



14 against 59 = 70? Dilemma for Headley

Councillors have been warned to “be under no illusions” that a plan for 70 homes at Headley Court could be progressed as they rejected an application for 59 homes on the same site. A long history of applications on the green belt site is set to continue, with various parts of it currently under appeal and the district council’s local plan currently under examination.

Mole Valley District Council’s development management committee meeting on Wednesday (October 6) refused the application by **14 votes to zero**, with four abstentions, in line with the officers’ recommendations. After outline permission was granted in December 2020 for up to 70 homes on the site, it could now see a previous application for 70 homes approved, after an appeal was lodged with government inspectors.

The site, former Ministry of Defence land, is located over the road from the NHS Seacole Centre, used as a temporary hospital during the coronavirus pandemic and as a temporary mortuary.

Developers warned during the meeting that if councillors rejected the scheme for 59 homes then the 70 home plan would go ahead if granted on appeal, despite having previously offered to take the larger plans off the table.

Tony Williamson, representing **Angle Property**, said: “Be under no illusion, if this application is refused tonight, and approval is granted by the planning inspectorate then the 70 unit scheme will be implemented and progressed. The concessions offered in this application will be lost. In that scenario, I’m sure the local residents will not be thanking this committee.”

The previous application, deferred from a November 2021 meeting had been appealed by the developer for non-determination. Subsequently, a June meeting of the development management committee concluded it would have refused the application, had it not been sent to central government for a decision.

The latest refused plans included three two-bedroom, 28 three-bedroom, 17 four-bedroom and 11 five-bedroom homes, with eight of them being affordable. Officers described the housing mix as “unacceptable” because a three-bed home sold under shared ownership “would not prove attractive due to affordability issues”. The district council’s local plan, currently undergoing inspection at government level, identifies the Headley Court site as a whole for 120 homes.

There is still an appeal on the east part of the site for 14 senior living homes in the listed building there and redevelopment of the rest of the site for 100 new-build senior living homes. Headley Parish Councillor **Jane Pickard** said the village was at risk of doubling in size, and that the new plans had seen a shift away from smaller homes. She added: “We are prepared for a major increase in the size of our community, but want it to be done in a way which enhances rather than damages the semi rural character in the green belt.”

Cllr **Tim Hall** said he knew of at least three planning applications around Headley Court and Headley road, “all of which have serious transport implications”. He said: “This needs to be linked together. Because Headley Road, as has been said previously by the residents, is not a great highway. It’s a rural Surrey lane, in the nicest possible way.”

Will “Top Tory” Surrey County lobby Coffey?

A council chief has called on select committee members to use their status as a “top Tory” authority to influence health spending at government level. Calling ambulances backed up outside hospitals “dangerous” and saying “we don’t want old people on trolleys in corridors”, one of the council’s health directors said it would take everyone working together to get through the winter.

Surrey County Council’s adults and health select committee heard on Wednesday (October 6) from representatives from Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS), South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb) and Frimley Health and Care ICS.

As the health organisations set out their plans for winter pressures, and commitment to working together to cope, members heard of current issues including Frimley Park hospital beds being nearly 100 per cent full most of the time and systems issues causing delays in ambulance handover times.

Liz Bruce, joint executive director for adult social care and integrated commissioning (Surrey County Council and Surrey Heartlands ICS), said she “absolutely agreed” that ambulances backed up outside hospitals was “high risk and dangerous to everybody else in the community”. She said: “We don’t want old people on trolleys in corridors, and therefore we’re all in this together.” She highlighted the importance of the “whole system” working together, saying improvements were “everybody’s responsibility”.



The director said: "What can this committee do to help us? A Conservative council, a top Tory council, you can help us by influencing government around funding nationally for hospital discharge and social care, and how we support sick people safely to go into hospital and come out again. Because we don't want to see elderly people go into long term care when they don't need to."

While the government had announced £500million for health care over the winter, she said it was not yet clear how it would be allocated or if it was "truly new money". Saying she expected the winter to be "extremely challenging", she added: "It's very obvious that we're going into significant and stark problems in our system for people in discharge. I've asked [my team] to build, very quickly, a business continuity plan around with winter discharge."

The meeting heard from **South East Coast Ambulance** and **Surrey Heartlands** representatives about what was being done to improve ambulance handover times. Moving towards electronic patient records, virtual wards and daily meetings were all hoped to help with delayed handovers which were made worse by sicker patients and "systems problems".

SECAmb's deputy director of operations **Mark Eley** said he was having to balance offering staff overtime, particularly in the current financial situation, with the risk they might "work too hard, wear themselves out" and go off sick. He said: "Staff are becoming very weary and worn from the last two years, so I'm not pushing too hard because as I increase my overtime, I can increase my sickness if I'm not careful."

The issues with Frimley Park hospital beds being full "almost all of the time" were also said to be caused by not being able to discharge patients who were well enough to go home.

County children home challenges

The challenges facing Surrey County Council's bid for more children's homes include high property prices, competition for places and no priority for the authority for homes in the area. Officers outlined plans to nearly double the number of spaces available for Surrey children in the county at a meeting of the children, families, lifelong learning & culture select committee on Tuesday (October 4).

The meeting heard of the authority's aim to house 80 per cent of its looked after children within the county, a number that in July 2022 was just under 40 per cent. An officers' report showed that in July, 45 of the 118 children in children's homes placements were living in Surrey, but this did not include those in residential schools, parental assessment units and in "unregulated" placements.

If these groups were included, then the number was 49 of 147 children in Surrey at that time. Plans to increase the number of children staying in the county would mean increasing the number of beds available by an additional 45 just in children's homes, or 69 to include all residential provision types.

Currently there are 28 beds in nine children's homes that are run by Surrey County Council, following the closure of one in February within 24 hours of an Ofsted inspection which said residents were at risk "of significant harm".

There are also 26 beds available in six children's homes run by external providers, but not included in total figures are 12 registered beds in two specialist services solely for young people with sexually harmful behaviours.

Councillor Jonathan Essex (Green, Redhill East) asked if there was an option to bring more of the residential services in house at the council, highlighting costs in the report which showed the weekly cost of a placement in a council-run children's home ranging on average from £3,177 to £4,294. This was in comparison to an average weekly cost in July on the open market of £5,232 per week.

The meeting heard that running children's homes "wasn't easy" and that having other providers could mean more support for the authority. Meeting documents show that the council's intention would be to run the new homes in the first instance, but consideration would be given to working with "trusted and high-quality" external providers. Documents also showed that Surrey faced challenges with its location near to London, which contributed to "increased competition" for beds in children's homes and some of the highest property prices in the country outside of London.

High costs of living made it hard for new providers to set up in the county which in turn meant "upward pressure to the cost of placements in Surrey". The county council also does not have priority access to local homes in the area, and other local authorities can refer children to homes in the county in placements which may last for several years. There is also a need to increase the number of places available because of the number of children in "unlawful" placements in Surrey.



Unregulated placements are not subject to Ofsted inspections but the county council is responsible for quality assuring all unregulated provision where looked after children will be placed. As of September 12 2022, there were five Surrey children looked after by the county council and aged under 16 in “unlawful” placements, so called after a change to legislation in September 2021.

Tina Benjamin, the county council’s director – corporate parenting, said: “Unregulated, unlawful placements are not something we ever want to use and we try to do everything we can to avoid them. Unfortunately the national lack of placements sometimes means that we have to.” She said as well as looking for other placements for the children, the authority would work with providers to try to get their Ofsted registration.

Plans to re-purpose £18 million of capital funding to bring about the additional capacity will be brought to the council’s November cabinet meeting.

Thought for Food in Surrey

The first Surrey Food Summit took place at the WWF Living Planet Centre in Woking last week. Surrey County Council organised the event to bring together stakeholders across the local food system, including farmers, local food businesses, food caterers and local food initiatives in Surrey to begin sharing different perspectives on challenges, including related health inequalities, in our food system and explore ideas for addressing them together.

The council is in the process of developing a food partnership and whole food system strategy to ensure it can provide nutritious, affordable, local and sustainably produced food for residents. The food summit is an opportunity to better understand the local food system, and to co-produce the whole-system food strategy. Recognising the current economic climate, the strategy aims to have an initial focus on addressing food poverty and sustainability challenges.

Those in attendance heard from a number of speakers during the event, including Emily O’Brien of Sustainable Food Places, Cllr Marisa Heath, SCC lead member for environment and CEO of Plant Food Alliance, and David Edwards, Director of Food Strategy at WWF. There was also an opportunity to engage in a food system mapping activity, to draw together our priority areas of action and build on existing work.

Carolyn McKenzie, Director of Environment and Project Sponsor for the food strategy said: “The food summit was an important event to bring together our key stakeholders and build a vision for a sustainable food system in Surrey.”

For further information please visit the Surrey Food Partnership – Healthy Surrey webpage or contact the food strategy leads at Surrey County Council – Jane Semo (Jane.Semo@surreycc.go.uk) or Negin Sarafraz-Shekary (SarafrazShekary.Negin@surreycc.gov.uk).

Surrey County Council news

Epsom Firefighters making businesses safer

Statistics for the UK show that 30 people die and 2,000 are injured each year as a result of fires in the workplace. The damage to businesses caused by fire costs the economy over £6 billion and 75% of businesses that have a fire within the first year never trade again.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service aims to support businesses in reducing the risk and impact of a fire by offering free advice and guidance on fire safety.

Their **Business Safe and Well Visits** take just ten to fifteen minutes and cover aspects such as identifying the hazards, reducing the risk of a fire starting and steps to ensure the safety of staff and visitors.

Dean, a Fire Fighter on Green Watch at Epsom Fire Station, said “Our Business Safe and Well Visits are an effective way of educating businesses on fire safety and reducing the number of fires we have to attend”

If you would like a free Business Safe and Well Visit, please visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/businesssafety



or simply scan the QR code below and complete the request form.



Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
Email businesssafety.education@surreycc.gov.uk



Epsom's Church Street Fire Station

Council partnerships secure Surrey nature reserve

Last week saw the official handover of **Tice's Meadow Nature Reserve** to **Surrey County Council**. This much-loved wildlife haven on the outskirts of Farnham saw its long-term future safeguarded when a partnership of six councils came together in December 2021 to purchase the site and protect it as a natural space.

Surrey County Council acquired the site from **Hanson UK** with funding support from Hampshire County Council, Guildford Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council, Rushmoor Borough Council and Farnham Town Council. The 55 hectare (137 acre) former quarry site which is fully restored as a nature reserve now forms part of the Surrey County Council countryside estate.

The official handover was not only an opportunity to celebrate and commemorate the long-term future of Tice's Meadow but also



to understand the vital role the **Tice's Meadow Bird Group** play in the conservation of the site and the tireless work of local volunteers.



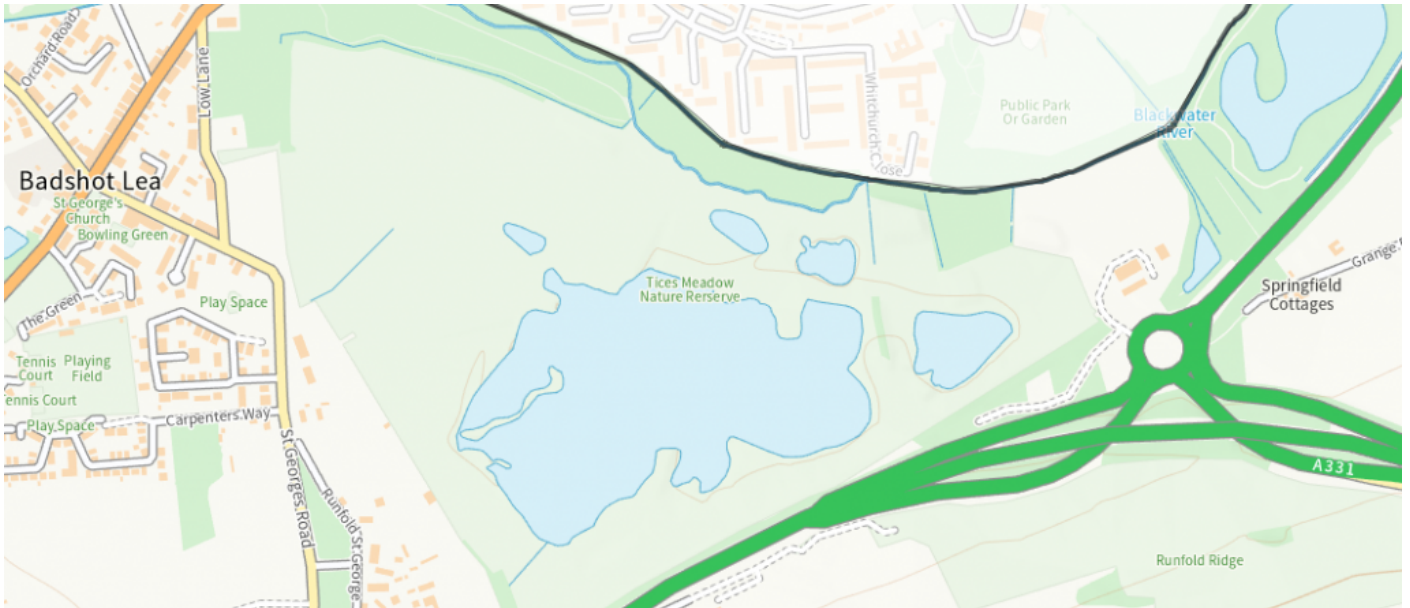
Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council said: "It is an honour to be a part of the successful partnership Surrey County Council has formed with five other councils, with our shared vision to protect and enhance the natural environment. It is our ambition to work collaboratively with partners to protect our environment and invest in climate change.

"I would like to recognise the valuable work of the Tice's Meadow Bird Group and local volunteers whose dedication ensure this site will continue to be a haven for wildlife, and a wonderful open space for everyone to enjoy recreationally."

Paul Williams, Head of Land and Mineral Resources at Hanson UK, said:

"Hanson UK are committed to conserving and enhancing nature before, during and after mineral extraction. Tice's Meadow - on the site of our former Farnham quarry - is an exemplar of the biodiversity uplift and community benefits that can be achieved through progressive restoration after quarrying has finished. Going forward we know it's in expert hands".

Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, **Marisa Heath** and Director of Environment **Carolyn McKenzie** planted a Bird Cherry tree (*prunus padus*) and unveiled a commemorative plaque to mark the occasion.



Location of Tice Meadow off the Farnham Road (A31) 137 acres.

Tice's Meadow is widely considered one of the best inland sites to watch birds in the southeast of England. As well as a circular 'biodiversity' trail within the site there are also footpath links to Tongham Pools and the Blackwater Valley giving the opportunity for visitors to explore wildlife and the natural environment.

For further information on Tice's Meadow including volunteer opportunities visit their website Tice's Meadow (ticesmeadow.org).

News from Surrey County Council

How to help "low-incomes" with your £400

The **Epsom and Ewell Energy Support Scheme** is a plan to offer those running into difficulties immediate help with their bills, and then advice and financial support to improve energy efficiency or reduce energy consumption in their homes and so reduce bills going forward. This might include buying a more efficient appliance for them or helping with improved insulation. The scheme is supported by local MP **Chris Grayling**

To help support this programme they are asking local households who have less difficulty paying for these higher energy bills to donate their £400 support payments to the fund so that it can be used to help reduce the bills of those who are struggling. If you are able to do this, they would be very grateful, and all other donations are of course also very welcome.

The Scheme is being run jointly by the **Good Company**, which runs the local food bank, and **Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell** helped by local Churches. It will offer both advice sessions to help those who are not sure how to improve their energy efficiency as well as assistance paying for improvements.

To make a donation, please visit the donations page at www.justgiving.com/campaign/epsom-ewell-energy-support-scheme

£11.9m to help Surrey residents cut their energy bills

Grants of up to £25,000 are now available for eligible Surrey residents to help make their homes warmer and more energy efficient.

People living in hard to heat homes and on lower incomes, could receive grants between £10,000 and £25,000 to improve



insulation and install renewable technology – helping to save energy, reduce emissions and combat rising energy prices. Improvement measures include loft insulation, cavity and external wall insulation, underfloor insulation and renewables, such as solar electricity panels.

Residents can check if they are eligible by visiting the Action Surrey website – www.actionsurrey.org, or calling them on 0800 783 2503.

Marisa Heath, Cabinet Member for Environment at Surrey County Council said: “We know this is a challenging time for many and we’re really pleased to be offering this funding to our residents who need our support the most.

“Improving the energy efficiency of homes in Surrey will also help us achieve our goal to be a net zero county by 2050.

“I encourage residents to check if they are eligible as soon as possible.”

Funding totalling £11.9m has been awarded through central Government to Surrey County Council, leading on behalf of the local authorities across the county. The project will be delivered and managed by Action Surrey – an energy efficiency advice service set up in partnership with all Surrey local authorities.

Keep up to date on progress towards the target of making Surrey net zero by 2050 and find out what you can do to help. Sign up to the Greener Matters newsletter to get updates here: [Climate change newsletter – Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://Climate%20change%20newsletter%20-%20Surrey%20County%20Council%20(surreycc.gov.uk))

News from Surrey County Council.

Epsom and Ewell pressed-on to Victory

East Preston 1-3 Epsom & Ewell Southern Combination League – Division One. Saturday 1st October 2022

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk Reporter: Richard Lambert.

We won our second consecutive match by the score of 3-1 on Saturday at East Preston, but the two contests could hardly have been more different. On Tuesday at Godalming Town, we didn’t play particularly well and relied on a late goal to clinch the points from an even match, so supporters came away fairly happy. On Saturday though, our first visit to the Lashmar was a much more impressive performance, and we arguably could have won by many more. However, a 93rd minute Alfie Moss goal for the home side spoilt the clean sheet that our boys deserved and left a slightly disappointing taste in the mouth.

There was originally just one change to the line up following the win at Godalming as Josh Owen came in for Jaevon Dyer, but then Johnny “Sonic” Akoto tweaked a hamstring in the warm up, so we needed to make a second change. Fortunately we had a more than able replacement in Gideon Acheampong ready to go. In terms of the substitutes, Dyer wasn’t originally named on the five man list, but the non-appearance of Jubril Adamson meant that he was included just before kick off and he would also come on and score later! It was also interesting to see the return of Josh Alder in that group, having returned from a brief but very successful spell at Oakwood last month.



Pos		Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Diff	Pts	Form
1		Selsey	9	7	1	1	20	7	13	22	
2		Epsom & Ewell	8	7	0	1	27	9	18	21	
3		Wick	9	6	0	3	18	14	4	18	
4		Dorking Wanderers B	10	5	2	3	20	13	7	17	
5		Godalming Town	9	5	1	3	21	12	9	16	
6		Shoreham	7	4	3	0	16	4	12	15	
7		Arundel	9	4	2	3	18	17	1	14	
8		Chessington & Hook	9	4	1	4	16	12	4	13	
9		East Preston	8	4	1	3	10	9	1	13	
10		Billingshurst	11	4	1	6	18	26	-8	13	
11		Mile Oak	9	4	0	5	16	16	0	12	
12		Worthing United	9	3	2	4	11	17	-6	11	
13		Seaford Town	9	2	4	3	14	15	-1	10	
14		Hailsham Town	8	2	2	4	8	13	-5	8	
15		Oakwood	9	2	2	5	11	18	-7	7	
16		Forest Row	9	1	0	8	10	28	-18	3	
17		Montpelier Villa	10	0	2	8	3	27	-24	2	

Southern Combination Football League

On a sunny day with a little shower now and then, we kicked off heading towards the remaining trees at the clubhouse end. When I had visited on a ground hop back in 2001 I thought there were more trees, but a club official pointed out that many had to be removed during the summer, which left the ground a lot more open to the sunlight, but lacking a little in character as a result. I hope they are able to replace them.

We started off well and just kept going. Ricardo Fernandes sent an early shot wide of the post before Nick Wilson and Athan-Smith Joseph both struck at goal only to provide comfortable saves for Maj Kason. Owen was a constant threat in this match and he set Fernandes through with a clever pass, but the shot went wide from a good position. The pair combined again as Owen flicked on a long throw to Fernandes, but he was unable to keep his header on target.

We continued to press. Kason had to punch away a dangerous delivery before a Ryan Smith corner to the far post was headed back across by Brad Peters only for Aaron Bogle to miss a straightforward header from five yards out, glancing it wide instead. Fortunately, we took the lead in the 35th minute after Smith received the ball just over twenty yards out and drilled it low into the keeper's left hand bottom corner. Fernandes also had another try but his equally powerful strike went wide of the post.

This had been an extremely one-sided first half against a team in the top half of the table and the only criticism you could level at our team was that we probably should have been in a position of greater dominance on the scoreboard. We had a slight delay to the second half as an Assistant was unable to continue, so a home official ran the line for the remainder of the match and he was very busy as almost all of the play would again be contained within the East Preston half.



Athan Smith-Joseph was unfortunate to strike just beyond the top corner from nearly twenty yards and his next delivery was palmed up into the air by Kason, but a defender was able to head clear before it reached Fernandes. The home side did get a shot blocked by a defender for a corner which, disappointingly for the home side, went straight out of play and we made them pay as a nice through ball set Smith-Joseph in on goal from a central position where he clipped the ball past the keeper before rolling the ball into the empty net with his left foot for our second goal in the 54th minute.

Chances kept coming. Owen struck just over the bar after beating two men and on the hour Fernandes intercepted a pass across the back and was through on goal, but telegraphed his shot and Kason saved low down to his left. Dyer came on for Smith-Joseph in the 63rd minute and he found the net nine minutes later, although much of the credit goes to Owen who did well on the right before sending the ball over from the left for Dyer to side foot home from eight yards. Kason nearly managed to keep it out, but there was just too much power in the shot and it was 3-0.

Alder joined the fray and sent one powerful strike at goal but Kason did well to block the shot, then Alder set up Wilson who struck powerfully enough, but it went just over the bar from only ten yards.

Seven minutes from the end of normal time we saw the return of Steve Springett after his nasty injury at Worthing United back in August and he did well to head a rare home attack away, but unfortunately we were caught out ten minutes later with a looping header that dropped over Matt Walton and into the net. It was an unfortunate way to end the match from an Epsom point of view, but it shouldn't be forgotten that this was still our seventh League win in a row and with leaders Selsey being held to a draw by Seaford, we closed the gap at the top to a point and hold a game in hand. Despite the late drama it was a good day in terms of the bigger picture.

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Gideon Acheampong, Zach Powell, Ryan 'Butch' Smith, Brad Peters (c), Aaron Bogle, Nick Wilson, Gavin Quintyne, Athan Smith-Joseph, Ricardo Fernandes, Josh Owen

Subs: Jaevon Dyer for Smith-Joseph (63), Josh Alder for Owen (73) Steve Springett for Powell (83), Lewis Jupp for Acheampong (88)

Sutton and Epsom Rugby Just Fall Short

BOURNEMOUTH 28 SUTTON & EPSOM 25: Sat. 1st Oct. Sutton & Epsom travelled to Chapel Gate with confidence following their opening win of the season against Brighton the week before. The revolving door of selection was again in evidence as the Black & Whites lost influential fly half Gareth O'Brien and Ben Tame to injuries sustained at training on Thursday night but Messrs Craig, Glanville and Clemett returned from the sick list.

Freddy Bunting kicked off in bright sunshine playing against the significant wind and up the slight slope. From the outset both teams were keen to spread the ball wide and a thoroughly entertaining contest had begun. The host's early dominance was assisted by S&E conceding far too many penalties. It was from one of these infringements that Grant Hancox opened the scoring after five minutes for a 3-0 lead. Moments later they had the chance to extend the lead but opted to kick the penalty into the corner for the attacking 5-metre line out. The Sutton defence repelled the first couple of strikes before the ball was spun wide for Brad Law to score. Grant Hancox added the extras from the flank to lead by ten points in as many minutes.



#	Team	P	W	D	L	PF	PA	+/-	TB	LB	Pts
1	Oxford Harlequins	5	5	0	0	144	97	47	2	0	22
2	Wimbledon	5	4	0	1	216	88	128	4	1	21
3	Maidenhead	5	4	0	1	193	106	87	5	0	21
4	Havant	5	4	0	1	147	96	51	4	1	21
5	Camberley	5	4	0	1	151	83	68	3	0	19
6	Bracknell	5	3	0	2	123	117	6	3	0	15
7	Bournemouth	5	2	0	3	109	136	-27	1	0	9
8	Brighton	5	1	0	4	128	182	-54	3	2	9
9	Sutton & Epsom	5	1	0	4	124	155	-31	1	2	7
10	London Welsh	5	1	0	4	105	159	-54	0	1	5
11	Banbury	5	1	0	4	105	171	-66	1	0	5
12	Royal Wootton Bassett	5	0	0	5	48	203	-155	0	0	0

<https://www.englandrugby.com/home>

Emboldened by their fine start the Lions ran the restart from the 22 and only an errant pass prevented Josh Wickens from the opportunity to make a telling contribution. In fact the ball was recovered by Freddy Bunting and the Black & Whites had their first attack. Once more the visitors were thwarted by conceding a penalty and were soon on the back foot in defence. Following sustained pressure a long pass was thrown out to Jordie Wayman who was hugging the touchline. The bounce favoured the Chapel Gate team and the wing touched down in the corner. The challenging conversion failed but Bournemouth had a significant 15-0 lead in the first quarter.

George Drye, relishing in the role of captaincy, led the riposte that saw the visitors have a line out deep in their opponent's 22. Unfortunately Mr Long spotted an infringement and Sutton's hopes of getting on the scoreboard were thwarted by a careless technical error. However, five minutes later it was a case of 'Action: Take 2'. Great control by S&E was matched by superb defence until Bournemouth conceded a penalty near the uprights. The visitors opted for a scrum, the ball went wide and after a powerful carry by Archie Fitzgerald the ball was transferred to Kyren Ghumra who squeezed home in the corner. Freddy Bunting's touchline conversion went agonisingly close as Sutton trailed by 5-15. With the interval fast approaching the next score went to the hosts as Grant Hancox chipped over a drop goal as the Dorset side stretched their advantage to 18-5 with the elements.

The hosts pressed hard to add to their account and secure a sizeable buffer before they faced the strong wind. Dogged Sutton defence repelled a 5-metre line out that was followed by the Lions conceding a penalty at the scrum. Freddy Bunting cleared to halfway as the clock ran down. But on the final play of the half the alert scrum half Harry Warr intercepted and raced away to score. With Grant Hancox successful conversion the whistle blew with Bournemouth leading 25-5. The home team had dominated the breakdown and had been on the front foot for the majority of the contest and were worthy of their 20-point advantage. The Sutton cause had not been helped by the early departures of Ciaran Mohr and Dan Jones who were replaced by Sam Hurley and Luke Halford but many of their wounds were self-inflicted with the penalty count far too high.

The question on the lips of the crowd was whether a 20-point cushion was enough to counter the wind in the second period. Obviously the Black & Whites needed an improvement in quality and an early score. Having hardly made a mistake in the first half Bournemouth knocked on Ross Parsons clearance kick on halfway. An emboldened S&E spun the ball out to Kyren Ghumra who punished a weak tackle and ran in to score from distance. Freddy Bunting added the conversion and Sutton grasped the lifeline to now trail 12-25 and were back in the contest. The Lions looked for an immediate reply but the Sutton defence held firm before a penalty enabled them to clear. From a perfect catch and drive George Drye secured the ball and the pack marched to the line and Alex Mount added the finishing touches. Freddy Bunting did the necessary for 19-25 and the match was now very much in the balance with 25 minutes still to play.

The Surrey men were playing with confidence and in their next sortie Owen Clemett broke into the 22 but the scrambling home



defence intercepted his inside pass that would have resulted in a try. As the game entered the final quarter S&E lost their hooker, James Craig, and the front row was re-organised with Alex Mount taking over throwing duties as Will Lloyd returned to the fray. Both teams looked more than capable of adding to the score. An error by the hosts, kicking the ball out on the full, gave the visitors a prime attacking position. Kyren Ghumra charged into the 22 with his hat trick in the offing but he was brought down by a superb tackle. Sutton had the consolation of a penalty and Freddy Bunting cut the deficit to three points as the Lions led 25-22. Within five minutes the Sutton centre had levelled the scores at 25 apiece with another calmly executed penalty. Trailing by 20 points at the break Sutton had overcome the significant deficit with ten minutes to play.

Bournemouth stormed back desperate to turn the tide. They were rewarded with a penalty of their own and Grant Hancox made no mistake to retake the lead 28-25. The Rugby Lane men threw everything at their opponents in search of another score. Rob Hegarty was prominent in the loose linking well with the ubiquitous George draw. Robbie Martey with intelligent angled runs threatened to make the telling strike. But the home defence was superb and once they got possession they managed the clock and closed out the game. A thrilling contest finished with Bournemouth recording their first victory of the campaign since the opening weekend of the season.

The 28-25 score reflected the closeness of a contest that could have gone either way or ended honours even. Bournemouth's defence was of the highest quality and they started the contest magnificently and bullied Sutton at the breakdown. However, S&E's response after the break was exceptional to level the scores. Owen Clemett playing out of position at 10 led the line with aplomb. George Drye was outstanding, securing the ball at the line out, leading his team and being at the heart of all Sutton's best moments. The returning Kyren Ghumra with a brace of tries was a potent threat. Once again the Sutton fitness shone through in the last quarter and Rob Hegarty was tireless. Ultimately the Lions shaded the contest with cool heads and fine match management in the final stages of a game that had the crowd on the edge of their seats.

Next Saturday the league goes into abeyance and the players can have a deserved weekend of rest and recuperation. Hostilities resume on Saturday 15th October with, perhaps, the highlight of the season being the visit of the historic London Welsh RFC. The Exiles have been making a rapid ascent of the league pyramid following the financial difficulties that led to an enforced reset in the lower leagues. The kickoff will be 3pm at

Rugby Lane and it might be wise to arrive in good time as a sizeable crowd is anticipated.

Sutton & Epsom

Ciaran Mohr, Robbie Martey, Archie Fitzgerald, Freddy Bunting, Kyren Ghumra, Owen Clemett, Ross Parsons, Tom Boaden, James Craig, Will Lloyd, Matt Harwood, Josh Glanville, Dan Jones, Rob Hegarty, George Drye ©.

Replacements: (all used)

Alex Mount, Luke Halford & Sam Hurley

Bournemouth

Antony Fitch, Jordie Wayman, Brad Law, Grant Hancox, Josh Wickens, Mike Pope, Harry Warr, Tom Napier, Conrad Carkreet, Alan Manning ©, Matt Warwick, Joe Desmond, Ben Kimber, Ciaran Smyth, Jake Guildford.

Replacements

Luca Firetto, Connor McCaffery & Jack Young.