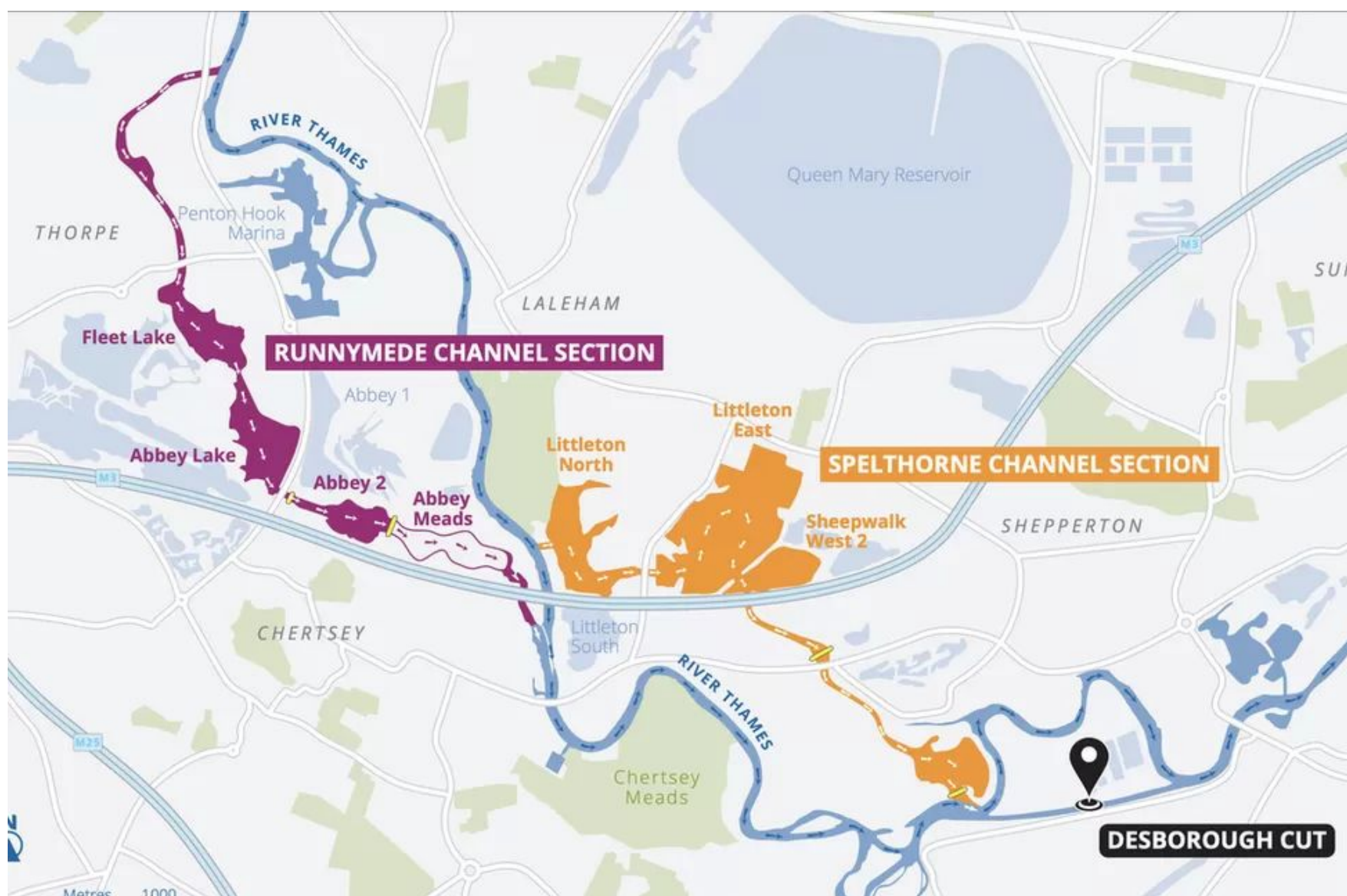
Mayflies form an important part of the river eco-system and are an important food source for fish and, once transformed into its adult form, insectivorous birds. Although the may flies have historically been found in small and medium sized streams they are also found in the upper areas of lowland rivers where they live in slow flowing shallow water. The RTS will create more of these river habitats so the team are hopeful new colonies will thrive.

As part of its work to understand the existing environment the RTS carries out hundreds of ecological and environmental surveys every year. A range of species have been targeted in these surveys, including bats (and their roosts), water voles, breeding birds, great crested newts, fish, invertebrates and species of reptiles.

Hannah Packwood, RTS environmental surveys project manager said: "It's so important that we understand the existing environment so we can continue to protect and where possible enhance it through the RTS. Finding rare and unexpected species is exciting, and we will continue to monitor the environment in our survey work throughout construction and the operation of the scheme".

A team of ecologists undertake the surveys by observing, measuring, taking notes and photographs, as well as soil and water samples. These surveys don't cause any significant disturbance to the environment or to land or property.

The RTS is currently holding a six-week public consultation for people to have their say on plans which includes a new flood channel whilst also providing habitat for wildlife and a new feature in the landscape for recreation. The consultation will run until **Tuesday 20 December 2022**. Full details of the consultation events, how to get involved, and to discover all venues that have brochures available to pick up please visit the website at [www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk](http://www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk) or call the Environment Agency National Customer Contact Centre on: 03708 506 506.



- The River Thames Scheme is being delivered in partnership between the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council.
- The scheme's wider partners are Elmbridge Borough Council, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Runnymede Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Thames Water, Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- The River Thames Scheme is an integrated scheme which responds to the challenges of flooding, creating more access to green open spaces and sustainable travel, in addition to encouraging inclusive economic growth, increasing biodiversity and responding to the dual challenges of climate change and nature recovery.
- The project aims to deliver many benefits for local communities and businesses. The new flood channel will reduce the risk of flooding to homes, businesses, and infrastructure, while also providing habitat for wildlife and a new feature in the landscape for recreation.
- **The River Thames Scheme will include:**
  - a new river channel built in two sections - one section through Runnymede (between Egham Hythe and Chertsey) and one through Spelthorne (between Littleton North lake and the Desborough Cut)
  - capacity increases around the Desborough Cut and at the weirs at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington
  - improved access to quality green open space and connections with wildlife, in addition to supporting a more sustainable travel network
  - a network of high-quality habitat to achieve a biodiversity net gain
- The River Thames Scheme will reduce flood risk to people living and working near the Thames, enhance the resilience of nationally important infrastructure, contribute to a vibrant local economy and maximise the social and environmental value of the river.
- There have been serious floods in this area over the past 100 years, namely in 1947, 1968, 2003 and most recently between 2013/2014.
- The new flood channel will reduce flood risk to over 11,000 properties and 1,600 businesses in Hythe End, Egham, Staines, Chertsey, Shepperton, Weybridge, Sunbury, Molesey, Thames Ditton, Kingston and Teddington.
- There will be increased capacity of the Desborough Cut and weirs at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington by installing additional weir gates.
- Detailed planning and design are under way. The large scale of the project means the government has directed that it be treated as a project of national Significance. This requires a type of consent known as a 'development consent order' (DCO). A DCO removes the need to obtain several separate consents, including planning permission and is designed to be a quicker process than applying for these separately.



## Epsom Oracle awarded in the present

18 November 2022



The prescient promotional powers of Epsom based PR firm **Oracle** recognised in National Property Press Awards. The annual Property Press Awards were held 14th November and saw The Oracle Group named as Property PR Agency of the Year, a momentous achievement showcasing the impressive work and capability of the company. The awards, organised by Property4Media, celebrate the work of professionals across the industry and for the first time, five PR categories were also included to recognise the crucial work of this sector.

Image: From left to right Oracle's Emma Holden, Zoe Murzell, Viv Onslow, Caroline Coskry, Bethan Millett, Annable Lewis, Joann Frame and Clare Sanderson.

As well as the triumphant win, The Oracle Group also celebrated two shortlisted entries with **Viv Onslow** named as a finalist in the PR Professional of the Year category and **Bethan Millett** as a PR Newcomer of the Year finalist. The successful agency sponsored the Influencer of the Year category which saw Property Tribes' Vanessa Warwick named as the winner. Caroline Coskry, Chairman of The Oracle Group, was also part of the judging panel alongside 20 other senior property executives, media editors, industry experts and personalities.

**Caroline Coskry**, Chairman at The Oracle Group comments: "This is the award which everyone wants to win as it signifies incredible teamwork which is what we are all about at Oracle. We were up against some very stiff competition which made this win even more significant for us. I am very proud of my team and thank them for all the hard work that has gone into being the best in class."

This year, the ceremony celebrated its twelfth anniversary which was marked by a gala dinner for the first time, at Hilton London Bankside, with property celebrity **Phil Spencer** returning to anchor the show for the third year running. The ceremony covered 18 media categories, 2 special recognition awards and 5 PR categories.

Based in **Epsom**, Surrey, The Oracle Group has been providing remarkable communication services to leading housebuilders, local organisations and others from the housing sector for over 10 years. With a team of industry experts, the well-established agency covers traditional PR, crisis communications, events, content creation, innovative campaigns and outstanding award writing.

For more information about The Oracle Group, please visit <https://theoraclegroup.co.uk/> or email [bethan@oraclepr.co.uk](mailto:bethan@oraclepr.co.uk)

## Campaign to save special Epsom school builds

18 November 2022



**Kingswood House School** is asking local people to join hundreds of residents in opposing the school's landlord's redevelopment plan. Around 100 local residents turned out at a community meeting on 10 th November in support of Kingswood House School. The School's current landlords, the **Aczel brothers** who own extensive property in Epsom, have for many years made no secret of the fact, that they would like to replace the School with a housing estate.

The brothers have teamed up with local developer **Steve Curwen** and have confirmed that the plan is to get planning for

a small school first and then apply to build houses on the remaining part of the site. With objections on the Council's website already approaching 200, local people have made their views abundantly clear.

The application to replace Kingswood House School, a registered charity, which local residents regard as a trojan horse to facilitate the building of a housing estate, was described by MP **Chris Grayling**, in a message of support as: "an example of the worst form of business practice". Grayling continued: "In reality this application is a sham. There is no known requirement for or plan to open a more limited facility like this on the site. Surrey County Council has said clearly that it has no intention of funding the development of such a school on the site, and there are no known private sector plans to do so."



Objectors, public, parents and school governors meet 10th November

A very high percentage of Kingswood House's 245 pupils have special needs and in recognition of its valuable work, the School has been made an Asset of Community Value by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. Local residents heard first-hand about the difference the school makes as a former parent **Helen Beckman**, described in the most moving of terms, how the School supported her son who moved to it having suffered severe depression and mental anguish brought on by living through the tragic impact of Parkinsons on his father.

Headmaster **Duncan Murphy** explained that this was but one example of many similar cases within the School. If allowed, the new school would be a privately operated "for profit" venture aimed at 60 pupils with severe special needs for whom public transport would be out of the question, requiring travel to and from school to be by private transport. In order, to allow space for the housing estate on the current School's playing field, access to the new school would be via a new road from West Hill Avenue, currently a quiet residential road.

The findings of the independent traffic experts were shown to the audience and demonstrated that given the level of traffic required, total gridlock in West Hill Avenue and surrounding roads would ensue at drop off and pick up times. Additionally, at least four trees would need to be felled to allow sufficient visibility for traffic exiting the new school. Experts explained that the gridlock effect would be exacerbated if the housing estate were to follow. The application would appear to have been made without proper ecology reports having been undertaken.

Curwen's own ecology report submitted with his application, accepts that one of the buildings on the current site that is proposed to be demolished shows a high propensity as a bat habitat. As a protected species a bat survey should have been carried out over the summer months, but has not. It is understood that it is the Council's practice to require full surveys before considering any planning application.

Given the lack of demand locally for the new school, the school would be looking to attract pupils from outside the borough with Curwen Group themselves admitting that pupils will be travelling at least 40 minutes to get to the new school. As regards Kingswood House's pupils, none of them would qualify for the new school and all of them would need to find new homes. Given the special needs of many Kingswood House pupils and the scarcity of places locally, this is likely to pose a severe challenge.

Those wishing to object should endeavour to do so by 21 st November via the Council's website [tinyurl.com/epsomewellplanning](http://tinyurl.com/epsomewellplanning)

and entering the reference number 22/01653/FUL or by email to the case officer, Gemma Patterson at [gpatterson@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:gpatterson@epsom-ewell.gov.uk) (ref 22/01653/FUL)

See our earlier reports:

Battle for Epsom School continues....

Community Asset to be stripped?



# Surrey County pays asylum child £15,000

18 November 2022



A “vulnerable”, unaccompanied asylum-seeking child has been given £15,000 by Surrey County Council after years of failings in his care which led to him sleeping on the floor of a restaurant where his friend worked.

The child twice attempted suicide and was hospitalised because of his mental health, having arrived in the UK alone aged 12.

After his arrival in March 2016, the youngster was found local foster placements by the county council until April of that year, followed by a residential placement in Manchester. An investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman after “Mr X” complained about the council said the authority did not “appear to have considered anything other than a ‘roof over his head’” at the later stages of his time under its responsibility. The ombudsman said the child was “extremely distressed and unhappy” at the placement in Manchester, telling staff he was 15, and not 12. The older age was accepted “without question” by the council, then the child ran away from the placement and attempted suicide.

There then followed several moves, including a placement with a foster carer of the same nationality, residential placements, including one in Staffordshire, and him being detained under the Mental Health Act. While he was in hospital, after a second suicide attempt, Mr X told staff he was not as old as he had said, but the council “refused to accept” his younger age according to the ombudsman.

The report broke down the “symbolic” payment of £15,000 as £10,000 to reflect the impact on Mr X’s education, £2,000 for the failure to assess Mr X’s age and needs leading to a lack of appropriate placements and care, £2,000 for his time spent homeless and £1,000 for distress caused, including delay to his asylum claim and legal action taken to establish his age. The investigator said Mr X “was vulnerable, and his distress was severe and prolonged”. They added: “It is not possible for me to calculate a financial remedy for the distress Mr X has suffered as a result of fault by the council. There is no formula I can use. Any recommendation I make can only be a symbolic payment to acknowledge his distress. It is not ‘compensation’.”

The report showed that the child’s mental health deteriorated in early 2017, with social care records saying he was distressed and preoccupied by what had become of his family. After he was discharged from hospital, he repeatedly ran away from his residential placement in Staffordshire, eventually failing to come back and being recorded by the council as living “independently” when he could have been as young as 13.

Requesting a foster placement from the council, and being told there were none available, Mr X refused the offers of independent or semi-independent placements from the council. It was at this stage the ombudsman’s investigation said the council “should have been concerned with ensuring suitable aftercare to ensure Mr X’s recovery” but seemed to be looking only to provide “a roof over his head”.

Between January and April 2018, he was “sofa surfing” in London and sometimes slept on the floor of a restaurant where a friend worked, according to the ombudsman’s investigation. He then got help from the Refugee Council and a solicitor, who found him a foster placement and asked the council to formally assess Mr X’s age, with the authority concluding he was the older of the two ages that had been given.

This assessment was criticised by the courts in May 2019, who decided he was the younger of the two ages when Mr X challenged the council’s process. The council upheld parts of complaint made by Mr X, which included that it failed to carry out an age assessment when he first became “looked after” and that it was wrong to appoint his allocated social worker to do the age assessment. As part of the complaint made by Mr X directly to the council, the authority also accepted it had failed to assist Mr X with his asylum claim, to arrange suitable education for him and to provide suitable placements (because of its failure to assess Mr X’s age and his care needs).

He was offered £2,000 compensation as part of the decision as well as an apology and an explanation of how problems had been addressed.

While the ombudsman welcomed steps taken such as the setting up of a specialist team to care for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, the investigator said the council seemed to have missed “the bigger picture” in dealing with the complaint. The findings said: “Mr X was a looked after child. The council was his parent. While the council accepts there were serious shortcomings in the care it provided Mr X, it has not responded in the way I would expect a parent to respond in the circumstances.”

The ombudsman found that for two and a half years, the council had treated the asylum seeker as “almost an adult when he was in fact a vulnerable child”, which impacted on decisions about accommodation and education. The report said he had now settled and returned to education, wishing to “move on, pursue his studies and make something of his life in England”.

The ombudsman said: “In making his complaint, he was keen to ensure council services for other young people in similar circumstances improved.”

A county council spokesperson said they could not go into specific detail for safeguarding reasons, but said the authority would always try to place children in accommodation appropriate to their needs and a full assessment would be done to assess this, with fostering being the first option explored. But they added that in some cases, children would come to the attention of the authority in an emergency and a full assessment was not always possible.

The spokesperson said: “We wholly accept the Ombudsman’s decision and we sincerely apologise for any distress that was caused. Our Social Workers are trained to undertake comprehensive age assessments in line with national standards. We also have an agreed accommodation strategy that places an emphasis on both the development of accommodation within Surrey and the recruitment of more foster carers.”

## Maverick win over the Salts?

18 November 2022



Epsom & Ewell FC **1 - 3** Worthing United FC. Saturday 12th November 2022. Who said lightning doesn’t strike twice in the same place? Last season we hosted Worthing United with the knowledge that we had won easily away from home and on the back of an eleven game home winning run, only to lose that day by the only goal. Eight months on and with another 3-0 away win in our pocket from this season’s trip, we witnessed the end of our twelve match unbeaten run this time as the Mavericks travelled home from Fetcham Grove with a 3-1 victory. This was also our first loss at home on this day since 1949!

It would be very easy to look at the recent departures of our Joint Manager Liam Giles along with some of our players as a reason for this loss, but I don’t believe this was the case. Quite simply, this was just a very poor performance with all three goals coming as a result of defensive miscommunications and in a way it was very similar to the one we suffered on the opening day of the season at Shoreham.

The starting line up contained three changes from our win over Billingshurst. Aaron Bogle came in for Steve Springett at the back, while in midfield Nick Wilson returned and Jamie Byatt made his first start since re-joining the club, while Jubril Adamson had left for Croydon and Jaevon Dyer was sitting on the bench.

For the first quarter of an hour possession was mainly in favour of our boys, although there were hints of problems ahead as the visitors missed two good chances to open up their account when our defence parted rather easily. Then we took the lead in the 15th minute. I wrote in my preview of this match about how Byatt would fit in to the line up and the answer was easy to see as Athan Smith-Joseph got down the left and sent a low ball in for our striker to poach his first of the season and 32nd for the club on just his 30th appearance with a typical close range finish inside the six yard box.

We continued to press as we exerted more control over our opponents, but then in the 22nd minute the wheels fell off and we never truly got them on again. The visitors pumped a hopeful ball forward and Dan Hills just got a toe to it ahead of Kane Charles. The ball fell a little ahead of him though and it looked like Bogle would make the routine clearance, only for Hills to stick out a leg and block the attempt back into the net. I recall Matt Ferdinando doing something similar for us to win a match against Spelthorne Sports a few years back and I gave him credit for his innovation, and so I must also praise the scorer equally here. However, I couldn’t help but think that this was a completely avoidable goal to concede and it appeared to hit us very badly.

Worthing United nearly scored again a few minutes later as they broke through once again, but Charles stood his ground well and the shot was dragged across the goal. The remainder of the half contained little to write home about apart from a thirty yard strike from Ryan Smith which only just cleared the bar, but the period was mostly broken up by injuries and poor passing, although only two minutes of injury time were played, which was somewhat surprising.

Whilst it wasn’t clear whether it was tactical or injury related, Bogle did not reappear for the second half with Johnny “Sonic” Akoto coming on and Gideon Acheampong moving into the centre of defence, but the general pattern of play continued. We held possession for large periods but appeared extremely vulnerable to the counter attack. One of these resulted in a powerful shot just wide of our goal in the 48th minute, but eight minutes later a delivery in from the right was poked past his own keeper by Brad Peters and the visitors were ahead.

Jaevon Dyer entered the contest for Gavin Quintyne who had covered an enormous amount of ground and he created one chance on the right that Byatt poked at with his left foot and sent over the bar. Further changes followed as Josh Alder and Warren Colman came on, but with the clock showing the 74th minute we conceded again in similar comedic circumstances as Charles flapped at the ball and half knocked a cross away, but then chased after the loose ball and lunged in, appearing to bring a striker down. However, as we appeared to freeze, maybe expecting a penalty against us, Kiko neatly chipped the ball back over everyone into an empty net from twenty yards.

This was serious. We hadn’t created much of a threat throughout the second half and were now two goals down. Bad became worse after Springett came on but lasted only a few minutes before being sent off after kicking out. Whilst it probably wouldn’t have made any difference by this stage whether we had kept eleven men on the field or not, this was our fourth red card of the competitive season, together with three sin-bins, and this indiscipline needs to improve before it



costs us further points. I'd be surprised if we aren't right at the foot of the merit tables right now.

There was still time for Hadleigh de Vall to pick up a second yellow card for our opponents, but all we were able to produce was a decent Wilson free kick from an angle that was tipped away for a corner, while in the eighth minute of injury time Peters did well to get to a Zach Powell ball into the box, but he was at full stretch and couldn't keep the header down.

The good news is that if we are able to pick up wins at Wick next week and at home to Shoreham seven days later, then this result will be able to be consigned to the history books as just a bad day at the office. I'd like to think that we are good enough to make that happen, but we will have to produce a vastly improved performance in those matches if that is to be the case, as this one was awful!

Southern Combination League - Division One

Epsom & Ewell: Kane Charles, Gideon Acheampong, Zach Powell, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Brad Peters (c), Aaron Bogle, Athan Smith-Joseph, Nick Wilson, Jamie Byatt, Gavin Quintyne, Josh Owen

Subs: Johnny "Sonic" Akoto for Bogle (HT), Jaevon Dyer for Quintyne (62), Josh Alder for Byatt (73), Warren Colman for Owen (73), Steve Springett for Smith-Joseph (80)

Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk)

## Havant Heartbreak For Battling Black & Whites

18 November 2022



**SUTTON & EPSOM 27 - HAVANT 30.** Saturday 12th November – saw the visit of a familiar foe in Havant. Last season the Hampshire club did the double over the Surrey side. A cursory glance at the league table prior to the kick off would have suggested a continuance of this recent trend. By the final whistle this close fought match evoked memories of the two classic encounters of the 2013-4 campaign as the visitors returned home to Hooks Lane with a narrow 30-27 win but the hosts won many plaudits for their determined comeback.

There was a Sutton and Epsom debut for Sebastian Priest and another appearance for the veteran Steve Munford. Havant were also missing regulars like Elliott Bellman, Harrison Young and Scott Morris. After the silence for the Remembrance weekend the visitors kicked off in glorious sunshine on a mild winter's afternoon. The crowd were immediately on their feet as after a few phases James Caddy, in space on the blindside, gave a wonderfully timed inside pass to Stefan Cooksammy who had come off his wing. A weaving run for 40 metres saw the winger touch down for the opening score. Freddy Bunting duly obliged with the conversion to send the Rugby Lane crowd into raptures and Sutton and Epsom led 7-0.

The Hampshire men bounced back to draw level after ten minutes. This time it was Reuben Knight with the 40-metre break though he was denied just short of the line but support was on hand and a couple of passes later saw fullback Ben Chambers crossing the whitewash. Joel Knight added the extras to level the score at 7-7. It was not long before Havant were pressing for the lead. They drilled a penalty into the corner for a 5-metre line out. Resolute defence thwarted all that was thrown at the Sutton and Epsom line but the referee brought play back for an earlier infringement. Significantly it also meant a yellow card for S&E lock George Drye. The visitors immediately made their numerical advantage pay as hooker Sean Shepherd barrelled over from close-range. Joel Knight added the simple conversion and the Bedhampton boys had a 14-7 advantage. The fourteen men showed great spirit to restrict the opposition to only one additional Joel Knight penalty before parity was restored with S&E trailing by 7-17.

As the teams entered the second quarter the game ebbed to and fro before Joel Knight's boot extended the Havant lead with another well struck penalty for 20-7 after 30 minutes. The Black and Whites stormed back. A quickly taken tap penalty on halfway by Austin Bell saw the hosts burst into the 22 and Ciaran Mohr was bundled into touch five metres short. S&E regained possession as they peppered the line. First, a sublime offload by Jack Howes nearly created a try in the right hand corner. Then the ball swung to the opposite flank as Gareth O'Brien and Stefan Cooksammy tried in vain before it finally went wide for debutant winger Seb Priest to score in the corner. Freddy Bunting converted from the touchline for 14-20.

The promotion contenders quickly capitalised on a missed clearance to touch and the Red and Whites marauded forward. After sustained pressure it was that man Shepherd again who proved unstoppable near the line. Joel Knight continued his impeccable kicking for 27-14 and the thirteen-point cushion was restored. With the interval fast approaching the hosts were awarded a penalty and Freddy Bunting reduced the deficit and the half-time whistle blew with Havant leading 27-17.

S&E restarted the game as Havant looked for that vital fourth try and a bonus point to maintain their title challenge whilst Sutton were eager for early points to get within a single score. At once the Black and Whites had a penalty and Freddy Bunting made it 20-27. Sutton and Epsom were now in the ascendancy and within 5 minutes Freddy Bunting was standing over another penalty. The kick 10 metres from the touchline drifted agonisingly wide. It was a temporary

respite. The visitors failed to clear their lines and conceded a scrum in their 22. The ball was spun wide and a James Caddy tap pass and a wonderful Ciaran Mohr offload had Jack Howes within a metre. The ball was recycled and swung to the opposite flank where Josh Glanville was on hand to supply the finishing touches. Freddy Bunting's conversion was greeted with a tumultuous roar with the score at 27-27. With a little less than 30 minutes to play the game had been transformed.

Not only the bonus point but also the win was under threat for the visitors. They responded in style pressing hard in the home 22. It was Joel Knight's turn to add a penalty and he accepted a simple three points that put the Hooks Lane team back into the lead, 30-27. Buoyed by this success they went in search of that elusive fourth try and a wonderful attack was quelled by scrambling defence. Moments later a surging break by Freddy Bunting had Sutton on the front foot. However, passing and handling errors now began to frustrate the hosts who were thrown back onto the defensive. From a 5-metre line out superb defence held Havant up over the line. Then agony as the drop out went out on the full and more pressure ensued with a 5-metre scrum for the Hampshire men. A chance in the corner went begging as the cover arrived and the ball was passed into touch.

Sutton were now under siege and the next clearance resulted in a yellow card for Seb Priest as he took the catcher out in the air. The home-team would have to survive the vast majority of the remainder of the game with only 14. Moments later a certain score was denied by a terrific tackle. At the death Havant declined a most kickable penalty in the quest for a bonus point. A poorly executed line out resulted in an S&E scrum that soon became a penalty. The Black and Whites valiantly tried to run the ball from 80 metres out but to no avail as at the first opportunity the Red and Whites kicked it off the paddock to end the game. A pulsating performance by both sides ended with Havant winning and remaining in third place snapping at the heels of Camberley and Wimbledon.

Narrow losses have been the story for the Black and Whites this season and, similar to the Oxford Harlequins game, there was much to admire in pushing a top four team to the brink. Their resilience in the final quarter was magnificent. It was a superb team effort from 1 to 18 against a side aiming for promotion that had run Wimbledon very close a fortnight earlier. For the victors 16 points from the metronomic boot of Joel Knight and a brace of tries from the rampaging hooker Sean Shepherd was the foundation for another win. The visitors created more chances, had more territory and possession and on those indicators were worthy winners. However, rugby is not as simple as that and if your defence is organised and tenacious, you are fit, score tries and have a quality place-kicker you will be very competitive as were S&E in this game.

After a weekend of quiet reflection the league season reaches its halfway mark with the resumption of hostilities on Saturday 26th November with Sutton's trip to Braywick Park. Maidenhead after winning the opening four matches topped the table but then lost the next five on the spin before finally recording another win on Saturday. Last season the Berkshire team won the corresponding fixture with a try on the final play of the game. With the Black and Whites penchant for close games this campaign perhaps we might once again get more last minute drama.

**Sutton and Epsom:** Ciaran Mohr, Stefan Cooksammy, Freddie Bunting, Jamie See, Sebastian Priest, Gareth O'Brien, Austin Bell, Tom Boaden, Jack Howes, Will Lloyd, Josh Glanville, Matt Harwood, George Drye, Chris Farrell © and James Caddy. Replacements (all used): Rob Hegarty, George London and Steve Munford.

**Havant:** Ben Chambers, Harry Carr, Joel Knight ©, Jacob Knight, Scott Morris, Reuben Knight, Wes Dugan, Armandus Morgan, Sean Shepherd, Jake Waterman, Richard Janes, Sam Vince, Nathan Bellman, Harry Ransom and Dylan Lawley. Replacements (all used): Luke Marks, Jarod Leat and Jonah North.

## Epsom and Ewell remembers...

18 November 2022



**Epsom and Ewell** came together for the annual **Remembrance Day** service at Epsom's Clocktower, Friday 11th November. The Mayor's Chaplain reflected on the history of Remembrance Day. The first was held in the grounds of Buckingham Palace in 1919 when the two-minute silence was observed. In 1921 the poppy became a symbol of Remembrance. The Second World War saw the commemoration being held on a Sunday, to avoid disruption of ammunition production should the 11th of November fall in the working week. The Chaplain mentioned how the reality of today's television coverage of wars was inuring many to the horror of war.

The service was attended by a full complement of Councillors of all parties, servicemen and boys and girls from Blenheim





School and other local schools.

The full service is reprinted below.



**An Act of Remembrance to mark 11.11.11 - Armistice Day  
Friday 11 November 2022**

The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Clive Woodbridge leads the civic party to the Clock Tower

The Mayor's Chaplain, says:

*We meet in the presence of God.*

*We commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation  
between the nations that all people may, together, live in freedom, justice  
and peace.*

*We pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer  
the consequences of fighting and terror.*

*We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world  
wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.*

**Act of Remembrance**

*Read by The Royal British Legion:*

*They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old:  
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*

*Read by a Cadet: At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
we will remember them."*

*All: We will remember them.*

*Non-uniformed male personnel to remove headwear, please*

Bugler will play *The Last Post*

**11.00: Two Minute Silence**

Bugler will play *Reveille*

The Kohima Epitaph, read by the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment  
*When you go home, tell them of us and say,  
for your tomorrow we gave our today.*

The Mayor will lay a wreath on behalf of the citizens of the Borough



*We Shall Keep the Faith* — By: Monica Michael 1918  
 read by Cllr Clive Woodbridge, Mayor of Epsom and Ewell

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Oh! You who sleep in<br/>         Flanders' Fields<br/>         Sleep sweet — to rise anew:<br/>         We caught the torch you<br/>         threw,<br/>         And holding high we kept<br/>         The faith with those who died.</p> | <p>2. We cherish, too, the Poppy red<br/>         That grows on fields where<br/>         valor led.<br/>         It seems to signal to the skies<br/>         That blood of heroes never<br/>         dies.<br/>         But lends a lustre to the red<br/>         On the flower that blooms<br/>         about the dead<br/>         In Flanders' fields.</p> |
|--|--|

And now the torch and Poppy red  
 Wear in the honour of our dead  
 Fear not that ye have died for naught:  
 We've learned the lesson that ye taught  
 In Flanders' fields.

Reading: *Goodbye Young Soldier* - By: Sgt John Norbury, Afghanistan, January 2010  
 read by Representative 135 Geographic Squadron

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1 We said goodbye tonight<br/>         To a soldier whom I did not know<br/>         He did his duty well<br/>         But sadly he had to go</p>  | <p>2 He did not travel this far<br/>         To leave behind family &amp; friend<br/>         He came to do his duty.<br/>         He did not know it would be his<br/>         end</p> |
| <p>3 His short life was just that<br/>         A soldier's ultimate commitment<br/>         he gave<br/>         This earth deserved him longer<br/>         He sent too early to his grave</p> | <p>4 He is one of many heroes<br/>         Another poor young soldier<br/>         For he is not alone<br/>         No years left in which to grow<br/>         older</p>               |
- What comfort lies for those he left  
 Never again to be by their side  
 A gallery of happy memories  
 And deservedly this Nation's pride
- |   |
|---|
| <p>6 So farewell young soldier<br/>         Whilst here you did just right<br/>         I hope your life was not a waste<br/>         Farewell young soldier, sleep tight</p> |
|---|

The Chaplain: 'Reflection'

Readings -

*In Gratitude of Silence* - By: Debbie Holick read by a pupil from  
 Blenheim High School

*Silent now the soldiers sleep, their tales long laid to rest.  
 I knew them not yet still I weep and place a poppy o'er my breast.  
 They were husbands, brothers, fathers, sons; so valiantly they fought.  
 On shores stained red, on hands and knees; it was our freedom that they sought.  
 Courageously they stood their ground, but freedom carries a cost.  
 Thousands of men were wounded, and countless lives were lost.  
 So, in gratitude of silence and all those who have served,  
 sleep now, you have earned it. Your peace is well deserved.*

*Remembrance Day* - read by a pupil from Rosebery School

*We wear a poppy  
 On Remembrance Day,  
 And at eleven  
 We stand and pray.  
 Wreaths are put  
 Upon a grave.  
 As we remember  
 Our soldiers brave.*

*Prayer for Peace* - read by a pupil from Ewell Castle School

*Let us know peace.  
 For as long as the moon shall rise,  
 For as long as the rivers shall flow,  
 For as long as the sun shall shine,  
 For as long as the grass shall grow,  
 Let us know peace.*

The Lord's Prayer (all can join in):

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come;  
 thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily  
 bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass  
 against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For  
 thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*



## Act of Commitment

The Chaplain says:

*Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men, women and children: That we may help, encourage, and comfort others, and support those working for the relief of the needy and "for the peace and welfare of the nations.*

Response:

*God of peace, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all people, in the cause of peace and reconciliation and for the relief of want and suffering. Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope and give us perseverance now and always. Amen*

## *The National Anthem*

God save our Gracious King!  
 Long live our noble King  
 God save the King  
 Send him victorious  
 Happy and glorious  
 Long to reign over us  
 God Save the King!

The Chaplain concludes the service:

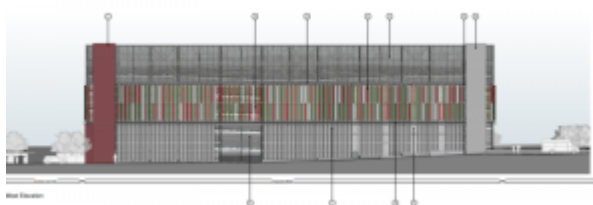
*Ever-living God, as we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations. Amen.*

## End of Service

*The Mayor, Councillor Clive Woodbridge, would like to thank all those who joined us in today's Service and hopes you will keep a special thought for those military personnel, past and present, who gave and continue to give their service for our country.*

# Epsom Hospital car park appeal

18 November 2022



On Wednesday 2nd November, **Epsom & St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust** appealed **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's** (EEBC) decision to refuse planning permission for a multi-storey car park on the **Epsom General Hospital** site. The NHS Trust had proposed the construction of a car park comprising ground plus five storeys, providing 527 spaces, the redesigning of surface parking to provide additional spaces, and improvement to access from Dorking Road.

EEBC refused the plans in May 2021. It stated that, 'by reasons of its height, mass, scale and poor design', the proposed development would adversely impact the area, and fail to preserve the adjacent Woodcote Conservation Area. The plans had received 125 objections and one letter in support.

At the appeal, The NHS Trust argued that the scale of the proposed car park is necessary. **Thomas Spencer**, on behalf of the NHS Trust, said that the construction of the New Epsom and Ewell Community Hospital, due for completion in March 2023, would require an additional 50 spaces. Mr Spencer said additional parking would also be required to replace land sold to **Guild Living**. Guild Living now lease this land to the NHS, but their plans to build a retirement community will result in the loss of around 270 parking spaces currently used by the hospital.

**Mike Kiely**, on behalf of the Council, said that the proposed height of the car park would dominate the area, and 'dilute the experience' of listed buildings on Dorking Road and the adjacent Woodcote Conservation Area.

**Councillor Liz Frost** (RA Woodcote) said she had received many calls and emails from residents expressing 'grave concerns'. **John Woodley**, a Dorking Road resident, said the car park would be the first thing he saw when he opened his windows. He added: 'It's overbearing; far too big. It just seems excessively large.'

The Trust argued that the car park's height would be consistent with the existing complex of buildings at the hospital site, and that its plans bring the car park as close to existing buildings as possible.

Mr Kiely also argued that building a new multi-storey car park goes against national and local climate policies, and that alternatives, such as offsite staff parking and a shuttle bus, should be considered first. Mr Woodley added: 'For a health trust to be building more space for cars blows my mind. We need to think more sustainably.'

Mr Spencer said that high vehicle use is a reality on a hospital site, since patients often rely on private transport. He added that some staff travel significant distances, and staff also work night shifts, so offsite parking would not be the Trust's preference. He added that the proposals have 'green credentials', including 67 electric charging spaces, with the possibility for adding more in the future.

The Trust also said that there had been 'numerous changes' to the landscaping to improve the building's design, including green walls on the building and a potential mural. Mr Kiely, however, said that the changes would make a 'marginal difference', and that 'there had not been a landscape-led approach; landscaping had been squeezed in'.

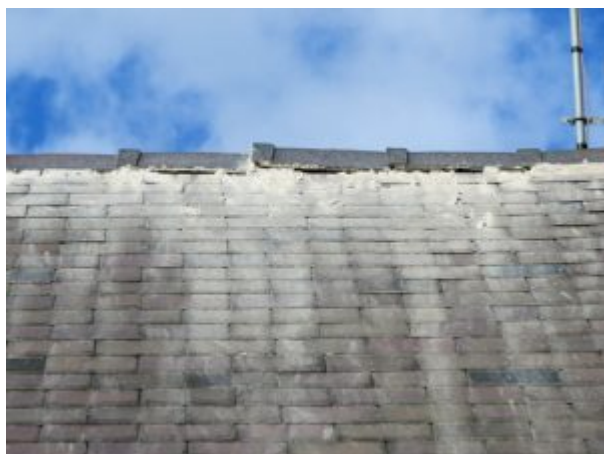
Woodcote councillors Liz Frost and **Steven McCormick** also said that the car park could create a safeguarding issue, since it would overlook several sports clubs. However, the Trust said that the sports ground is already overlooked from various vantage points within the hospital, and the same people would be using the car park. It added that there would be 24-hour CCTV, and that any parking above the first floor would be used by staff only.

The Trust said that there would be other benefits of the proposed car park, including reduced congestion, improved access for emergency vehicles, and improved pedestrian and wheelchair access from Dorking Road. Mr Spencer also said that parking pressure on surrounding residential streets, which caused the NHS to be 'plagued with complaints', would be reduced. Mr Kiely, however, said that many of these benefits were not reliant on building a multi-storey car park, and that access could be reconfigured without it.

The appeal was heard by **planning inspector David Spencer**, who said his decision is likely to be made in early December.

## Shoddy Tadworth builder imprisoned

18 November 2022



A fraudster has received an immediate 32-month custodial sentence after being found guilty of 14 charges following a Surrey Trading Standards investigation. On Friday 4 November 2022 at the Crown Court in Guildford, **Stewart Munnery** (aged 46, Tadworth, Surrey) was charged with the following:

- Three substantive fraud counts, totalling over £100,000.
- Three aggressive practice charges, including one involving the use of racist, abusive language.
- Five breaches of professional diligence.
- Three misleading actions, including by using false customer testimonies on websites and photos on his website of work that was not carried out by him.

Mr Munnery received individual sentences for all the charges listed above, but as these are to run concurrently it results in a total sentence of 32 months. 16 of these will be served in custody while the remaining 16 months will be served on license.

Mr Munnery has also been disqualified from being a company director for five years commencing from the date of his release from prison, and over the same period of time has been issued with a restraining order banning him from any contact with the witnesses or their families.

In addition, Mr Munnery is subject to a Criminal Behaviour Order, which prevents him from unsolicited calling at domestic properties to provide quotations for work.

Mr Munnery operated both as a sole trader and as sole director of multiple companies. Whether acting as an individual or for one of his companies, Mr Munnery would use the trading name "**Surrey Construction**".

Presenting himself as a knowledgeable and reputable local builder, Mr Munnery would exploit vulnerable customers by presenting seemingly reasonable schedules of work at underquoted fees, but which he had no intention of honouring.

Once payment was received and initial works were undertaken, Mr Munnery departed from previously agreed schedules and demanded further payments, inflating the cost of the works to take advantage of the vulnerability of the homeowner.

When payments were not forthcoming, Mr Munnery resorted to threats and unreasonable demands. Mr Munnery would even use emotional blackmail, exploiting his own ill health and using it against victims when initial agreements were



inevitably not adhered to.

The works he did undertake were assessed by an independent expert as having a value far below the contracted price and in many instances were substandard.

In mitigation, Mr Munnery's representative explained how he is suffering from complex medical issues requiring regular hospital treatment and that this appears to have been the reason for his fraudulent behaviour. The court also heard that Munnery was remorseful and had no relevant previous convictions.

Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards have supported five residents who lost significant sums of money for poor quality building work that required extensive remedial work.

**Denise Turner-Stewart**, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety said: *"To deliberately target vulnerable residents in this way is shameful, and I'm glad this individual has now been brought to justice. The financial losses incurred, while significant, were only part of the suffering experienced by his victims, some of whom were left with uninhabitable and unsafe homes.*

*"I'd like to thank the Trading Standards officers involved with this investigation for their diligent work, and I hope it brings some comfort to the victims to know he will now get the punishment he deserves. Together, we will continue to do all we can to keep the residents of Surrey safe."*

Find out more about scams and how to prevent them by visiting [www.surreycc.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards).

Find a trusted trader by visiting the Trading Standards approved website [www.traders4u.co.uk](http://www.traders4u.co.uk).

Surrey County Council News.

## Surrey road safety played out on the pitch

18 November 2022



On Friday 4 November **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's** football team played host to **Surrey Police**, with the shared goal of improving road safety during the winter period.

The fixture was planned to highlight the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and general road safety during the winter period. Those in attendance heard a speech from Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Simpson, who took the opportunity to underscore the importance of safety on Surrey's roads, and the need to improve behaviours. He was joined at the event by Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey **Ellie Vesey-Thompson**, Chair of Surrey County Council Councillor **Helyn Clack**, Councillor **Denise Turner Stewart**, Mole Valley MP **Sir Paul Beresford**, and Surrey FA's CEO, **Sally Lockyer**.

There were 330 road traffic collision incidents with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service involvement between November 2021 and February 2022 and in 2021 there were 24 Fatalities, 647 Serious casualties and 2490 slight casualties on the county's roads, 15% of which involved young drivers. The services are encouraging drivers not to drive under the influence, as well as warning against the dangers of distractions while behind the wheel. They are also calling on motorists not to speed and to take caution with risks such as adverse weather conditions and country roads.

Filming was carried out during the match, with players from both sides interviewed about their experiences in responding to road traffic collisions and the impact they had on the lives of those involved in these incidents, as well as on themselves.

Surrey Police took the bragging rights at full-time, emerging with a 1-0 victory from a competitive game. However, it is hoped that the main result from the fixture will be the powerful, football-based road safety campaign which will run throughout the World Cup and across the winter. 115 drink or drug impaired drivers were apprehended during the previous three international tournaments in which England's Senior Men's Team have featured (Euro 2016, 2018 World Cup, Euro 2020), and 78% of these were male.

Commenting on the event, **Jon Simpson**, Assistant Chief Fire Officer for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service stated: *"Whilst we are all here to enjoy a game of football between the services, it also gives us a great opportunity to highlight a really important safety message to a key target audience, as we raise awareness of safe driving among young people - predominantly young males.*

*"We all have a responsibility here to improve our own behaviours on the road and encourage them in others to ensure we all come home safe this winter. During the World Cup, plan your journey home on public transport, do not mix drinking*

*with driving. If you are driving home for the games, then allow extra time for your journey. Speeding could result in three points you really do not need, or the consequences could be even worse – the loss of a life. Adapt your speed appropriately for the road and weather conditions and make sure you always wear a seatbelt.”*

Chief Inspector for Roads Policing at Surrey and Sussex Police, **Michael Hodder**, added: *“Road safety is a huge priority for us at Surrey Police and sadly we often work closely with our blue light colleagues at Surrey Fire and Rescue when dealing with collisions on the county’s roads. Although we know the vast majority of road users are conscientious and law-abiding citizens, there is a minority of people who just disregard the law and put not only their lives, but other people’s lives at risk. It really is quite simple – always drive with due care and attention, stick to speed limits and follow the laws to keep all those using the roads in Surrey as safe as possible.”*

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey commented: *“It was great to support the police and fire service working together to share the importance of road safety. The win for Surrey Police was an added bonus of the day!*

*“It concerns and saddens me that our young people aged 17-24 disproportionately die in road traffic collisions. With cold and wet weather as well as social events like the World Cup and Christmas parties, it’s a really key time to be sharing the message around driving safely. I urge anyone heading out with friends this winter to ensure you have a safe way of getting home – be that public transport, a taxi or a designated driver. It is also important to always pay attention and to drive to the conditions of the road, particularly when wet or icy.*

*“Ensuring safer Surrey roads is a key priority in Commissioner Lisa Townsend’s Police and Crime Plan, which is why we are pleased to support initiatives such as Safe Drive Stay Alive which helps educate young people on the dangers of the ‘fatal five’; drink or drug driving, speeding, using a phone whilst driving, not wearing a seatbelt and driving whilst distracted.*

*“By working together to spread this message we can reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads.”*

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service have shared their top tips for road safety, for drivers both young and old, here.

Surrey County Council News