

Surrey tops Man v FAT contest

11 January 2026



Guildford's MAN v FAT Football Club has been crowned Community Club of the Year 2025 at the nationwide MAN v FAT Football Awards, recognising its outstanding contribution to improving men's health and wellbeing.

In Surrey, the MAN v FAT weight loss programme is commissioned by Surrey County Council through the free healthy lifestyle service One You Surrey. The FA-accredited scheme, which also runs in Woking, combines football with structured weight-loss support and is aimed at overweight and obese men with a BMI of 27.5 or above, helping participants lose weight, gain confidence and build friendships.

At each session, players weigh in before taking part in a 30-minute six-a-side football match. Teams receive extra goal bonuses based on their combined weight loss. A team's match scores and weekly weight-loss totals then contribute to its standing in the club's league table.

Mark Smithies from the Guildford club said joining had been transformative for him: he has lost weight, improved his fitness and made lasting friendships. He added that the positive, supportive environment has boosted his confidence and mindset, describing the club as "more than just football... a proper community".

H5 How the programme supports players

Alongside weekly football sessions, MAN v FAT players receive additional support off the pitch, including healthy meal ideas, general fitness tips and access to a bespoke mental health platform through partners JAAQ.

Across the UK, MAN v FAT players have collectively lost more than 800,000 pounds in weight.

H5 Success in Guildford and Woking

The Guildford club meets on Friday evenings at Kings College - Community Sports Hub on Southway and currently has 68 members regularly achieving their weight-loss goals. Over the past twelve months, players at the club have shed more than 34 stone of excess weight, with progress continuing week on week.

The Woking club meets on Monday evenings at the Woking Sportsbox and has supported 40 players to lose a combined 365kg during 2025.

H5 Find out more

Funded places are available for Surrey residents at the Guildford and Woking clubs through Surrey County Council and One You Surrey.

To register, visit manvfat.com/football and search for Guildford or Woking to apply and begin your journey to a healthier 2026.

Surrey County Council



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Epsom and Ewell lags Surrey's recycling front-runners, new tracker shows

11 January 2026



Surrey's self-assessment - and what sits behind it

A new "Surrey Waste Tracker" published by the Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP) claims Surrey is one of the best performing areas in England for recycling and low landfill. The tracker uses data for the 2023-24 year and compares Surrey County Council with 28 "similar" waste authorities across England.

SEP reports that 54.5% of Surrey's total household waste is recycled, reused or composted, placing Surrey joint second out of 29 comparable authorities. Surrey households produced around 445kg of rubbish per home, said to be eighth out of 29 and better than an England average of around 511kg. Just 0.2% of Surrey's household waste went to landfill, compared with an England average of 5.5%, and 85% of Surrey's waste is processed in the UK rather than exported.

The tracker does not spell out which 28 other authorities Surrey is being measured against, nor does it cite the exact national datasets used for those comparisons.

How independent national data stacks up

Provisional government waste statistics for 2023-24 show that, across England as a whole, the household recycling rate is around 44%. The same official release reports that 5.5% of local authority-collected waste in England was sent to landfill.

Taken together, these independent figures broadly support SEP's central message: Surrey's recycling rate is around ten percentage points higher than the England average, Surrey sends a much smaller share of its waste to landfill than the country as a whole, and Surrey households appear to be producing less residual rubbish than the average English household.

However, the 42.3% "England average" recycling figure quoted on the Surrey Waste Tracker is slightly lower than the 44% national rate reported by government, suggesting SEP may be using a different measure or earlier cut of the same data.

Where Epsom and Ewell sits in the Surrey league

The tracker also breaks down performance by each of Surrey's 11 district and borough councils, including Epsom and Ewell. For each area it publishes annual rubbish per household (in kg), the proportion of household waste recycled, reused or composted, and the proportion of recycling processed within the UK.

On those measures, **Epsom and Ewell** is a low performer within Surrey, but well behind the best-performing districts.

Recycling rate: Epsom and Ewell recycles, reuses or composts 52.1% of its household waste. This places it ninth out of the 11 Surrey districts and boroughs on the recycling measure, while Surrey Heath leads the county on 58.9%, with Guildford and Tandridge close behind.

Rubbish per household: Epsom and Ewell households produce 402.3kg of rubbish per year. That is better than Elmbridge and Spelthorne, but still ninth out of 11 when ranked from lowest to highest residual waste. Surrey Heath again tops this table with 341.2kg per household.

How much recycling stays in the UK: Only 63.7% of Epsom and Ewell's collected recycling is processed within the UK, the lowest share in Surrey. Several councils send a much higher proportion of recyclables to UK facilities, including Reigate and Banstead, Guildford and Tandridge.

Surrey district and borough waste league table, 2023-24

Based on the Surrey Waste Tracker's published data, the picture across the 11 local areas is as follows, ranked by recycling rate from highest to lowest:

Rank (recycling)	District / Borough	Rubbish per household (kg)	Proportion recycled / reused / composted (%)	Proportion of recycling processed in UK (%)
1	Surrey Heath	341.2	58.9	76.8
2	Guildford	347.5	57.9	84.6
3	Tandridge	361.5	57.8	84.2
4	Waverley	350.0	57.0	75.3
5	Mole Valley	362.1	56.4	72.2

Rank (recycling)	District / Borough	Rubbish per household (kg)	Proportion recycled / reused / composted (%)	Proportion of recycling processed in UK (%)
6	Woking	348.1	56.4	73.1
7	Elmbridge	407.5	54.2	72.6
8	Reigate and Banstead	381.2	54.2	96.2
9	Epsom and Ewell	402.3	52.1	63.7
10	Runnymede	386.4	46.8	71.5
11	Spelthorne	439.3	44.5	70.7

On this reading, Epsom and Ewell recycles a larger share of its waste than the national average, but less than eight of its ten Surrey neighbours, produces more rubbish per household than most Surrey areas, and sends the smallest proportion of its recycling to UK plants.

Who owns the Surrey Environment Partnership?

The Surrey Waste Tracker is published by the Surrey Environment Partnership, which is a partnership between Surrey County Council and the 11 district and borough councils. SEP is therefore not an external watchdog but a joint project of the councils whose performance it reports on.

The tracker draws on data that councils are legally required to report to central government through the WasteDataFlow system, which the government then uses to produce national statistics. However, it does not identify the 28 “similar areas” Surrey is compared with, nor the criteria for including them, and it does not explicitly reference the government publications from which national averages appear to be taken.

For residents in Epsom and Ewell, the Surrey Waste Tracker offers a useful snapshot of local performance within a strong-performing county, while also raising questions of transparency and comparability. The extent to which the borough can close the gap with Surrey’s recycling leaders, and keep more of its recycling treatment within the UK, is likely to remain a live policy issue for years ahead.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Image: Landfill site in UK by M J Richardson CC BY-SA 2.0

Since publication of the above report the Surrey Environmental Partnership has issued the following helpful clarification:

Unfortunately, there was an error in the number of authorities that we compared Surrey with. The report originally listed that there were 29 similar authorities, when in fact it was 27. This has now been amended on our website - Surrey Environment Partnership - Surrey Waste Tracker. The authorities that Surrey compares to are the other waste disposal authorities in England.

The article also mentions a discrepancy between the figure of 42.3% that we used for England’s recycling rate compared to the figure of 44.0%. Just to clarify that 44.0% is England’s recycling rate for the calendar year of 2023 whereas 42.3% is England’s recycling rate for 2023-24, which is the period that our report covers.

Finally, with regard to the source of the data, the source is Defra’s publicly available data, which can be found here - Local authority collected waste management - annual results - GOV.UK.

We have made a note to include the above level of detail in Surrey Waste Tracker reports from hereon.

Long serving Epsom Councillor blasts LGR and NACs

11 January 2026



Dear Editor

I am not sure where your Editorial writer of 6th January 2026 gets their information on SCC's pilot project Neighbourhood Area Committees (Parish power, democratic ideals — and the Residents' Association dilemma), but NAC's are certainly not the answer to the proposed LGR centralisation of local government and are far away from the concept of local democracy.

But before I address that, let's just step back a bit and see how we got here. The Government had no electoral mandate to abolish SCC and Surrey's Districts and Boroughs. And even if a vague manifesto reference to the reform of local governments counts as legitimate, the Leader of SCC had no mandate to use his Executive power to drag all of Surrey's local authorities into a rushed and centralising new local government structure.

The Government and Tim Oliver also cancelled the May 2025 local County Council election, denying residents themselves of the chance to express their view on this change, via the ballot box. That said, residents used a different mechanism to say what they thought. The results of the Government's own public consultation on the Unitary Options, published in October, showed that 51% of respondents expressed support for the three Unitary Option and only 19% favoured SCC's two Unitary option, with 56% strongly opposed to it. Yet the Government decided it knows better.

The outcome is that we won't have the devolution of power as promised under LGR but, instead, the centralisation of local government upwards and into two Unitary Authorities covering populations over ½ million. And in my Division, covering Ewell Court, Auriol, and Cuddington, just two Unitary councillors will replace the current eight local councillors with the expectation (I suppose) that this is sufficient to ensure that our residents needs and expectations will still be adequately met.

And this is where the Government's concept of Neighbourhood Area Committees comes into play. How ironic that, having realised Unitary Authorities will have nothing "local" about them, the Government decides (fully supported by the ruling party at SCC) that they will also impose what will fill that void.

Your Editorial seems quite keen on these. They write *"These advisory bodies bring together local councillors, police, NHS, voluntary sector leaders and community stakeholders — arguably, the very people most qualified to inform decisions on community priorities."*

However - and given that I am a Residents' Association councillor you probably won't be surprised at this - I think the people most qualified to determine local priorities and what their council tax should be spent on, are residents and council taxpayers themselves. Not an unelected quango with a small minority of residents working to an agenda determined by the Unitary Authority. Neighbourhood Area Committees therefore do not pass the tests of democratic local government, representation of the people, nor the ability for local people and communities to influence local outcomes.

Your Editorial also states that NACs come *"at minimal administrative cost."* I am not sure that's a given if it's only based on SCC piloting four NACs. If introduced by the East Surrey Unitary there could 36 or more of them. And how long will it take before the Police, NHS, and Fire Service, for example, realise that that simply cannot resource every NAC and every meeting in Surrey.

So, I do not support the NAC option. It is not local, it is not democratic, and it excludes the voice of most residents. But neither do I support the Town Council and precept model which will add a further tax burden on residents alongside any new elected Mayor's annual precept, in order to run allotments and not much else.

We need to look at options such as providing Unitary Councillors, individually or jointly in their localities, with funding to allocate locally. We need more local engagement and consultations on the introduction of school streets, speed limits and no verge parking zones and more. We should increase opportunities for community asset transfers enabling communities take over council assets that are better run by those who will use them. And we should undertake more co-designing with residents and users of local services and facilities, to better reflect their needs and aspirations.

So, going forward, if I get the chance to influence the local arrangements, it won't be to install a quango of unelected public servants and self-selected individuals, but it will be introducing localised structures and financial decision making to ensure that our residents are able to influence the important local choices and funding allocations that affect their lives.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Eber Kington - (RA Surrey County Councillor Ewell Court, Auriol and Cuddington and former RA Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillor)

Editor's note: Epsom and Ewell Times received its published information about Neighbour Area Committees and the cost of running 16 meetings of pilots direct from Surrey County Council's communications team.

Related letters and editorial

Parish power, democratic ideals — and the Residents' Association dilemma

Have your say on the future of local representation in Epsom and Ewell

Epsom and Ewell's Local Democracy Debate: What's at Stake as Consultation Enters Phase Two

Letters from local Councillors on Epsom and Ewell parishes

Epsom Hospital faces flu challenge

11 January 2026



Hospitals serving Epsom and Ewell are facing one of their toughest starts to a year in recent memory, with dozens of beds taken up by flu patients and others closed because of infection control, as winter illnesses surge across the country.

As of Sunday, 45 beds across St George's, Epsom and St Helier hospitals were occupied by patients with influenza, according to the St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group. At the same time, further beds have had to be taken out of use due to flu and norovirus outbreaks, reducing the system's overall capacity just as demand is rising.

The combination of cold weather, widespread winter viruses and a growing number of patients needing specialist treatment has created what NHS leaders locally describe as a "bleak" start to the new year.

Elaine Clancy, Group Chief Nurse for St George's, Epsom and St Helier, said hospitals across the group were seeing "some very sick patients" as winter illnesses and low temperatures take their toll. "Don't make the mistake of thinking flu is just a bad cold," she said. "These figures show the infection can make people seriously ill, and I'd urge people to take steps to ensure they and their loved ones don't suffer."

A national problem, not just local

The pressure on Epsom and St Helier reflects a wider national trend. NHS England has warned that socialising over Christmas and New Year is likely to have fuelled a rebound in flu, Covid-19 and other winter viruses, with senior figures cautioning that the worst of the season is "far from over".

Across England, hospitals are again reporting high numbers of admissions for respiratory illness, alongside continued demand from people with complex medical needs who are more vulnerable in cold weather. The knock-on effect is felt most sharply in accident and emergency departments, where delays grow when wards are full and patients cannot be moved on.

Public health experts have long warned that flu remains a serious illness, particularly for older people, pregnant women and those with underlying conditions. In bad seasons, it contributes to thousands of excess deaths nationally, even though it is often dismissed as minor.

Norovirus, meanwhile, spreads rapidly in hospitals and care settings, forcing wards or bays to close for deep cleaning, further reducing available beds at precisely the moment they are most needed.

What people can do

Local NHS leaders are urging residents to take simple but effective steps to reduce the spread of infection and help protect the health service. These include getting vaccinated against flu if eligible, washing hands regularly, staying at home if unwell, and avoiding contact with vulnerable people when displaying symptoms. Keeping homes warm - ideally at 18°C or above in key rooms - and wrapping up when going outdoors also helps reduce the risk of illness.

People are also being asked to use health services appropriately, so that emergency departments remain available for those in urgent need. NHS 111, which is available online and by phone 24 hours a day, can direct people to the right service, while community pharmacists can advise on many minor illnesses and treatments.

Residents are encouraged to check on neighbours, friends and family who may be vulnerable, to make sure they have food, medication and adequate heating during the cold snap.

With flu and winter viruses still circulating widely, health leaders say the coming weeks will be critical — both for hospitals trying to manage demand, and for communities doing their part to keep themselves and others safe.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Related report:

Epsom Hospital braces for flu spike

Call to join the merry Morris Men of St Mary's Ewell

11 January 2026



The friendly team of Ewell St Mary's Morris Men are holding an open day for anyone who would like to try out a bit of Morris Dancing. No experience needed.

Morris Dancing is a very old British tradition going back more than 600 years and whilst some people enjoy the colour, the cheerful music, the fun and whole spectacle, they sometimes feel a bit nervous to actually try it, this open day is an ideal opportunity, no audience, just a lot of very friendly people. Give it a try, there's nothing to lose, and it might just be that thing that ticks your box. It's Free, it's Open to all and there's no commitment

There are many reasons to try out Morris Dancing and if you asked a hundred different Morris Dancers you would get a hundred different reasons, however these are some of the more common reasons.

It is a very old tradition and should be supported

It keeps people fit and trim It is fun The people are all friendly It beats boredom Any age can do it

2-4pm Saturday 17th January, Bourne Hall in Spring Street, Ewell Village KT17 1UF is on the 406, 293 bus routes and has plenty of Car Parking available. Ewell West, and Ewell East railway stations are also nearby.

Everyone welcome, from Epsom, Cheam, Ashted, Sutton, Malden, in fact anywhere. Just come along. On Saturday 17th January.

Musicians wishing to try the music are also welcome, again, no experience required.

More information

Website - <https://ewellmorris.co.uk>

email - contact@ewellmorris.co.uk

Facebook - [ewellstmarymorris](https://www.facebook.com/ewellstmarymorris)

Alan Greenwood

Epsom lamppost flags: symbol of pride – or cause of anxiety?

11 January 2026



Across parts of Epsom and Ewell, the appearance of Union Jack flags tied to lampposts has prompted sharply differing reactions. For some residents, the flag remains a symbol of shared identity and national belonging. For others, the manner of their sudden arrival — often without permission and fixed to public infrastructure — has caused unease, sparking wider anxieties about division, ownership of public space, and the meaning of patriotism in modern Britain.

In September 2025 Surrey County Council restated its position on flags and attachments to street furniture, reminding residents that anything fixed to a lamppost or painted on a public highway requires formal consent. The council emphasised safety considerations for drivers, pedestrians and maintenance crews, and said unauthorised attachments may be removed during inspections. Residents wishing to display flags on public land are advised to apply in advance through established procedures. The council was clear, however, that anyone may fly a flag from their own property if they wish to do so.

The debate has not only been technical or regulatory. One local resident, writing to the *Epsom and Ewell Times*, described attempting to remove some of the flags in their neighbourhood and being confronted in the process. Their concern was less about flags as symbols, and more about how — and by whom — they were placed, and whether they were being used to signal exclusion rather than unity. The writer reflected on the way social and political polarisation in recent years has shaped how national imagery is read, and expressed frustration at what they saw as a lack of clarity over which authority is responsible for removing unauthorised items from street furniture.

Others in the borough have reacted very differently, seeing the flags as benign expressions of pride, or as gestures intended to lift spirits at a time of economic and social uncertainty. Some residents have argued that the Union Jack should not be regarded as belonging to any one political tradition, recalling moments when people across the country — including at national sporting events and during major civic occasions — have gathered beneath it without controversy.

That broader question — who “owns” the flag — has recurred throughout modern political history. When crowds waved the Union Jack outside Downing Street on the night of Labour’s 1997 election victory, commentators spoke of the centre-left “reclaiming” national symbolism from the political right, attempting to make it inclusive rather than exclusive. Others have suggested that opportunities were later missed to develop a more layered sense of identity, for example by flying the European Union flag alongside the Union Jack on public buildings, as was commonplace in many EU member states. For some, that dual display might have normalised a shared British and European identity; for others it would itself have been contentious. The difficulty of striking a balance illustrates how strongly flags can be read in different ways.

In Epsom and Ewell, the present concerns appear to rest less on the flag itself than on process, tone and consent. The sudden appearance of flags on lampposts — without clear identification of who has installed them and without permission from the asset-owning authority — has left some residents feeling unsettled or excluded, while leaving councils fielding questions about responsibility and enforcement. The practicalities are not trivial: removing items at height may require equipment, contractor time and public money.

One constructive suggestion arising from local discussions is that the right of individuals to fly a flag from their own homes could be matched by a more open and confident approach from civic bodies, schools, churches, voluntary groups and local businesses — flying the Union Jack from their own buildings in clearly identifiable and lawful ways, and on agreed occasions. In that model, the flag becomes visible as a symbol belonging to all, rather than as an anonymous street-level intervention that some interpret as a political statement.

Another proposal is for clearer published guidance from the relevant authorities — setting out who owns which assets, how permission can be sought, what safety standards apply, and how residents may raise concerns or objections. Transparency about due process may help reduce tension, even where views differ about meaning and symbolism.

What the current debate in Epsom and Ewell perhaps most clearly reveals is that flags still carry emotional weight — capable of reassuring some while unsettling others. Between those positions lies a space for thoughtful discussion about how shared symbols are used in public places, and how a sense of belonging can be fostered without causing anxiety to neighbours who may read them differently.

Sam Jones - Reporter



If you have a considered view on this topic feel free to write to The Epsom and Ewell Times.

Related report:

[Surrey County Council flags up the flag issue](#)

Do you have the bottle for these cold nights?

11 January 2026



With the UK in the midst of a bitter cold snap, many of us are reaching for hot water bottles to help keep warm during the day and through the night.

While hot water bottles are an effective and affordable way to keep warm, in 2024 nearly 1,000 people were admitted to burn units in England and Wales following hot water bottle accidents.

Here, the team at Health and Safety training experts High Speed Training share some practical advice on how to use hot water bottles safely.

Dr Richard Anderson, Head of Learning and Development at High Speed Training, said: "Hot water bottles are a fantastic way to beat the chill, and with energy costs remaining a concern, they are more popular than ever. However, like any household item that uses high heat, they aren't without risk."

Check the age

It is recommended that hot water bottles are replaced every two years. The rubber used in their construction can deteriorate over time, making bottles more likely to split or leak.

You can check when a hot water bottle was made by looking for a flower-shaped symbol, known as a 'daisy wheel', embossed onto the neck or body of the bottle. The number in the centre shows the year of manufacture, while the twelve surrounding segments represent the months of the year. The number of segments with dots indicates the month the bottle was made.

For example, if the symbol has 25 in the middle and dots in the first six segments, the bottle was manufactured in June 2025. If a segment contains more than one dot, the number of dots in the final filled segment shows which week of the month the bottle was produced.

How to fill and use your hot water bottle safely

Dr Anderson added: "Before filling a hot water bottle, always check it for visible damage or signs of wear and tear. Avoid filling the bottle with boiling water, as this can weaken the internal seams. Allow the water to cool slightly before filling.

"It's also advisable to only fill the bottle to around two-thirds full. Expel any remaining air before tightening the stopper securely."

He also advised always using a cover on a hot water bottle to reduce the risk of contact burns, and never sitting or lying on one, as this increases the likelihood of the bottle failing. "When not in use, empty the bottle completely and store it with the stopper removed in a cool, dry place, such as a cupboard."

Copy provided by High Speed Training

Problem Pavement Parking Powers Promised

11 January 2026



The Government has announced plans to give councils across England new legal powers to tackle pavement parking, following years of concern from disability groups, parents, and local campaigners about blocked pavements forcing people into the road.

In a statement issued on 8 January, the Department for Transport said the changes are intended to make it easier for local authorities to restrict pavement parking across wider areas, rather than relying on street-by-street restrictions that can be slow and complex to introduce.

The Department said blocked pavements create serious barriers for wheelchair users, parents with pushchairs, blind or partially sighted people, and older residents, limiting independence and making everyday journeys less safe. Ministers say

the new approach will allow councils to act where pavement parking causes the greatest local problems, while retaining flexibility where limited pavement parking may still be considered acceptable.

Local Transport Minister Lilian Greenwood said clear pavements are essential for people to move around safely and independently, and that councils will be given the power to “crack down on problem pavement parking” while taking account of local conditions. National organisations including Guide Dogs and the RAC welcomed the announcement, calling for consistent enforcement and proportionate use of the new powers.

Surrey County Council: details awaited

Responding to questions from Epsom and Ewell Times, Surrey County Council said it welcomed the announcement but stressed that it is too early to comment on how it might operate in practice.

A Surrey County Council spokesperson said the authority is “looking forward to finding out more about new powers allowing local authorities to tackle antisocial pavement parking,” but added that further detail is needed on what exactly is proposed and what the powers will entail once introduced. The council said it would be happy to revisit the issue once more information is shared by the Department for Transport.

The Government has said that guidance on how councils should use the new powers will be published later in 2026.

Local MP claims campaign success

The announcement was welcomed by Epsom and Ewell MP **Helen Maguire**, who described it as a significant step forward following sustained local and parliamentary campaigning.

Ms Maguire said she had raised pavement parking repeatedly in Parliament, including through a Westminster Hall debate, an Early Day Motion, written questions to ministers, and local campaigning with residents. She said pavement parking makes streets unsafe and inaccessible, and that no one should be forced into the road when walking to school or the shops.

Following the announcement, the Minister for Local Transport wrote directly to Ms Maguire, thanking her for her advocacy and citing her work in highlighting the challenges caused by pavement parking.

What powers already exist?

At present, pavement parking outside London is not subject to a general nationwide ban. Enforcement relies on a patchwork of existing powers, which can be limited or difficult to apply.

Yellow line parking restrictions, for example, apply from the centre of the carriageway to the highway boundary, which usually includes the pavement. However, these restrictions only apply during the signed controlled hours and do not always prevent vehicles from mounting the pavement if enforcement is not prioritised.

Councils can also act where a vehicle causes an obstruction of the highway, an offence under existing road traffic legislation. In practice, enforcement is often reserved for cases where access is completely blocked, such as preventing wheelchair passage or emergency access. This can leave many partially obstructed pavements unaddressed.

Local authorities may also introduce specific Traffic Regulation Orders banning pavement parking on individual streets or sections of road, but this process can be time-consuming, requires consultation and signage, and is rarely applied borough-wide.

The Government has said the new powers are intended to move away from this piecemeal approach, allowing councils to introduce area-wide pavement parking restrictions more easily, while still permitting exemptions where pavements are wide enough and pedestrian access is not compromised.

What happens next?

The Department for Transport says further guidance will be published later this year, setting out how councils can use the new powers in a proportionate and locally appropriate way. Until then, councils such as Surrey County Council say they are unable to comment on how enforcement might change on the ground.

For residents in Epsom and Ewell, the announcement signals political momentum on an issue that has generated long-standing concern, particularly with food delivery mopeds in the Epsom High Street area, but any practical change to enforcement will depend on the detail of the legislation and how quickly local authorities choose to act once the new framework is in place.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Image: Delivery moped on pavement in Epsom

Related reports:

Pavement Parking: Epsom & Ewell MP Speaks Out

Get That Drain Unblocked in Epsom & Ewell - Trusted Local Drainage Specialists

11 January 2026



Blocked drains are one of the most common and disruptive problems faced by homeowners and businesses in Epsom and Ewell. What often starts as a slow-draining sink or unpleasant smell can quickly turn into an overflowing drain if left untreated. Acting early is usually the best way to prevent further damage and unnecessary costs.

Drainage & Plumbing Ltd is a local drainage company providing professional drain unblocking services across Epsom, Ewell and nearby areas. Working regularly within the community, the team understands the drainage challenges common in the area, particularly in older properties where pipework has been in place for many years.

The company focuses on thorough, long-lasting solutions rather than temporary fixes. Blockages caused by grease, debris or everyday waste are cleared properly using professional equipment, helping restore normal flow and reduce the likelihood of repeat issues. Whether the problem affects a kitchen sink, toilet or external drainage system, work is carried out efficiently and with minimal disruption.

Reliability and transparency are key priorities. The business places strong emphasis on clear communication, punctual attendance and fair pricing. Customers are given honest advice based on the condition of their drains, allowing them to make informed decisions without pressure or unnecessary upselling.

Drainage issues can affect residential homes, rental properties and local businesses throughout Epsom and Ewell. Having access to a dependable local drainage specialist can make a significant difference when problems arise, especially when quick action helps prevent further disruption.

By choosing a local service, residents are also supporting a business that contributes to the local economy and community. The company continues to build its reputation in Epsom & Ewell through repeat customers and word-of-mouth recommendations.

If you are experiencing a drainage problem or would like professional advice, local help is available from a team that understands the area and its infrastructure.

Drainage & Plumbing Ltd
Local drainage specialists serving Epsom & Ewell
Call: 07771 200075
Website: <https://www.drainage-plumbing.co.uk>

Sponsored article

Warm places to go to in Epsom and Ewell

11 January 2026



Christ Church Ewell

Address: Cheam Road, Ewell, KT17 1AD

Opening Times: Wednesday from 10am to 1pm

Services offered: Hot drinks; meals; social activities

Accessibility: Ramps available for disabled access and disabled toilet

Epsom Methodist Church

Address: Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5AQ

Opening Hours: Wednesday from 10am to 6pm

Services offered: Hot drinks; meals; craft activities and social activities;

Accessibility: Fully accessible

King's Church, Epsom

Address: Off Gibraltar Crescent, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 9BU

Opening Hours: Friday from 6pm to 8pm

Services Offered: Hot drinks; Meals; Craft activities; Social activities;

Accessibility: Fully accessible.

Love Me Love My Mind

Address: St Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom, KT19 8HA

Opening Times: Monday from 1pm to 7pm

Services Offered: Meals; Hot drinks; Craft activities; Physical activities; Social activities; Meals.

Accessibility: Wheelchair accessible; Disabled Toilet

St Mary the Virgin, Ewell

Address: Ewell Village Hall, London Road, Ewell, KT17 2AY

Opening Times: Thursday from 12pm to 2pm

Services Offered: Hot drinks; Meals; Social activities; Food bank/ Food Club / Community Fridge.

Accessibility: Accessible toilet available.

Epsom Library

Address: 6 Epsom Square, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8AG

Opening Times:

- Monday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Tuesday : 9.30am to 7pm
- Wednesday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Thursday: 9.30am to 7pm
- Friday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Saturday: 9.30am to 5pm
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Epsom Library Webpage

Ewell Court Library

Address: Ewell Court Community Library, Ewell Court House, Lakehurst Road, Ewell, Surrey KT19 0EB

Opening Times:

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 10am to 5pm
- Wednesday: 10am to 5pm
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Ewell Court Community Library Webpage

Ewell Library

Address: Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT17 1UF

Opening Times: Tuesday to Saturday from 9:30am to 5pm

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks via a voucher scheme with the onsite cafe, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Ewell Library Webpage

Stoneleigh Library

Address: 1 Stoneleigh Broadway, Stoneleigh, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 2JA

Opening Times:

- Monday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Tuesday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 10am to 1pm
- Friday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm;
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Stoneleigh Library Webpage

Tattenhams Library

Address: Tattenhams Community Library, Tattenham Crescent, Epsom Downs, Epsom, Surrey KT18 5NU

Opening Times:

- Monday: 10am to 1pm
- Tuesday: 10am to 1pm
- Wednesday: 10am to 1pm
- Thursday: 10am to 4pm

- Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Tattenhams Library Webpage

Epsom Vineyard Church (Community Venue)

Address: 23 Lansdowne Road, West Ewell, Surrey, KT19 9QJ

Opening Times: Wednesday: 2pm to 5pm and Friday 10am to 12pm

Services Offered: Hot drinks ;Social activities; Light Meals;

Accessibility: Disabled access; accessible toilets; parking for 5 cars, plus on street parking.

Image: Epsom Methodist Church

Festival of Friendship -Epsom and Ewell - Ukraine

11 January 2026



From 27 January to 1 February, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is proud to partner with Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network, Epsom Library, and Epsom Picturehouse to host a borough Festival of Friendship - Ukraine.

This week-long celebration will showcase traditional Ukrainian crafts, music, and cultural heritage, while highlighting the friendships formed between Ukrainian nationals who have settled in the borough and the local community that has welcomed them.

The festival offers a vibrant programme of exhibitions, workshops, films, and live performances, all designed to share Ukrainian culture and foster community connections.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has worked with partners to curate and run a week of workshops as part of the Festival of Friendship - Ukraine.

Key Highlights:

- Free Workshops and Exhibitions at Epsom Library, including Ukrainian block printing, paper cutting art, wool crafts, and beading. *Spaces are limited; please arrive early to secure your spot. All materials provided.*
- Film Screenings at Epsom Picturehouse, accompanied by live Ukrainian music performances. *Tickets available via the Epsom Picturehouse website.*
- Children's Activities, including a treasure hunt, face painting, and a special Paddington Bear appearance, at Epsom Library.

Speaking of the upcoming festival, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Community said, "The Festival of Friendship - Ukraine is a heartwarming celebration of culture and community spirit, it brings together Ukrainian nationals and local residents through shared traditions, crafts, music and friendship. Events like this remind us that kindness and mutual understanding are at the heart of a thriving borough—thank you to everyone helping to make this festival possible."

Jo Sherring, Lead from Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network added, "Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network are delighted to partner with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Epsom Library and Epsom Picturehouse to create this celebration of our friendship with Ukrainian nationals who live in our community. Since the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022, we have been working with Ukrainian nationals who fled to the UK, helping them access work, housing, schools and community. Their courage, resilience and determination have been an example to us. As we have helped them to navigate life in the UK, we have enjoyed building friendships and learning about their culture and traditions.

The Festival of Friendship is a chance for our Ukrainian friends to share their traditions and culture with the local community with activities happening during the week. We hope you will find time to join us during the week to be part of this celebration.”

Festival Timetable Highlights:

- **Tuesday 27 January:** Opening Celebration at Epsom Library; Ukrainian craft workshops and exhibitions.
- **Thursday 29 January:** Performance by Renaissance Choir and screening of *Rocky Road to Berlin* at Epsom Picturehouse.
- **Sunday 1 February:** Music from Yuliia Komyschan (Ukrainian Bandura) followed by screenings of *Sanatorium* and *Home for Ukraine* at Epsom Picturehouse

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council



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Parish power, democratic ideals – and the Residents’ Association dilemma

11 January 2026



EDITORIAL

For nearly ninety years, since the creation by Charter of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council in 1937, the Residents’ Associations have held political control of the council. Their defining claim – and the claim on which generations of RA councillors have been elected – is that they are not a political party. They describe themselves as pragmatic, non-ideological representatives, motivated only by the practical interests of residents and by efficient, modest and locally accountable government.

That historic self-identity now faces its most searching test in decades.

The decision to promote the creation of two new parish or “community” councils – one for Epsom and one for Ewell – at the very moment when Local Government Reorganisation is removing a tier of local government, raises a question that goes to the heart of the RA project. Is the Residents’ Association movement acting in accordance with its founding principles – or is it, for the first time, beginning to behave like the very kind of political body it has always claimed not to be?

The new community councils, if ultimately approved, would initially be responsible only for allotments and for acting as statutory consultees on planning matters. The projected precept would be around £43-£46 per Band D property – yet council reports make clear that the overwhelming share of the budget relates not to allotments but to administrative costs. The ratio highlighted during the council debate – approximately £1.5 million in administration and around £20,000 in allotment management – leaves opponents arguing that residents would be paying for a structure, not a service.

Supporters reply that this is about local voice, continuity and identity under the new East Surrey unitary authority. They argue that unparished areas risk being left behind elsewhere in the country, and that residents deserve the ability to remain represented at a truly local level.

That argument is a respectable one. But it is also a philosophical one.

It places a principle — more tiers of directly elected democratic representation — above the question of whether those tiers provide proportionate value for money or a clear functional purpose. In short, it places democratic ideology ahead of administrative efficiency.

That is — ironically — the kind of approach the Residents' Associations have historically said they exist to avoid.

A further tension arises when one compares the parish model with the alternative now being piloted elsewhere in Surrey: Neighbourhood Area Committees. These advisory bodies bring together local councillors, police, NHS, voluntary sector leaders and community stakeholders — arguably, the very people most qualified to inform decisions on community priorities. They operate without a precept, at minimal administrative cost, and are designed expressly to improve coordination and engagement under the new unitary structure.

Yet this model does not feature in EEBC's consultation options.

The consultation preamble instead foregrounds the "potential impact" of losing a local tier of governance, and asks residents to respond within a framework in which the only practical question is whether to establish parish councils — not whether alternative governance models may offer equal or greater benefit at far lower cost.

If the Residents' Association ethos is one of pragmatism, value for money and minimal bureaucracy, then excluding the lowest-cost participatory model from public consideration is difficult to reconcile with that philosophy.

Some councillors have gone further, suggesting that the drive toward community councils is shaped less by principle than by personal and institutional incentives — that is, by the desire of some existing borough councillors to continue to occupy civic roles in a post-unitary landscape. Whether or not that suspicion is fair, the perception exists, and it has been voiced across party lines during the council debate.

The Residents' Associations have for generations prided themselves on being the guardians of restrained, businesslike and non-political local government. If they now choose to champion new and potentially expanding administrative bodies — with uncapped taxation powers and initially limited service responsibility — they will need to persuade residents that this is not a departure from that tradition, but a logical extension of it.

That case will need to rest on facts, not sentiment; on function, not symbolism; and on the long-term interests of residents, not on the preservation of municipal office.

As the parish consultation enters its second phase, that is the question at stake: whether the proposals reflect the values the Residents' Associations have always proclaimed — or whether, in the face of structural change, they risk becoming the very political establishment they were founded to resist.

