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

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Containing the Problem. A lesson in enforcement.

8 September 2022

Keeping with our current focus on planning matters. Woking Borough Council contain the container problem of a posh hotel. Read Local Democracy Reporter Emily Coady-Stemp's report here.

A Surrey mansion hotel has been given three months to remove from its land two shipping containers being used for storage. Gorse Hill Hotel, near Woking, applied for a lawful development certificate for the containers in January but the application was refused.

Image: Gorse Hill Hotel. Credit: Darren Pepe

The containers, which according to council documents are being used to store tables, chairs and other hotel equipment, have been in place for more than three years.

The shipping containers Gorse Hill Hotel faces enforcement action over not removing. Credit: LDRS

A meeting of Woking Borough Council's planning committee on Tuesday (September 6) voted to issue an enforcement notice saying the containers must be removed.

The hotel and conference centre, in Hook Heath Road, is described on its website as "an elegant mansion house hotel [in a] peaceful location, surrounded by expansive manicured gardens". The Grade II listed building, which was once private house, was built in 1910 and has since been extended. Bed and breakfast at the hotel starts at £124 per night.

The borough council first received a complaint about the two containers in December 2021. Both the neighbour complaining and the hotel's own subsequent application for the containers said they have been in place since May 2019. Each of the two storage containers measures 6m long x 2.4m wide x 2.5m tall.

According to council documents, in its application for the containers in January, the hotel said they did not amount to development, because they were "ancillary to the site's use", did not comprise a "building" operation or constitute a material change in use of the land.

The application was rejected by the council because the "degree of permanence" of the containers, along with their size and each being fixed to the ground through their own weight, meant they counted as buildings according to planning legislation, and therefore planning permission was required.

The council's senior planning enforcement officer visited the hotel on May 16, when the containers were still being used and had not been moved.

Gorse Hill Hotel has not responded to a request for comment at the time of publication.

Full agenda:

The Edge of development for Elmbridge

8 September 2022

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Epsom and Ewell Times has reported recently on planning dilemmas for our Borough. We are not alone in facing pressure on Green Belt land. 2 miles away from the edge of the Borough, Elmbridge Borough Council decided on a Green Belt development. Emily Coady-Stemp reports:

Studios for business start-ups and three new homes have been given the green light at the “gateway to Elmbridge” despite fears for the future of a golf club.

Image: Waffrons proposed development of studios area. From design and access statement.

One councillor claimed others “aren’t concerned” about the borough’s local welfare or green belt as the application was approved.

The application, submitted by the family who have lived at The Waffrons, in Chessington South, for 30 years, will see the current stables on the land demolished.

Surbiton Golf Club objected to the plans due to fears that potential additional traffic to the site, which is accessed through the course, would affect play on its first, fifth and eighth holes.

Elmbridge Borough Council’s planning committee voted for the plans on Tuesday (September 6), having rejected a motion to refuse them that was put forward by Councillor Janet Turner (Hinchley Wood Residents’ Association, Hinchley Wood and Weston Green). She was talked into putting forward the motion to refuse the plans by Claygate Councillor Alex Coomes (Liberal Democrats) who said she should do it “for completeness and for democratic reasons”. Cllr Turner had previously said that listening to the debate she though there was “very little point” in her putting forward reasons for refusal for a vote. She added: “It’s fairly obvious to me that people aren’t concerned about our local welfare or our green belt, so that disturbs me quite a lot.”

Her reasons included it being inappropriate development in the green belt, as well as traffic concerns along the single track lane. Cllr Turner described the site as “very important” because it was the “gateway to Elmbridge from Greater London” and a corridor of green land from Claygate and Hinchley Wood to Long Ditton.

Officers at the meeting said the bar was very high for assessing “harm” in green belt land that was previously developed, as this had been. The three planned houses on the site would all be detached bungalows, with an applicant’s representative stating one of the homes was for the daughter of the family currently living there.

The 11 studios would be from 10 to 19 square metres each, with a communal area around a courtyard. The current use of the land for horses would stop, with commercial livery being replaced by it only being used for the private enjoyment of the new homes. BabyBarn, a shop for baby equipment currently on the site, would stay, with part of the stables being redeveloped for storage.

Keith Blake, chairman of Surbiton Golf Club, spoke at the meeting to object to the plans, which he called the “biggest threat to the future of the club and course”. The club, which has been in existence since 1895, has around 700 members and membership fees of £1,900. Mr Blake said the club did not object to some development of homes on the site, but saw the commercial element as “perhaps a step too far” and that traffic needed to be reduced or limited. He added: “Otherwise, I see the members walking and joining other clubs. “If we lose 20 per cent of our membership, the club will not be in existence for the community in the future.”

An officer’s report into the application said the plans were not “considered to adversely impact upon Surbiton Golf Club to warrant a refusal reason”. Conditions had been put on traffic entering the site both during the construction phases and once in use.

Many councillors were in favour of the small business units, saying they were in demand in Elmbridge and would be even more so when 60 offices in Weybridge were lost as part of a Regus site redevelopment.

Councillor Bruce McDonald (Liberal Democrat, Claygate) said he had “great sympathy” with the golf club and concerns around traffic on the road but like others saw no information to conclude there would be more traffic than currently on the site. He added: “I would have artisan studios everywhere, I think it’s what we need. I think it’d be great for Elmbridge.”

Councillor Rachael Lake (Conservative, Walton North) asked councillors to raise their hands if they had ever heard of a golf course going out of business or bankrupt, because she had not. She added: “I sympathise because it’s all perception. “It’s the fear of going to the dentist, when you get there, it’s nowhere near as bad as you think.”

Full agenda

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Salts strike Anvils from League Cup

8 September 2022

Crawley Down Gatwick 2-3 Epsom & Ewell FC. Southern Combination League Peter Bentley Cup – Second Round. Tuesday 6th September 2022. Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk Reporter: Richard Lambert.

Our first ever visit to the Haven produced a fine performance from our boys as they knocked Step Five Crawley Down Gatwick out of the Southern Combination Peter Bentley League Cup on Tuesday evening.

We had obviously given Step Five Redhill a decent match recently in the FA Vase, so our Management will have expected nothing less in this contest, despite being underdogs on paper. Fortunately we were able to recall Richard Pingling after his two match suspension was completed, although in the absence of Gideon Acheampong, Johnny “Sonic” Akoto came in at right back and Ricardo Fernandes took on the Captain’s armband.

The Haven has changed greatly since my previous visit in the 1990s and it has become an enclosed and extremely picturesque tree-lined venue. However, there is limited cover behind both goals and a rainstorm accompanied the opening minutes of the contest!

Fortunately it subsided quickly and we got off to a fine start. A Ryan Smith long range effort was deflected wide for a corner and from Smith’s low set-piece delivery to the near post in the fifth minute the ball was casually flicked into the roof of the net on the half-volley by Brad Peters, who has now registered four goals already this season. Not bad for a centre-half!

Pingling was inches wide of the far post with a low strike from a Fernandes pass, while Jaevon Dyer found himself in a great position, only to scuff his shot and the danger was cleared. Fernandes had a similar opportunity just before this and Peters headed a Smith free kick over the bar, before Pingling then intercepted a poor back pass but was then smothered by about four defenders before he could make it count. We thoroughly deserved our lead at the half and arguably it could have been larger, with the only concerns being a harsh yellow card for Jubril “Jibs” Adamson and a sin-bin for Zach Powell in the 37th minute, which was still in force as the teams went off at the half, with only a header wide of the target and a shot blocked just before the break being registered by the hosts to this point.

The second half would be more even in terms of possession, but shortly after Powell returned to the field of play we had extended our lead. A fantastic pass from Gavin Quintyne in the 47th minute was sent perfectly into the stride of substitute Josh Owen who chested the ball down, before striking the ball across the keeper into the far corner for his first goal for our club.

Crawley Down pulled a goal back in the 59th minute with a ball through our defence that was struck low beyond Matt Walton from close range, but just five minutes later we restored our two goal lead and this time the superb assist came from Pingling, way out on the right hand touchline; his deep ball to the far post being met by a left-footed volley from Fernandes about four yards out, giving the home keeper no chance.

Further substitutions came as Nick Wilson, Adam Grant and then Josh Alder came on in quick succession. I’m not sure what anyone else thinks about the new five substitutes rule, but one thing is for certain, the games become far more stop-start in the second half as up to ten stoppages can occur now. It certainly seemed to break up our flow and the home side started to press us back a lot more as they chased the match.

A long range strike looped up off a defender and just dropped over Walton’s bar, but the respite was brief as the subsequent corner was met with a far post header from close range in the 78th minute as the hosts reduced the score to 3-2, and we picked up an unnecessary card when Alder kicked the ball away. It did seem a little harsh on our boys who seemed to be penalised for things in this match that the opponents didn’t, and by the end even free kicks were being taken from advanced positions with the officials seeming not to notice. As the time ran down, a long range strike was tipped over the bar by Walton, but by now we were in the sixth minute of injury time and the final whistle blew shortly afterwards to confirm our progress.

This was a thoroughly deserved win against a good team and in truth I felt that the scoreline should probably have been wider on the balance of play, but ultimately we claimed the win and will now host Broadbridge Heath in the last 16 of the competition.

Epsom & Ewell: Matt Walton, Johnny “Sonic” Akoto, Zach Powell, Ryan ‘Butch’ Smith, Brad Peters, Aaron Bogle, Ricardo Fernandes (c), Gavin Quintyne, Richard Pingling, Jubril “Jibs” Adamson, Jaevon Dyer

Subs: Josh Owen for Adamson (41), Nick Wilson for Dyer (60), Adam Grant for Smith (68), Josh Alder for Pingling (80)

Epsom’s Ashley Centre stands with Ukraine

8 September 2022

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The Ashley Centre in Epsom provided premises in the Mall to **Surrey Stands With Ukraine** rent and bills free since 7th March 2022. Now the unit is required for retailing. The Ashley Centre continues its generosity to the people of Ukraine by permitting the Epsom based charity to operate a kiosk in the public court. In addition the Ashley Centre owners are providing a large partitioned office space in Global House in adjacent Ashley Avenue. Here, Surrey Stands With Ukraine and the **Epsom Refugee Network** can carry on their activities. Processing donated goods destined for Ukraine and providing English classes and advice sessions to Ukrainian refugees.

Image: SSWU volunteers Rob and Anne-Marie Carlin with Epsom and Ewell Mayor Clive Woodbridge beside the new kiosk in the Ashley Centre 3rd September.

Alan Avis of Surrey Stands With Ukraine spoke to **Epsom and Ewell Times**. “We are overwhelmed by the generosity of the public, the Ashley Centre for our rent free accommodation and to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council for waiving all business rates. In six months SSWU has raised £200,000 and sent 40 vans to Ukraine filled with an estimated £1,000,000 worth of essential humanitarian supplies. The mission continues in our new and excellent facilities”.

The manager of the Ashley Centre, **Jacqui McGeeghan** told The Times “We are proud to have such strong links with the community and when we were approached to support the community and Ukrainian families we did not hesitate. The Ashley Centre has provided a dedicated space, The Ukrainian Hub, to allow the local team to operate a central donation point. In addition, the space acted as a platform to reach out to our loyal visitors and raise awareness for the efforts to raise money, food and medicine for local Ukrainians, and supporting their own families living in Ukraine in this difficult time of war.

It has been an absolute pleasure to be able to assist the charity and to date, the local initiative has been exceptionally well supported. As a result, the organisation has collected much-needed supplies and supported many of the Ukrainian families in the Epsom & Ewell community at this most crucial time”.

Epsom Hospital looks to ‘terrible’ Australian flu season

8 September 2022

Epsom and St Helier hospital staff will be encouraged to get their flu jab after a “terrible” Australian flu season which can be a sign of things to come in the UK.

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Among concerns that covid is now “old news” staff will also be encouraged to take their coronavirus booster in a campaign to encourage take-up in front-line staff.

A board meeting of the Epsom and St Helier hospital trust on Friday (September 2) heard that Jacqueline Totterdell, group chief executive of the St George’s and Epsom and St Helier hospitals group, had “nearly died” when she was admitted to hospital with flu a couple of years ago.

She said this experience gave her “a real passion” for making sure people took up the jab.

The chief executive added: “We always look towards Australia for what sort of flu season they’ve had, and they’ve had a pretty terrible one.

“That, for me, is a real driver about how we can encourage more of our staff to have the flu jab.”

Non-executive director Peter Kane raised a concern that coronavirus may be “yesterday’s news” and asked about how staff at the trust would be reminded of the importance of the coronavirus booster and the flu vaccination, which can be given at the same time.

Arlene Wellman, group chief nursing officer, said communications would begin going out to staff and that the best practices would be pulled from both St George’s and Epsom and St Helier trusts.

The two trusts formed a hospital group last year with the aim of sharing and working together on services.

According to the NHS, more people are likely to get flu this winter as fewer people will have built up natural immunity to it during the pandemic.

It can be life-threatening for some people, particularly those with certain health conditions.

The chief executive also confirmed the next board meeting in November would be updated on the trusts’ winter resilience programme, which is already being planned, and included looking at having the capacity to vaccinate all staff.

The coronavirus booster will be offered to certain groups including residents and staff in care homes and front line health and social care workers.

The meeting also heard about staff at St Helier “doing their absolute best” in a hospital building that was often not fit for purpose, with leaking roofs and lifts that were not big enough to fit hospital beds.

In July it was announced that a planned new hospital in Sutton has been delayed to 2027 at the earliest.

Board papers: https://www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/board-papers-and-agendas

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Civilised protest to save civilisation?

8 September 2022

Sunday 4th Sept, Epsom & Ewell’s climate action group put on a hard-hitting and thought-provoking street-theatre performance in Epsom centre. Right in the middle of town, on the big crossroads near the clock tower, a colourful backdrop had been erected, depicting landscapes ravaged by drought, forest fires and flooding. Against this backdrop, a dozen actors played out a silent lament, mourning the victims of climate disasters in the global South. The emotional impact of bodies on the ground being covered by shrouds was further amplified by a slow, powerful drumbeat and a bugle playing ‘the last post’…

Not surprisingly, this performance drew strong reactions from the public. Some felt greatly strengthened in their perception that a changing climate is a grave danger to us all, and the cause of worldwide injustice. However, there were also some who disapproved of the graphic nature of the performance and who felt that ordinary people were made to feel bad for things that are really the responsibility of governments and commerce?

As far as the local climate action group (Epsom & Ewell XR) is concerned, all views for-and against are welcomed, as they feel the gravest danger to us all will come from indifference to the issues.

Further actions and street-theatre are being planned.

Epsom & Ewell XR can be contacted at epsomewellxr@gmail.com

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BBC misreports Epsom and Ewell planning?

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On Friday 2nd September **Mark Easton**, the **BBC’**s top home affairs reporter, swooped down on **Epsom and Ewell.** Our Borough suffers from nimbyism and we could easily meet our housing targets, was his report’s message. The **Epsom and Ewell Times** takes his two minute report to task.

First – he opens his report while standing on **Epsom Common** off **Woodcote Side**. The implication being that this area could in part be developed for housing. Did he not check it was a **Local Nature Reserve** and **Site of Special Scientific Interest**?

Secondly, he travelled to **Station Approach Stoneleigh** and suggests the rejection of a plan to build a four storey block of flats was mistaken. The plan was rejected in February 2022. The developer **Woolbro Homes** (a part of **St James Group Ltd** which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the multi-million **Berkeley Group Holdings Plc**) did not exercise its right of appeal to a Planning Inspector.

Image of original 6 storey block

Perhaps they accepted the grounds for refusal which included overdevelopment, overbearing and incongruity. Moreover, the applicants had failed to sign a commitment to affordable housing.

Thirdly, the report of the BBC showed **Cllr Liz Frost** objecting to a 22 room residence for students near Epsom’s **University for the Creative Arts** in Ashley Road, Epsom. The reportage gave the impression that housing needed to meet ordinary housing targets was being denied. UCA indicated in connection with the case that it is attracting mainly foreign students to its new business courses. See Epsom and Ewell Times report on the meeting HERE

Lastly, Mr Easton claimed no Councillor was available for comment. The **Epsom and Ewell Times** know of at least two

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Councillors who attended the Planning Committee meeting who were NOT asked. Mark Easton is not available for comment as his direct contacts cannot be found. **Grace Manning-Marsh** of **LandTech**, was interviewed by Mr Easton, she was critical of Epsom and Ewell's failure to authorise developments on **Green Belt**. She did not ring back when asked to talk to us.

Opposite views from Westminster

8 September 2022

As explained when launching our **View from Westminster** feature the Epsom and Ewell Times will occasionally carry viewpoints from the other parties. Here is **Mark Todd**, Labour's local Parliamentary spokesperson's first contribution.

After Two Months of In-Fighting, Now It's Time for Action

Today Liz Truss has been elected as the leader of the Conservatives and hence Prime Minister. Elected as the leader of this country by just 0.3 % of the population. Truss now needs to move quickly from her jingoistic hard right policies aimed at getting votes from Conservative Party hardliners to policies that will help her citizens.

The UK is in turmoil and people are petrified about the winter ahead. They are also at a loss to understand the lack of leadership by the government during the two month leadership contest.

With energy bills skyrocketing, the NHS in crisis due to a lack of staffing, resources and the collapse in social care; the climate crisis deepening by the day, poo-luted rivers and beaches, and a cost of living crisis so bad that many can no longer afford the basics in life: food to eat and heat and light for their homes.

Boris Johnson was allowed to remain as Prime Minister and how did this help the country? He partied at Chequers, posed in various publicity shoots and went on holiday after holiday.

In fact, this Summer has been the perfect summation of his disastrous premiership. It has shown how much his time in charge has actually been about him and Carrie getting what they want, not the country.

And, at the same time, most of Mr. Johnson's Cabinet have been missing in action; either off on holiday or trying to ingratiate themselves with Liz Truss or Rishi Sunak to secure a job going forward.

One incident that I particularly noted was on the 7th August when former Prime Minister Gordon Brown called for the government to act on the energy crisis on Radio 4's Today programme. The Conservative minister's response was hollow, talking about why Rishi Sunak was the best candidate for leader, not what the Government would do now to tackle the crisis.

Tribalism and party self-interest have been the priority.

The new Prime Minister and Cabinet need to decide rapidly how they stop people falling into terrible poverty.

They need to do it now, not next week, not tomorrow, now!!!

5th September 2022

Rugby opener: Bracknell 34 Sutton & Epsom 14

8 September 2022

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With ten changes to the **Sutton and Epsom** squad that ended last season and five debutants, Messrs Benton J, Bunting, Craig, Glanville and Tame, the Black & Whites embarked on the new campaign. Ciaran Mohr kicked off on a sultry afternoon playing towards the clubhouse as the hosts returned to level the lively opening exchanges Sutton & Epsom looked to play with width and **Bracknell** showed panache when countering against clearances. The first opportunity arose in the third minute when the hosts were awarded a penalty. Ollie Radford stepped up to open Bracknell's account for the season to lead 3-0. From the restart S&E countered from the clearance as Freddy Bunting make a break and Jamie See carried it to the 22 before conceding a scrum. The Berkshire club using the blindside and the jinking footwork of captain Ian Burch surged to halfway. A pulsating opening to the match promised tries in the future for the Lily Hill Park crowd.

The Sutton scrummage was reassuringly solid for the visitors and provided the platform for Gareth O'Brien have plenty of time for a probing kick into the 22. However, in the blink of an eye an attacking opportunity turned to desperate defence. Fumbling pin ball at the line out saw the Greens recover the ball and explode out of defence on the narrow side with Ian Burch to the fore.

Jamie See covering back made a splendid try-saving tackle but whilst on the deck tackled the supporting runner. A penalty and a yellow card saw the Black & Whites defending a scrum 10 metres out with 14 men. The home crowd urged on their team who looked to seize the moment. Magnificent defence on their line thwarted multiple attacks until the defenders turned over the ball on their line as the attackers conceded a penalty. Freddy Bunting cleared to the halfway as Sutton survived.

Sutton & Epsom did extremely well to run down the clock whilst they endured the ten minutes of numerical deficiency. Indeed a great scrum led to a penalty and a break from Freddy Bunting got them to 10 metres shy of the line. However, every time Bracknell got the ball they were eager to make the extra man count. A fine James Craig tackle thwarted the first counter. Another powerful S&E scrum won a penalty. In the last minute of the ten on the card it looked like a perfectly timed offload by Alex Fieldhouse had set the hosts free as they sped away from halfway with a wonderful chance to score. The shrill blast of the whistle brought the play back for
a forward pass from the referee who was well placed to adjudicate. Jamie See returned as the
game entered the second quarter.

A searching kick from Gareth O'Brien was followed by an impressive catch and drive as the visiting pack looked to impose themselves on the game. The well organised Bracknell defence were containing the Sutton backs as they tried to play a wide game and were denying the Surrey club who were starting to enjoy more of the territory and possession. Another Bunting carry led to a penalty and the centre stepped up to arrow the ball into the corner. A fine catch and drive led to a penalty 5 metres out. The forwards went close, Jamie See went even closer before finally George London forced his way over under the posts after formidable defence by the hosts. In the turmoil on the line the influential Bracknell Number 8 Ken Hodgson was issued with a yellow card.

Sam Hurley added the easiest of conversions as Sutton took a 7-3 lead on the half hour. It was Bracknell's turn to survive with 14 men and Sutton brought on Will Lloyd and Jack Benton for Alex Mount and George London during this phase hoping that fresh legs would increase their chances to extend their lead. The hosts absorbed not only the visitors attacks but also scored a splendid try. Once again they exploited the narrow side but on this occasion the always dangerous Ian Burch rounded the cover and joyously touched down near the uprights. Ollie Radford added the extras as the 14 men regained the lead by 10-7. Moments later Kyren Ghumra was forced off with a groin injury and Jack Butt came off the bench as the first half concluded with no further addition to the score. Both sides retreated to the dressing rooms to receive the wise words from their coaches as the crowd replenished their glasses.

The players returned and the hosts restarted play. Sutton made one change at the interval as Mount replaced Boaden in the front row. The Bracknell pack who had struggled at the set scrum in the first period improved after the interval and after 5 minutes won a penalty as the scrum collapsed. Ollie Radford's aim was sound once more and the lead stretched to 13-7. Sutton pressed hard to get back on terms in the next ten minutes. Promising breaks were snuffed by the impressive Berkshire defences but at a cost as they lost Alex Fieldhouse and Liam Wood to injuries. Despite the visitors' pressure a solitary penalty miss from Sam Hurley was the closest they
came to reducing the deficit.

In contrast Bracknell scored on their first visit to the S&E 22. A sloppy line out saw the loose ball re-gathered by the hosts, a tackle was missed and moments later the powerful Ken Hodgson had scored under the posts. Ollie Radford made no mistake as the men in Green led 20-7. The S&E response was immediate. They won a penalty at the restart and Freddy Bunting rifled his kick to the corner. From the line out 10 metres from the line Sutton patiently mounted a series of attacks against the miserly home defence. Eventually Alex Mount squeezed in by the posts. Sam Hurley chipped over the conversion to trail 20-14. The see-saw nature of the second period had
another twist minutes later. Simon Bayliss found space and his powerful well angled run scythed through the Black & White's defences for a wonderful try. The reliable boot of Ollie Radford increased the gap as Bracknell led 27-14.

Moments later saw the visitors awarded a 5-metre scrum and it was the Lily Hill Park team's turn to thwart their opposition on the line. The turnover ball and the scrum allowed Bracknell to clear the danger. Ten minutes remained but it felt like a pivotal moment when Sutton had to score. The Black & Whites failed to create any further chances and it was Bracknell who ended the contest in style. With the lengthy time added on nearly complete the man of the match, Simon Bayliss, received the ball in space and charged through neatly sidestepping the last man to score. The bonus point secured, the conversion added by Ollie Radford and only time for the restart kick it was a job well done by Bracknell as they eased to a 34-14 victory.

The score-line probably did not reflect the closeness of the game. A keenly contested first half where S&E edged territory and possession had given Bracknell a slender lead. In the second period the hosts took their chances with clinical efficiency. The wingers, Bayliss and Burch, were a threat throughout and collected a trio of tries. In the pack Ken Hodgson rounded off an impressive afternoon with the other try. Perhaps key to the hosts success was their disciplined

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and organised defence that contained Sutton's attempts at an expansive game. For the Black & Whites Freddy Bunting had a strong debut in attack and defence as well as kicking well from hand. Austin Bell, in the absence of the usual incumbents at 9, was in no way overawed by the occasion. The Sutton pack scrummaged and mauled impressively and had periods of dominance though the line out faltered too often. The trio of debutants in the starting pack, Craig, Glanville and Tame, all showed promise for the future on an afternoon that was not as doom-laden as the final score might suggest. Bracknell were worthy winners and great credit must be given to those concerned with preparing the pitch in testing conditions many hours of hard work and dedication resulted in an excellent playing surface.

Continuing with the topic of pitches an early decision was made not to use the pitch at Rugby Lane next Saturday due to its condition. Various alternative scenarios were explored before deciding upon playing the 10 th September fixture at Cobham RFC. It will be the first occasion in the league era that Sutton & Epsom have played a home fixture at a neutral venue though we have been shunted to alternative surroundings several times as the visitors. Apologies in advance for those spectators who turn up at Rugby Lane next Saturday expecting to see Sutton & Epsom v Banbury but they really should read the Epsom & Ewell Times, the club website or their email communications.

Sutton & Epsom
Sam Hurley, Ciaran Mohr, Freddy Bunting, Jamie See, Kyren Ghumra, Gareth O'Brien, Austin Bell, Alex Mount, James Craig, Tom Boaden, Josh Glanville, Matt Harwood, Ben Tame, George London & Chris Farrell ©.
Replacements: (all used) Will Lloyd, Jack Benton & Jack Butt.

Bracknell
Will Field, Simon Bayliss, Alex Fieldhouse, Ollie Radford, Ian Burch ©, Alex Frame, Matt Outson, Jasper Miranda, Bradley Waters, Jake Hodge, Callum Russell, Tom Scott, Liam Wood, Tom Field, Ken Hodgson.
Replacements: (all used) James Gregory, George Milligan & Noah Cannon.

NOTE:

The RFU have restructured the league pyramid in a desire to reflect the trends of the game in the current era. Following a lengthy survey it was decided to reduce the number of league games and the travelling involved for many clubs. Last season's London & SE Premier fourteen clubs were released to the four winds and were distributed into two 12-team leagues. Sutton & Epsom are in Regional 1 South Central and have seven new opponents for this campaign. From the London & SE structure are the newly promoted London 1 South champions Camberley who are joined by the historic London Welsh. Promoted from the South West Premier come champions Oxford Harlequins, Banbury and Bracknell. Finally, through a formula only known by the chosen few at the RFU, Bournemouth and Royal Wootton Bassett are transferred from the West.
Just when the rugby fraternity thought that normality had returned after the interruptions of covid the clubs were faced with the more traditional hurdle of weather-related impediments. As people of a certain vintage reflected upon the summer of '76 there was a flurry of communications between the RFU and League secretaries concerning the state of pitches and match preparedness of playing squads whose pre-season might have been inadvertently affected by conditions. The final RFU missive was despatched on 30 th August with eleven points that hoped to cover every scenario. Fortunately S&E opened their account at Bracknell RFC whose facilities at Lily Hill Park were in good order and their team primed for the initiation of hostilities. The last occasion that the Black & Whites visited the Berkshire club it was a day for club masochists as the hosts put Sutton to the sword to the tune of 76-0. Saturday's encounter bore no resemblance to that thrashing but Bracknell did record a 34-14 triumph to start their season with a win.

Local hospital's building woes

8 September 2022

Buildings "Absolutely not fit for purpose", a meeting has heard as staff at **St Helier hospital** are trying to provide care. NHS bosses were told about a labour ward with a leaking roof, an intensive care ward where temperatures reached 35 degrees and lifts that were too small for hospital beds.

There are also corridors "cluttered" with equipment and staff "doing their absolute best in circumstances they should probably shouldn't be asked to work in". The board meeting of the NHS trust which runs the site took place on Friday

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(September 2) after members had done a walk around of the hospital to inspect first-hand.

It followed the announcement that a new planned hospital in Sutton, which would see the **Epsom and St Helier** sites' services downgraded, will now not be ready until at least 2027. The trust formed a hospital group with St George's hospital last year, which it was stressed in the meeting was not a merger between the trusts but a way of working together on services.

Jacqueline Totterdell, group chief executive of the St George's and Epsom and St Helier hospitals group, had been on a visit to the St Helier site's gynaecology and maternity wards, including pre- and post-natal and labour wards. The hospital leader said that staff based at the site a pre-fabricated building staff "do pretty well", despite a lift that is 50 years old, regularly breaks down and "is a real risk".

Ms Totterdell added: "When it really rains they have buckets and pads down because it rains and there's not much else we can do with that roof." While she said there were some issues around staffing, and around sick leave, annual leave and maternity leave, those she spoke to said they worked in good teams and generally enjoyed working. She added: "That's just the context that they work in."

Phil Wilbraham, an associate non-executive director on the board, called the hospital's intensive therapy unit (ITU): "The good, the bad and the ugly". He said going from the old unit where the beds were too close together and there was little air conditioning and exchange of air was a "massive contrast" to the new area, completed in 2020. Mr Wilbraham said: "When you go to the new ITU, you see how it should be."

He also said he'd heard about patients being brought into the unit and put in rooms where it was 35 degrees in August, and said in this environment patients couldn't be expected to recover as quickly as they should. He added: "I would say the staff seemed to be extremely calm, organised and professional. It's the classic of people doing their absolute best in circumstances they should probably shouldn't be asked to work in."

The meeting also heard about "clutter" in corridors and the demands of trying to balance bed space with break rooms for staff and storage at the site. Group chairman **Gillian Norton** highlighted a lot of the "clutter" was actually essential equipment. She said: "The whole discussion just illustrated why we need our new hospital at St Helier. We're trying to provide outstanding care, which we largely do, but in buildings that absolutely are not fit for purpose."

The board also heard from **Derek Macallan**, a non-executive director, about a patient who had been in the hospital for six months and not yet been able to be discharged because he was waiting to get his home situation sorted out. Mr Macallan said as well as patients in the renal department not being able to be discharged because they did not have the necessary social care available on release, he too noticed the poor state of the buildings.

In reply, he heard that when discharging patients the hospital trust could be dealing with up to 17 separate district and borough councils because patients extend out into Hampshire and Berkshire.

On the paediatrics ward, **Andrew Grimshaw**, group chief finance officer, saw that specific beds had to be bought to get in the lift, because the generic hospital beds didn't fit. He said he'd heard from staff that the planned Specialist Emergency Care Hospital in Sutton would solve a lot of those problems and challenges.

Managing director at the trust, **James Blythe**, told a Sutton Council meeting in July the trust was still "waiting for feedback" on the next steps and funding of the project from central government.

An Epsom style of socialism?

8 September 2022

Surrey's first food hall, **Epsom Social**, has just opened its doors on 29th August. The 200 seat venue will bring together 8 food vendors, with a central bar serving local coffee from Redber, craft beer from Esher-based Big Smoke brewery, cocktails, wine and non-alcoholic drinks, and a range of entertainment from local artists.

The food hall features 7 tempting kitchens in addition to regularly rotating pop ups offering up a range of cuisines and innovative menus. Food options will include local pizza purveyors Doughboyz, award-winning Venezuelan street food vendors Pabellón, Curry On Naanstop (as seen on BBC's 'Britain's Top Takeaways'), as well as Lebanese, Mexican, Korean and dessert options.

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Complementing the 8 food vendors is a 12 metre long bar, where Guildford-based Redber coffee and Esher-based Big Smoke craft beer will be served, in addition to a selection of wines, spirits and cocktails. Another key offering of Epsom Social is a performance area where there will be a curated range of events such as live music, sport on a large screen, comedy nights, cultural events and cooking demonstrations, using local artists and creatives where possible.

Located in the heart of the town, at Epsom Square, just off the high street and 1 minute from the train station, Epsom Social is open Monday – Sunday catering for everything from the morning coffee run, lunch and dinner through to evening cocktails and get-togethers.

Peter Farrell

Co-founder of Epsom Social, Peter Farrell, said: “We can’t wait for the local community to experience the really exciting things planned for the venue.”

Councillors agonise over student accommodation plan.

8 September 2022

Council postpone a controversial planning application for their own site visit. **Mr Colin Preston**’s plan to knock down a neglected house called **Green Gables** in Ashley Road, Epsom was deferred. A **22 student bedroom** development is proposed to take the place of the neglected Green Gables house. The development provides no more than 8 square metres per bedroom with two shared kitchens and two shared living spaces. **Thursday 1st Septembe**r, **Epsom and Ewell** Borough Council’s **Planning Committee** discussed a number of objections matching the number of bedrooms. 22 in all, concerning loss of privacy, overdevelopment, impact on the nearby Worple Road conservation area and many other grounds.

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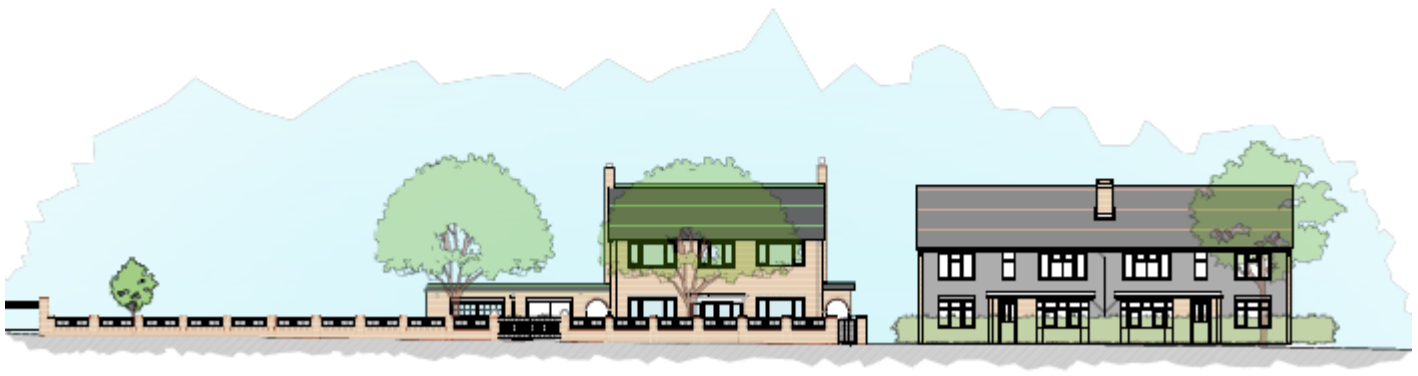
As Proposed Street Scene



As Existing Street Scene

Proposed linked two building student accommodation above and current scene below.

The **Woodcote (Epsom) Residents' Society** submitted "…excessive scale would be visually obtrusive, over-shadow the rear gardens and result in significant light spillage from the glazed stairwell and lobby area at night. The amenity area would give rise to unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance and the narrow footpath between the proposed buildings and the boundary with Ladbroke Road properties being a potential area for antisocial behaviour and security concerns…"

The **Strategic Housing Market Assessment** (SHMA) of Epsom and Ewell BC dated September 2019 concludes that "there does not seem to be a great demand for additional Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) at the moment". Mr Preston, the developer, contacted the **University of the Creative Arts** (UCA) situated just yards away in Ashley Road. UCA responded with the following: "We can confirm that UCA is broadly supportive of an increase in provision of student accommodation in and around Epsom and Farnham, both in Surrey. We have opened a dialogue with the local authorities in both towns, with a view to enlisting their support in addressing what is an increasing need for suitable accommodation for our students.

For the current year 2021/2022, UCA has approximately 1,800 students enrolled on our Epsom campus, of which 321 first years were housed in university provided accommodation. The others rely on the local private rental sector, or commute further away. Recently UCA also commenced a February intake into our Business School for the Creative Industries which is proving quite attractive to students, especially those from abroad."

Following a 90 minute debate the application was not decided on pending a site visit voted for by a majority of the Councillors.

Epsom and Ewell Times understands that UCA is heavily oversubscribed for the coming academic year. More student accommodation appears to be required by the Borough for its growing University population.

At the meeting **Cllr Liz Frost**, not a member of the Planning Committee, (Residents Association – Woodcote Ward) spoke against the proposal. She described the proposal as "Overdevelopment, far too close to neighbouring properties and overbearing. Rear of properties will be flooded by lighting from the development. Inevitably there will be disturbing noise effecting enjoyment of neighbouring gardens. Conditions suggested to deal with noise are unenforceable without a warden on site. The 32 square feet of outside amenity space wholly inadequate."

Local Ladbroke Road resident **Paul Ring** described the development as "a cramped student house in multiple occupation (HMO) and there would be disturbance from the movement of students in a narrow space".

Spencer Copping, the agent for the applicant, defended the application and asked the Committee to support the recommendation of the Council officers to approve the plan.

The **Council Officer** argued that there would be a requirement for a "management strategy" to deal with anti-social

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behaviour and that would mitigate risk of disturbance of neighbours.

Cllr Steve McCormick (RA Woodcote) expressed concern about the lack of amenity space for the students. The Officer explained that as a student accommodation the development was not subject to amenity space requirements and the nearby Rosebery Park mitigated this. The Councillor proposed refusal of the application. Cllr **Previn Jagutpal** (RA Stamford) also spoke against on grounds of the density and lack of amenity space.

Cllr Alex Coley (RA Ruxley) asked for the matter to be put off to allow a Councillors' inspection and despite the Chairman **Cllr Humphrey Reynolds** describing site inspections as a "waste of time", a majority voted to inspect. If a decision had been reached approval would have been voted for by **Cllr Kate Chinn** (Labour Court Ward) who recognised the need for more student accommodation in the Borough. **Cllr David Gulland** (LibDem College Ward) reluctantly accepted there were no legal grounds to refuse that would withstand an appeal to an inspector and would vote in favour.

Cllr Jan Mason (RA Ruxley Ward) could not accept that 22 students should live together without a responsible supervisor living there. They would play hip-hop music and make noise. She thought the rear of the development looks "like a prison". She asked "Why white brick? That would not fit the area."

Green Gables next to white rendered houses in Ashley Road

Houses opposite Green Gables

Green Gables' registered proprietor is one **Bernard Wells** who has owned it since at latest 1994 and the property is subject to a **Swindon County Court** charge in 2008 in favour of **Thames Water Utilities Ltd**. The **Land Registry** entries can be out of date due to months' long backlogs in data entry.

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