

Benches mark the victims of Co-Vid across the Borough

23 October 2022



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is installing 14 memorial benches across the Borough to commemorate all the lives lost in the Covid-19 pandemic. Metal benches have been placed at Alexandra Recreations Ground, Long Grove Park, Nonsuch Park, Shadbolt Park, Stoneleigh Broadway and The Grove in Ewell Village.

Mayor Clive Woodbridge, College Ward Councillors Julie Morris and Nigel Colin, Cllr Hannah Dalton and Elena Ciesco. Acting Borough Chief Executive Jackie King also attended.

More metal benches have been or are in the process of being installed at Auriol Park, Ewell Court Park, Mounthill Gardens and The Wells Centre. Wooden benches will also be placed at Epsom Common, Grandstand Road, Horton Country Park and Hogsmill by the steppingstones at a later date. Flowers will also be planted around the benches where appropriate.

Funding for the benches was provided via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Councillor **Hannah Dalton**, who put forward the CIL bid, said, “The past two years have been extremely hard for everyone in the Borough, but more so for those who have lost loved ones. These benches are our permanent memorial to all those affected by the pandemic. “I hope they will bring comfort to grieving families, ensuring that their loved one will always have a place in and be remembered by our community.”

Councillor **John Beckett**, Chair of Environment and Safe Communities Committee, added, “While these benches memorialise the pandemic, they also represent a time for reflection within the Borough. I can’t think of a more fitting tribute to those we have lost, than to have something to remind us of and generations to come.”



A Robin is a feature of the Co-Vid victims memorial bench

One of the benches, for each of the Borough’s Wards, was the place of a moving speech by **Mayor Clive Woodbridge** on Saturday morning 22nd October. In **Alexandria Park** The Mayor spoke of the loss so many across the Borough have suffered during the pandemic. As of the week ending 7th October 2022 the UK Government funded **LG Inform** states that 474 persons have died of Co-Vid in Epsom and Ewell.

Mayor Woodbridge recognised how deep the bereavement is felt by relatives who came to the bench this day especially as he had this year suffered the loss of a son. As an example of the reality of loss he read a tribute to one Epsomian who succumbed to the virus.



Elena Ciesco who campaigned for memorials in the Borough

“Luigi Ciesco was born in Italy in 1941 and at the age of 19 he moved to England in 1960 to start a new life. He met Vincenza his wife, at a wedding in Italy and soon after, they were married, settling first in Hook Road and then in Alexandra Road in Epsom for 45 years. They went on to have 4 children and 8 grandchildren and were married for 57 years. He was an amazing, fun loving and cheeky man, a real character and he was known and loved by so many. He loved his family, and he loved his Italian music and he loved to dance. He was an extremely hard-working man and worked in the NHS. He grew all his own vegetables and was an expert gardener and wine maker.

The Covid memorial benches mean a great deal to the bereaved families. The world seems to have moved on from Covid but they have not moved on, they are forever changed. The benches show the reality of how cruel this virus is and how it does not discriminate from young to old. We all hope that it makes people stop and think about our loved ones never to be forgotten.”

Indecent images end policeman’s career

23 October 2022



A former Surrey Police special constable will never be in the profession again after failing to report unwanted illegal indecent images. According to an accelerated misconduct hearing outcome posted on the force’s website, Special Constable **Alan Harvey** breached the “standards of professional behaviour” and was so serious “it warranted dismissal”.

Surrey Police handed Mr Harvey’s name to the LDPS on request as the hearing notice and outcome refers to him as “Special Constable Harvey”. However, limited details have been released since the hearing took place on October 3.

Here’s what happened:

A notice of the hearing was on the Surrey Police website on September 27, and was seen by the LDPS.

On approaching the force to gain the full name of the officer involved, which was not initially included, the notice was taken down and replaced with one with less detail on the allegations. The original notice of the hearing stated that former SC Harvey had stated, during police interview, that sometimes he would be sent indecent images of children. It said: “SC Harvey failed to report these illegal images to police so that the offenders could be prosecuted, and children safeguarded. Former SC Harvey continued to use the same online services despite having been sent [indecent images of children].”

According to the original hearing notice, the former SC had also accepted in police interview that he may have sent one of the indecent images of children by accident when trying to send legal adult pornography through the online service.

Chief Constable **Gavin Stephens** chaired the hearing on October 3, finding that the breach of the standards of professional behaviour was so serious that former SC Harvey should be dismissed, had he still been serving. The college of policing states that special constables are voluntary officers with the same powers as regular officers, and they take part in frontline police work.

This can mean a varied role including spending “much of their time on the streets”, patrolling in crime hotspots or taking part in crime-prevention initiatives.

A Surrey Police spokeswoman said: “The rules breached were that it breached our professional standards, the finding made was that he would have been dismissed had he still been serving and same goes for the sanctions imposed.”

*LDRS = Local Democracy Reporting Service of the BBC with which Epsom and Ewell Times is partnered.

Inspirational Surrey Syrian awarded

23 October 2022



Surrey Arts inclusion music teacher **Raghad Haddad** has won the Inspirational Music Leader Award at the Youth Music Awards 2022. Raghad received her award on 19 October in Troxy London in recognition of her work for Surrey Arts as a diverse leader of refugee background, supporting vulnerable children in Surrey.

Raghad Haddad is a viola player from Yabroud, a small town in the mountains north of Damascus. Since being granted asylum in the UK in 2018 she has performed at numerous charity events in London and Brighton and recently performed with Damon Albarn, The Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and The Orchestra of Syrian Musicians.

On behalf of Surrey Arts Raghad has worked on multiple projects supporting vulnerable children including SEND and refugee children and has been the executive producer of a major international music project involving the United Nations and 120 participants from around the world.

After finding out she won the award, Raghad said: *"I was speechless when they announced my name as the winner of the Inspirational Music Leader at the Youth Music Award 2022 this week!"*

"It's such an honour to have received this award and I'm so grateful to my colleagues at Surrey Arts for the support they have given me since I arrived in the UK from Syria."

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity, not only to rebuild my own life but also the privilege to help others affected by war, poverty, climate change and discrimination. Sadly, the need to support displaced communities is not getting smaller and I look forward to supporting more of your transformational projects in the months and years ahead."

Kavyan Hajirostami also won the Young Leader Award for their work with Big Leaf. Big Leaf support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) across Surrey and work closely with Surrey Arts on a range of music and arts projects. You can find more information about Big Leaf here: <https://www.bigleafoundation.org.uk/>

Surrey County Council news

Anyone for tennis and computers?

23 October 2022



Pupils at Shawley Community Primary Academy **Epsom Downs** will put their racket skills to the test this half-term and take part in an exciting afternoon of tennis coaching and computer-based learning activities, with education charity, **Rackets Cubed**.

The unique initiative combines racket sports with science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) lessons at the local Sutton Sports Village, rounded off with a well-deserved and nutritious hot meal for the budding athletes and computer whizzes.

Supporting all children to be healthy, happy and ambitious learners is at the heart of Shawley Primary Academy's approach. The school has partnered with Rackets Cubed to help widen access into sports and STEM learning for more children in the borough, empowering each pupil to realise their full academic and sporting potential.

The charity aims to improve the lives of children and young people across the UK and raise aspirations through its integrated programme of sport, education and nutrition learning. As part of the enriching afternoon, pupils in years 5 and 6 will be getting served with:

- Racket sports - a structured coaching session with a professional sports coach
- STEM activities - one hour of fun and engaging computer-based activities delivered alongside the sports coaching, to complement the core school curriculum
- Nutrition - A healthy and hearty meal will be provided at the end of the session to help the children re-energise, whilst learning about the importance of nutrition for classroom and sporting achievement

While tennis fans bid farewell to old legends such as Serena Williams and Roger Federer this year, the future is looking bright with newcomers such as Naomi Osaka and Emma Raducanu. This makes it a perfect time to introduce more local children to the sport and nurture the next generation of diverse tennis talent.

By providing pupils with the opportunity to try extracurricular opportunities that otherwise might not be easily accessible, Shawley and Rackets Cubed are working to help children dream bigger, develop their skills and discover new passions.

Sports Lead at Shawley Community Primary Academy, said:

"We are very excited here at Shawley to begin this partnership with Rackets Cubed and help break down barriers to sports and STEM learning. The positive growth and self-fulfilment of our pupils is central to what we do, so being able to align ourselves with a charity that is also driven by these aims was incredibly important to us. Sports can create an infinite number of opportunities and benefits when it's regularly engaged in, so it wonderful to work with Rackets Cubed and help our pupils access professional coaching and training, which all contributes to their wider success."

For more information about Shawley Community Academy, please visit: <https://www.shawleyprimaryacademy.co.uk/>

Le Pire, The Worst - Epsom burglar gets 3 years.

23 October 2022



A man who stole £23,000 when he burgled a house in Epsom, will now spend just under three years behind bars for his crime. **Alfred Pire**, 25, of York Road, Chingford, pleaded guilty to using a crowbar to break into a home on East Street, Epsom, on the afternoon of 23 May. After conducting an untidy search, Pire took approximately £23,000 in cash and fled the scene.

In his rush to leave the crime scene Pire left the crowbar behind, allowing officers to swab it for DNA bringing up a match on the system. Investigators also trawled through footage from nearby CCTV images and were able to match Pire to a man acting suspiciously in the area at the time of the burglary.

At sentencing at Guildford Crown Court on Monday, 17 October, Pire was sentenced to 32 months in prison. Unfortunately, the money stolen in the burglary was not recovered.

Investigating officer **PC Brown** said: "Pire was brazened enough to drive to the scene in his own vehicle and use a crowbar to break into the victim's house, stealing a significant amount of cash that was proceeds of years of hard work and long hours from the victim's business. The impact this has had on the victim has been huge.

"We know that when your house is burgled victims can feel extremely violated and uncomfortable in their own home. No-one should have to feel like this due to another persons' selfish and criminal actions, so we are very pleased that we were able to bring the victim some closure with the successful prosecution of Pire."

Surrey Police

Woking up to a very big debt problem

23 October 2022



The senior councillor responsible for **Surrey County Council**'s money will step down from its cabinet amid a "potential conflict" as the Government calls for a review of finances at the borough council she used to lead.

Woking Borough Council's forecasted **£2.4bn debt** has been called an "outlier" by government ministers.

The now leader at Woking was sent a letter by local government minister MP **Paul Scully** on Tuesday (October 18) which said the authority had the highest level of commercial debt relative to its size for a council.

Image: Woking Borough Council. Credit Rebecca Curley.

It follows a letter that was sent to the borough council in May which said there was a need to tackle risk at local government level and protect taxpayers' interest. Mr Scully's letter said: "As you will be aware, the Government has in recent years expressed concerns that some authorities are putting taxpayers' money at risk through disproportionate levels of debt, over-reliance on commercial income, or pursuing novel and risky investments." He described Woking's debt, forecast to rise to almost £2.4bn by 2024/25, as "an outlier" even among the other local authorities government was working with.

He also said he had concerns about the authority's lending arrangements for major developments, the risks council and taxpayers were exposed to due to the long-term high levels of debt and the "sensitivity of these investments to commercial performance".



Ayesha Azad, leader of Woking Borough Council from Oct 2020, submitted by her. Credit to Ayesha Azad.

Surrey County Council announced Councillor **Ayesha Azad** (Conservative, Woking South West), who led Woking Borough Council from October 2020 to May 2022, had decided to step down from the authority's cabinet, where she was appointed in September. The county council's leader, **Tim Oliver** (Conservative, Weybridge), said: "I have discussed this matter with Cllr Azad and in light of her recent role in Woking and a potential conflict in the light of the support being provided by SCC, she has decided to step aside from her cabinet position while this review takes place."

On Wednesday (October 19) the borough council had announced a "partnership approach" to fixing the authority's finances, working with the county council and continuing to work alongside the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Councillor **Ann-Marie Barker** (Liberal Democrat, Goldsworth Park), the borough council's leader, said she was pleased the letter had recognised the "constructive and cooperative approach" taken by the authority in working with DLUHC and the county council. She added: "I welcome the support and additional advice from an independent review into the council's finances, investments and related governance that has been offered on a non-statutory basis."

She said since the Liberal Democrat group had taken control of the council in May, the administration had been assessing the debt, looking among other things at the rising cost of the Victoria Arch project, projecting a further £53 million in costs, and the funding of the Victoria Square development. Cllr Barker said: "It is however clear that difficult decisions will have to be made and significant financial challenges lay ahead. "My administration has taken decisive early action and is committed to ensuring that our financial position is resilient, affordable, responsible, and sustainable and I will ensure that that residents, businesses, and community partners are kept fully informed throughout the duration of this process."

The authority's portfolio holder for finance and economic development, Cllr **Dale Roberts** (Liberal Democrat, St Johns), said the first priority was taking "urgent preventative steps to stop the situation worsening" and said reviews would be carried out of the Thamesway and Victoria Square Woking companies.

In May's local elections the Liberal Democrats won a majority on the council, after the Conservative group had led the council for 14 years.

The May letter, from then minister for equalities and levelling up communities, **Kemi Badenoch**, was received a week after the local elections, while Cllr Azad was still technically in position as leader. At the time Cllr Azad said that though the size of Woking's debt was not disputed, the council was acting on a financial model accepted and encouraged by central government. Cllr Azad said at the time that of the money, £700m had gone into Victoria Place and £450m into

Sheerwater which had provided between them new homes, retail and entertainment spaces, public spaces and space for NHS provision.

Cllr Oliver said in a statement: "Surrey County Council has agreed to work closely with Woking Borough Council on this review and to support them in the coming months to develop a sustainable and deliverable improvement plan. The residents of Surrey are our primary focus and, as we have demonstrated before, we will always do everything we can to help our fellow Surrey local authorities to protect the services our residents rely on."

Ducks in a Row put Epsom 4 points on top

23 October 2022



Forest Row 0-2 Epsom & Ewell Southern Combination League - Division One Tuesday 18th October 2022

Five weeks ago we visited Forest Row and were heading for a goalless draw in a tame contest before the match was abandoned for a nasty injury to Andy "Woody" Hall. This time we did at least manage to complete the fixture and although we were well worth the win, the supporters couldn't really relax until a late second goal secured the points, which were then dedicated to Woody by the players after the match.

This third visit to Tinsley Lane this season means that we have now played as many League matches here as we have at Leatherhead this season. In fact, this eighth away fixture ensures that we have now completed half of our away schedule already!

We took the field in our red kit which might look nice, but is not our traditional colour and really shouldn't ever be used competitively, and we got off to a worrying start when a free kick was squared for a shot at goal that pinged off our crossbar in just the eighth minute, but were soon on the attack and broke through, albeit in fortuitous circumstances in the 14th minute when Ryan "Butch" Smith tried his luck from 25 yards and although the ball took a slight deflection off a defender, Ben Abbott, the Forest Row keeper will have been disappointed as he let the ball slip under him and into the net.

Josh Alder then broke through on goal and poked the ball wide of Abbott who brought our man down, earning a yellow card in the process, but he redeemed himself by saving Smith's penalty in the 19th minute. Then Jaevon Dyer, back again after being indisposed at Montpelier Villa on Saturday, had a good run and shot at goal but Abbott saved comfortably. He was followed by Gideon Acheampong, maybe remembering his left footed strike when he scored at Oakwood in August, and decided to have another go from distance, but this one sailed over the bar.

We had to make an early substitution when Alder was tackled and damaged his leg in the process and Athan Smith-Joseph came on in his place. Smith-Joseph had originally been named in the starting eleven ahead of Alder, before the line-up was switched just before kick off, and the new man's contribution was almost immediate as his ball in from the left was poked into the net ahead of Abbott by Dyer, only for the offside flag to be raised against him.

Brad Peters picked up a yellow card for a foul out wide, but from our next attack Dyer shot from an angle with Abbott doing just enough to divert the ball around the post and from the corner Josh Owen was waiting as the ball was half cleared, and saw his snap shot fly inches wide of the top corner. We nearly got a second in injury time as Smith-Joseph mishit his low left wing cross and it nearly crept in; Abbott keeping the ball out with a desperate lunge with his foot.

The second half opened in a similar fashion to the first half with the home side making a decent opportunity on the right, but the ball in was just in front of the incoming striker. We attacked again and Nick Wilson's shot appeared to hit a hand, but to be fair, the defender it hit was standing in very close proximity and it would have been a very harsh call to give the penalty.

Smith-Joseph was causing a lot of damage on the left wing, but then he was switched with Warren Colman and neither provided quite the same threat. The Row striker sent a decent chance wide of our goal from the edge of the area, but they were restricted to very few efforts on goal and their chances of taking anything from the match reduced substantially after their number 18 saw red for a foul on Athan Smith-Joseph in the 65th minute. It didn't appear to be particularly dangerous from where I was situated, but our players saw it from a different angle, clearly didn't like it and reacted as a group. Maybe this convinced the referee to issue the red card and there was really no way back for the home side from this point. Colman struck over after good interplay with Wilson before Smith's free kick had the power taken out of it by a defensive wall that was no more than six yards away from the ball. We really should ask referees to pace the ten yards out more often.

Eldi Baze came on for Colman and Smith-Joseph reverted over to the left wing. However, the game was starting to get a bit niggly and Dyer made a great run before his shot was blocked for a corner and while on the ground he was stepped on by a defender, which understandably led to a reaction. The referee decided to call both Captains over to tell them to calm down and to be fair this seemed to do the trick. From the subsequent corner, Smith-Joseph saw his goal bound shot blocked on the line by a defender and the danger was cleared.

We were then finally able to clinch the points in the 86th minute. Baze chased a ball on the right and just managed to keep his footing as he rode a challenge. He then cut in from the right before drilling the ball into the net from twelve

yards with his left foot; the ball just flicking off both Abbott and a defender on its way in. It was his first goal for our club and one that could prove to be quite crucial in the grand scheme of things. Another substitute Johnny “Sonic” Akoto then made a good run and set up Baze for another shot, but this time a defender got in the way.

In the fourth minute of injury time we had one final chance when a loose defensive pass enabled Smith-Joseph to break through on goal, although he was unlucky to see his low shot cannon back off the post from twelve yards and the danger was cleared.

The final whistle went soon after and we now lead the table by four points and have dropped less points than any other club in the division. However, this match and the one before it have not seen us at our most clinical, bearing in mind that the matches were against the two teams at the foot of the table, and I believe we will need to step things up if we are to claim the points on Saturday when we are visited by Seaford Town. However, if that sounds a little critical, it should also be pointed out that this was our third straight clean sheet, which is a definite defensive improvement from our September results.

Epsom & Ewell: Kane Charles, Gideon Acheampong, Zach Powell, Ryan ‘Butch’ Smith, Brad Peters (c), Aaron Bogle, Josh Alder, Nick Wilson, Jaevon Dyer, Josh Owen, Warren Colman

Subs: Athan Smith-Joseph for Alder (28), Eldi Baze for Colman (74), Steve Springett for Wilson (88), Johnny “Sonic” Akoto for Dyer (88)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Chelsea supports footie expansion next-door

23 October 2022



Cobham Football Club will get major upgrades to attract more women into football after councillors gave the green light following support from Premier League giant **Chelsea**. Several other organisations showed support for plans, which include a new spectator stand and new floodlights, saying the club helps support those with disabilities and could help in bringing more women and girls to the game.

Councillors said the football club was an asset to the community in an area where a lot of facilities were privately owned, voting for the changes with only the meeting chair abstaining. A meeting of **Elmbridge Borough Council**’s planning committee approved the application from the club, which was brought to the meeting on Tuesday (October 18) for a decision because the land is owned by the authority.

Support for the new 3G artificial pitch came from **Chelsea FC**, in a letter which highlighted the Premier League club having worked in the area for many years and said it would like “first refusal” on possible future community projects. These were listed as possibly including supporting the growth of women’s football and running a development centre for 7- to 15-year-old girls as well as supporting grass roots clubs looking to get girls into competitive football.

Chelsea’s Cobham Training Centre is in nearby Stoke d’Abernon and many former players including Frank Lampard, John Terry, Petr Cech, and Eden Hazard have lived in the area.

As well as this there was support for the application from **Surrey FA**, **Surrey Soccer Schools**, **Cobham Link**, a day service for adults with learning disabilities and autism, and **Leatherhead Primary Care Network**, representing a group of GP practices in the area.

Councillor **Alistair Mann** (Conservative, Cobham and Downside) said he hoped the committee would get behind the application because the club was there to promote “sport for all, football for all”. He said: “The outstanding feature of Cobham Football Club is its community basis. It’s there for the community.”

Concerns raised around the application included the loss of Cypress trees at the club’s eastern edge, to be replaced with holly hedges, as well as the noise impact on neighbours of the facility. Councillor **Laurence Wells** (Liberal Democrat, Cobham and Downside) said the installation of an artificial pitch would mean more playing time available, important in making sure sport was accessible to all and particularly in an area with a lot of private facilities. He said he thought conditions on the application regarding light and noise would deal with issues as best as they could but added: “Whether a noise management plan can effectively deal with swearing at 10 o’clock at night, we will wait and see but I think it’s covered off as best as possible.” He called for the pitch to be recycled at the end of its ten-year lifespan, saying it was equivalent to 1.5million plastic bags.

ENDS

Insurers against poverty?

23 October 2022



Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell (CAEE) has launched a crowdfunding scheme with the **Aviva Community Fund** to raise money to deliver critical Cost of Living advice to local people. Aviva has selected CAEE to be part of the Aviva Community Fund where Aviva employees can allocate £25 (donated by Aviva) to their chosen charity project on the scheme. The crowdfunding scheme is not limited to Aviva employees - the public are encouraged to donate towards community fund projects. In addition, Aviva has pledged to match donations (one per donor) up to the value of £250 to help tackle the Cost of Living crisis.

Lisa Davis, CEO, CAEE said: "The Cost of Living crisis is affecting all of us with rising prices and concerns about the future. But for some, the crisis is truly devastating. People coming to us are understandably very worried about paying their bills, heating their homes and looking after their families. Demand for our services is predicted to grow this winter so this campaign is crucial to help us support the local community during this difficult time."

CAEE is an independent charity and needs to raise funds to keep its services running for the benefit of the community of Epsom & Ewell. It gives free advice and information about many different issues including debt, benefits, housing and employment advice. This can include crisis support such as vouchers for the local food bank and funds to help with fuel payments. CAEE can check that people are claiming all the benefits and other money that they are entitled to and help with budgeting skills whether they are in debt or worried about managing their money effectively.

Please visit the CAEE crowdfunding page for more information and to donate: <https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/citizens-advice-epsom-ewell-cost-of-living-advice-services>

Or visit the CAEE website www.caee.org.uk

About Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell CAEE is a small, local charity offering free advice and information for all who live, work and study in the borough of Epsom & Ewell. All advice is free, confidential, impartial and independent. As a small charity we are responsible for raising our funds. It costs, on average, £60 for each client that we help. To make a donation please visit www.caee.org.uk/donate/

Just £5 per month could enable us to help another client this year. If you need advice, please contact our friendly team at Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell on 0808 278 7963 (Mon-Fri, 10am - 4pm) or see our website: www.caee.org.uk

Epsom Pantry breathing life into the community

23 October 2022



Epsom Pantry is a member-led community hub and food shop opened by **Good Company** (Surrey). Opened to create a network of support and a much-needed source of affordable grocery shopping within our community. The Pantry is a means of strengthening people's financial and emotional resilience while also helping to reduce the dependency on food banks. The cost-of-living crisis means more and more households are struggling to make ends meet. The Pantry offers vital financial savings, access to healthy nutritious food and the opportunity to be part of a growing community of support during a time when it is most needed.

Image: *Volunteers Faye and David in the Pantry*

Since officially opening back in July they now have 170 members, supporting a total of 299 adults and 258 children. The Pantry membership has grown very quickly, far exceeding its aim of reaching 100 members in a year!

Bex Loomes, Epsom Pantry Manager said “With growing numbers comes a great sense of community. As soon as the shop opens there is a buzz and a lovely atmosphere. We have seen long lost friends reunited, shoppers sharing new recipe ideas, and people sitting down to chat with new friends, in a space they feel is their own. If you are in Epsom Monday to Friday, do pop in and say hello. We are open for limited hours but there is often someone in the shop ready to show you around.”

Epsom Pantry works through a membership system. Anyone can apply online to become a part of Epsom Pantry or be directly referred to the Pantry by Epsom & Ewell Foodbank. The Pantry offers an alternative food-aid that is available to anyone we see at our food banks centres. They also help people before they are in that crisis situation.



Maggie and Harris showing off the allotment fruit and veg

For £5 members get to choose 10 items from the shelves. Each week this includes meat, dairy, fridge, and freezer items, as well as all the store cupboard basics and toiletries. Fruit, vegetables, eggs, and bread are all given out for free! Our members are taking home over £30 worth of food shopping for just £5, meaning they are saving an average of £1,000 a year on shopping bills.



All smiles in the Pantry with Jane, Sarah and Faye

When not open for shopping, they are running community activities. So far these have included free children’s cooking classes with Jayne from Grow, Cook, Enjoy; energy advice consultations and top ups with Dave from Surrey Community Action; and adult low-cost, low-energy cooking classes with Chef Renu.

Newest staff team member **Jane** (Pantry Co-ordinator) will be heading up these community activities going forward, engaging with local agencies, and involving the wider Epsom community in what Epsom Pantry do here.

Epsom Pantry
24 South Street
Epsom
KT18 7PF

Will Council strikes spread to Epsom and Ewell?

23 October 2022



Reigate and Banstead Borough Council staff are using food banks and claiming Universal Credit, according to union officials, as workers go out on strike. Council employees have been offered a 1.3 per cent pay rise, labelled “insulting” by the Unison union. The strike will take place over Tuesday and Wednesday (18 and 19 October) with organisers calling for a greater increase in the face of rising inflation and the cost of living crisis.

Reigate and Banstead council staff on strike. Image credit: Darren Pepe/Surrey Live

Maggie Judd, principal local land charges officer at the council, is the union’s branch manager and said it’s the first industrial action in her 20 years at the authority. She said the council should be using some of its reserves to help staff with a better pay offer and the number of staff out on strike today showed the “strength of feeling” on the issue.

Claiming some staff were having to use food banks and topping up their wages with Universal Credit, she said: “It’s just so upsetting in this day and age, in full time employment, having to use food banks. People are having to make difficult choices.”

Unison said planning officers, parking attendants, administrators, refuse workers, cleaners, and security officers were on strike, and staff on the lower pay grades at the council would receive an additional £200. Unison south east regional organiser **Jenny Mason** said: “This pay offer is nowhere near enough. Staff feel insulted. Many employees are using food banks and their wages have to be topped up with benefits. They’ve been forced to stretch their pay to make ends meet even at the best of times.”

She called on the council to make a better offer, and on the government to provide money to protect local services, saying residents would also suffer because staff would “vote with their feet and join other local councils offering better pay”.

A council spokesperson said around seven per cent of its workforce, 40 employees, were believed to be on strike, and all services continued to operate. They said the 2022/23 pay rise was in addition to cumulative increases in the previous five years from 2017/18 to 2020/21 totalling 10.13 per cent, and additional one-off payments, such as £250 paid to all staff during the covid pandemic in August 2020 and £200 paid in April during National Insurance increases and rising living costs.

Council leader Councillor **Mark Brunt** (Conservative, Hooley, Merstham and Netherne) said the council had been making plans to minimise disruption to services since strike plans were announced. He said: “I am pleased to report that services, including our bin collections, are running as normal. We are disappointed that Unison has chosen to take this course of action. We are grateful to our dedicated staff for their ongoing hard work in challenging circumstances, and at the same time very conscious of the increased cost of living that they and their families are experiencing. However, the reality is that the council only has a finite budget from which we can offer a pay award. This is a national cost of living crisis, and increased costs and inflation are impacting the council’s budgets as well as those of households.”

Emily Coady-Stemp LDRS

Epsom and Ewell Times adds:

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council does not have a formal recognition agreement with a trade union due to the small number of union members in relation to the whole organisation. UNISON has a seat on the staff consultative group (made up of locally elected staff representatives) which is the recognised body for consultation purposes for the Council. As there is no formal recognition agreement with any union there is no formally recognised “facility time” [paid time to undertake union duties] within the Council. EEBC website statement on transparency.

A pay award for 2022/2023 of a 3% increase for staff was approved by the Council on 15th February 2022.

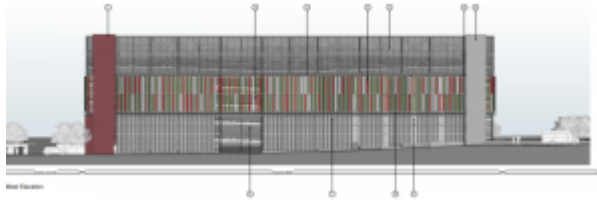
Reigate and Banstead Borough Council has 8 union representatives on its payroll and therefore do have “facility” time provided.

It seems unlikely that Epsom and Ewell Borough Council will be affected by strike action despite current inflation outstripping the pay award.

Epsom Hospital’s multi storey carpark wrong on

many levels?

23 October 2022



A council decision to refuse a new multi-storey car park at Epsom hospital is being appealed. **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** refused an application for 600 parking spaces and changes to the Dorking Road access because of its impact on the area. An appeal by the **Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust** will be heard at the authority’s town hall from November 2, and government inspectors will make a decision on the application.

Plans for the five storey car park, along with changes to surface parking and access to the site, received 125 objections and one letter in support before being refused by the borough council in May 2021.

Image: Stripe Consulting: West elevation multi-storey car park.

The multi-storey would have 527 parking spaces, with a further 104 spaces outside. Planning documents said that currently cars were backed up out of the existing car park, blocking the ambulance route in and out of the hospital but that the plans should help with this congestion. The hospital trust appealed the decision, which was made by councillors because the proposed development would adversely impact the area and affect the adjacent **Woodcote Conservation Area**.

Objections to the plans called for the car park to have some underground levels, which one nearby resident said would “minimise the horrific visual impact on the area”. A resident of Dorking Road, **Mr S Curd**, called the plans “totally out of proportion for a residential area”. He added: “We are so dismayed by the proposition that the house owners along our stretch of road were willing to sell our houses to the Trust so they can build a single storey car park that would actually add more spaces than this five storey monstrosity without desecrating the entire area.”

The appeal will take place on November 2 from 10am.