



Epsom & Ewell FC knocked out by narrow loss

VCD Athletic 1-0 Epsom and Ewell FC. Isuzu F.A. Vase – Fourth Round. Saturday 18th January.

After four home wins in the competition, we departed the F.A. Vase in our first away tie at high-flying VCD Athletic by a goal to nil, which on the balance of play it was hard to disagree with. However, our boys battled all the way in this match, only to be concede midway through the first half and the home side then defended that lead cleverly, showing good organisation and experience to break up the play when necessary and to keep us at arm's length from that point. As a result, the Vickers can be added to a small list of clubs alongside Eastbourne United, Hailsham Town and Long Buckby who have ended our interest in the Vase at the last 32 stage in the fifty years since we reached the inaugural final.

In terms of personnel and from looking at our bench, it looks like we are getting back to full strength, which is just as well bearing our League position and the upcoming challenges we face in that and the other two cups we remain in. Additionally, Dan O'Donovan returned between the posts after completing his suspension. Conrad Essilfie-Conduah, Ethan Nelson-Roberts and Nicolas Bostan returned to the starting eleven after our last match against Berks County, while Craig Dundas moved into a role further forward in place of the cup-tied Jason Bloor.

170 spectators were present on a chilly afternoon at Old Road and both teams opened up with half-chances. Kionte Gillfillian-Waul sent a dangerous ball into the danger area, but it was cleared, while at the other end Bostan made a good block for a corner. In the ninth minute Will Kendall was fouled close to the edge of the penalty area, and as Kendall and Ali Fofahan stood around the ball, I was surprised to see that our Captain Adam Green didn't appear to be involved, but found out soon after as Kendall tapped the ball across to him, leaving him with a more central angle for the shot, but it was blocked and the chance was gone. I appreciate the variety here, but this was a really good opportunity to test the keeper with our first set piece and it just didn't work. As it turned out, this would be the best chance we would get in the match.

We had a scare in the 14th minute when a foul by Essilfie-Conduah out wide gave the home side a chance to deliver the ball in and O'Donovan reached it at full stretch, only to then drop it at the feet of a striker. It happened too quickly for him to react though and the ball struck him and headed goalwards, where Niall Stillwell was well positioned to clear it off the goal line.

We had an opportunity on the twenty minute mark when the VCD keeper Andy Walker sent a clearance straight to Fofahan, who then found Dundas, but from twenty yards he was unable to keep his shot down. Three minutes later though, we were behind after Bostan was adjudged to have committed a foul out wide in the middle of our half, but the free kick seemed to go straight through a crowd of players and was met at the far post by Michael Fenn who smashed the ball into the net off the crossbar. I thought it had stayed out at first, but it was not to be.

This was obviously not good news. Particularly when you realise that we have only come from behind to win on one occasion this season out of the eleven wins we have registered, which took place about a mile away from this ground at Phoenix Sports back in August. This would be a real mountain to climb.

Ollie Freeman was next to try his luck with a stinging shot from close to twenty-five yards out, but O'Donovan pulled off a superb save to fingertip the ball over the bar, while our chances were of a less threatening manner. A Green corner was punched away by Walker straight to Kendall, but his shot flew over the bar from the edge of the area. On another day it might have gone in the top corner, but we were unable to punish them and Bostan had to make another great block at the other end as the home side threatened to extend their lead. We went off at the break trailing by the one goal.

An early opportunity for the hosts just missed our post before we registered our first shot on target in the 55th minute when Essilfie-Conduah's shot took a slight deflection on the way but Walker was able to make the save. We nearly had a chance just after that when Kendall's ball in from the right wing seemed destined to be met by the head of Dundas, only for the VCD Captain Ben Fitchett to get the faintest touch to it and deflect it away. Fitchett had clearly been detailed to keep an eye on our experienced midfielder and did an excellent job throughout the match.

We picked up a couple of yellow cards with Gillfillian-Waul being most upset by the decision, and then made a pair of substitutions with Carl Oblitey and Luke Miller coming on, but we were unable to create much, although we did get one more opportunity when Kendall robbed a defender and set up Essilfie-Conduah, but our man was out wide and was unable to thread the needle; the ball nestling in the side netting instead.

As the game entered the closing minutes we were indebted to O'Donovan who made a good block after a striker had broken through on the left and run in on goal. We were unable to equalise though, which was a shame as any Salts supporter who had seen our penalties in our shoot out victory over Berks County would have fancied our chances. During the last week I cautioned our club against publicising our penalties from that match online, but this was ignored, and it was interesting to see that Walker



had his water bottle in the goal covered with penalty notes, and it is to be hoped that our opponents in the two cups we remain in are not minded to look at our “official” social media channels, as for the first time in ages they might see something of relevance! VCD Athletic now have the excitement of a home tie against Hartpury University or Fareham Town in the next round, although I should point out that the previous three teams that knocked us out at this stage of the Vase went out in the last 16, so they will need to buck that particular trend!

Back in 2010/11 we departed the FA Vase at home to the favourites St Neots Town who fought back to lead us 2-1 and then promptly snuffed out the game, giving us very little to work with. This match felt a bit like that, particularly in the second half and sometimes you just have to admit that we were beaten by the better team. They will face harder challenges, but I wouldn't be totally surprised if VCD Athletic were walking out at Wembley Stadium in a few months.

Epsom & Ewell: Dan O'Donovan, Niall Stillwell, Kionte Gillfillian-Waul, Adam Green (c), Nicolas Bostan, Callum Wilson, Ali Fofahan, Conrad Essilfie-Conduah, Will Kendall, Craig Dundas, Ethan Nelson-Roberts

Subs: Luke Miller for Gillfillian-Waul (67), Carl Oblitey for Dundas (67), Jack Torbett for Kendall (90)

Epsom Jazz Club Brings Top Talent to Town

Epsom is swinging to the sound of jazz, thanks to the Epsom Jazz Club - a not-for-profit community project dedicated to bringing Nationally and Internationally renowned jazz musicians to the heart of Epsom. Situated at The Comrades Club, The Parade, Epsom, this intimate venue promises an unbeatable jazz experience, offering a warm welcome to all.

The club, a subsidiary of the registered charity Epsom Music, operates with the sole aim of promoting live music. Other than essential costs like venue hire and promotions, all ticket revenues go directly to the talented musicians. Any surplus funds are reinvested into enhancing the experience for concert-goers.

With no membership required and a strict capacity limit of just 70 seats - all arranged cabaret-style - everyone gets a great view and the same fair ticket price. Epsom Jazz Club is a rarity in its field: no booking fees, no tiered pricing, and not a raffle ticket in sight!

Upcoming Events to Mark on Your Calendar

Thursday 23rd January 7.30pm - Steve Fishwick & Leon Greening Present *SoulTime!*

The first event of 2025 kicks off with a spectacular tribute to Bobby Timmons, the legendary pianist, composer, and sideman to jazz greats like Art Blakey and Cannonball Adderley. Trumpet maestro Steve Fishwick and pianist Leon Greening - hailed as the club's finest pianist to date - lead the evening alongside bass and drums. Expect soulful melodies and toe-tapping grooves in a night that jazz aficionados won't want to miss.

27th February - Coloriage: Accordion Meets Tango and Gypsy Jazz

February brings the enchanting sounds of Mike Guy on accordion and Harry Diplock on guitar, exploring the legacy of Richard Galliano. This quartet will take audiences on a journey through Argentine tango, French musette, and gypsy jazz, with works from Astor Piazzolla and Django Reinhardt. It's a rare treat for fans of accordion-led ensembles.

27th March - Sharp Little Bones with Tony Kofi

A saxophone showcase awaits in March with the award-winning Tony Kofi leading the invigorating modern post-bop quartet. Fresh from a sold-out London Jazz Festival performance, Kofi's appearance is a must-see for lovers of dynamic, contemporary jazz.

Join the Jazz Community

Epsom Jazz Club is open to everyone, whether you're a lifelong jazz lover or new to the genre. The “Ronnie Scott's” like venue, central location near bus stops and the railway station, and welcoming atmosphere make it the perfect spot for a night of live



music.

Tickets are available exclusively via TicketSource

The charity also supports a national appeal providing grants to small struggling jazz clubs up and down the country led by Epsom's own jazz legend Nige Price.

Local Plan lessons from a Surrey borough?

Precious green belt sites could be at risk of speculative developments and Waverley Borough Council could be powerless to stop them after its biggest housing project was judged to be taking too long to build.

All planning authorities must demonstrate they can provide enough land to supply housing for five years.

If they don't they can become vulnerable to speculative applications and can lose control over where new homes are built – and may have to approve applications they would normally refuse.

Waverley Borough Council has been hit by a double whammy of increased housing targets by the Government and the Planning Inspectorate's decision to pull the 2600-home Dunsfold Park from its projections over its "development trajectory".

This has left the council running out of earmarked land for new homes in just two and a half years.

The situation gets even worse when the new Government's increased housing targets are added into the fold, bringing the figure down to just one and a half years.

The figures were published in a Waverley Borough Council position statement last November following the Planning Inspector's Dunsfold Park ruling.

It read: "The site has been discounted from the council's five year housing land supply by Planning Inspectors in recent appeals and for this reason, the council has decided to exclude the site from the five year supply until there is more certainty about the timescales for delivery of housing on the site."

The plan has been to redevelop the aerodrome to form a new garden village on the brownfield site.

Planning permission for the first stage of the project was originally granted by the Secretary of State in March 2018. Its infrastructure is expected to support other developments in the borough.

So far "not one home" has been built.

Councillor Jane Austin, leader of the Conservative opposition group on Waverley Borough Council, criticised the borough for not publicising the change more widely saying residents deserved to know what was happening.

She said: "These housing supply figures are utterly dire and will mean more opportunistic development in inappropriate locations."

"We may as well just hand over the keys to opportunistic developers for any of the borough's green fields without some kind of national planning protection over them. I am extremely concerned about what this means for Alfold and edge of town sites across the borough."

Surrey County Councillor for Waverley Eastern Villages Kevin Deanus added: "Since Dunsfold Park gained planning consent in 2018 not one home has been constructed.

"Meanwhile local villages like Alfold have doubled in size. Major planning permissions in the local area have been granted dependent on infrastructure upgrades delivered via the Dunsfold Park permission.

"We now have raw sewage coming out of the ground in Alfold and huge pressure on local roads and infrastructure. Local people are despairing."

Councillor Liz Townsend, Waverley Borough Council portfolio holder for planning and economic development said they remained fully committed to delivering sustainable housing that meets the needs of the community while challenging unjustified and unrealistic targets imposed by the Government.

Dunsfold Park had originally been included in the 2018 Local Plan when the council was under Conservative control and was one of several sites identified to meet housing needs.



She said: "While the council sets the framework for development, it is important to clarify that we do not have the power to compel developers to build homes once planning permissions are granted. As of now, planning permission has been granted for around 5,000 homes across Waverley.

"However, this is no longer sufficient to meet our five-year housing land supply target, primarily due to significant increases in government-mandated targets.

"Originally set at 590 homes per year, this skyrocketed to 710 homes under the previous government, and now to an extraordinary 1,481 homes per year under current government policies.

"This cumulative target amounts to a staggering 29,000 homes over the next 20 years — effectively requiring the construction of an additional Farnham and Godalming within the borough, which is entirely unfeasible.

"Waverley Borough Council has made robust representations to the Government, including direct appeals to the Deputy Prime Minister, outlining why the housing need calculations are flawed. To date, these concerns have been ignored.

"We are actively working with the promoters of Dunsfold Park and other developers to accelerate delivery.

"However, Government Planning Inspectors have questioned the certainty of delivery on the Dunsfold site within the next five years.

[As a result, the council has been forced to remove this site from its short-term housing projections, although this position will be continuously reviewed.

"The council is working urgently to develop a new Local Plan that ensures sustainable housing, job creation, and critical infrastructure.

"This is the only mechanism available to justify a more realistic housing target. Claims that the council is not fulfilling its obligations or has alternative options are factually incorrect.

"We are committed to addressing the national housing crisis while balancing the need to protect our borough's character and environment. However, it is the Government's disproportionate and unrealistic housing targets—not a lack of action by the council—that are placing immense pressure on local authorities across the country.

"Waverley Borough Council will continue to advocate for realistic and sustainable solutions to meet housing needs while standing firm against policies that jeopardise the future of our communities."

Image: Waverley Borough Council (Chris Caulfield)

The Redhill Harlequin Theatre bows out for 5 years.

It could take another five years before the Redhill's Harlequin Theatre reopens after dangerous crumbly concrete forced its closure.

The popular theatre and cinema space in the heart of the town centre welcomed up to 120,000 people a year through its doors before it suddenly shut when reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete, which can collapse without warning, was discovered in September 2023.

Now it appears it will potentially remain closed until 2030 while Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, which owns the theatre, carries out the £10m safety refurbishment work.

Council leader Richard Biggs told the January overview and scrutiny committee: "I understand the strong feeling and interest in resolving this situation at the Harlequin.

"I think we can all agree that none of us wanted to be in this situation but the safety risks associated with RAAC are paramount.

"The critical red nature of the RAAC panels means that this is going to take some time to resolve."

He added: "Optimistically two to three years, possibly up to five years to get it back.

"I don't think that's changed from the conversations that we've had so far but we need to get further down the road and then we can start putting proper dates on things."

The Harlequin Theatre is regarded as a key cultural venue in Redhill and acts as a hub for cultural and social activities.



It's closure has forced the council to look at providing alternate venues but early pledges to find a 500 seater venue have so far proved fruitless.

Cllr Biggs has still not ruled out the possibility of a larger venue being found but feels it is more likely that the arts community will have to settle for something less than half that size.

He said: "The likelihood at the moment is that we haven't found a suitable arrangement for something of that size and costs.

"If we've got to spend the money I want to spend it straight on getting the Harlequin back up and running."

He added: "I have said consistently that at the moment, we haven't found any suitable temporary venues.

"We have to consider the cost. I know people think that there's a money tree somewhere, there isn't.

"My priority is to get the Harlequin back up and running, particularly because of our lease obligations but partly because I genuinely believe that it's a huge asset to Redhill and for the borough and for the wider area.

"There are lots of reasons for getting it back up and running as quick as possible and I want to make sure that we are concentrating on the right thing."

He did not rule out the possibility of finding a larger site but added that there is a need for a variety of spaces.

In 2023 they sold about 69,000 tickets at the Harlequin's box office with a further 5,000 sold via alternate sites.

On average the Harlequin Theatre cafe welcomed a further 40 people per day and about 2,400 a year.

The productions would bring a further 6,000 people to the site and room hires an additional 10,000 each year.

Room hires included local churches and the NHS for café Milk and baby weigh-ins.

The council said it is looking for a mix of sites to fulfil these roles as well as audition spaces and performance venues.

The council leader invited interested groups who may have suitable sites to come forward with options but stressed that he did not wish to distract from his main priority of finishing the Harlequin project.

Related reports:

Redhill theatre gone to rack and ruin?

New family mediation in Epsom

Relate Mid and East Surrey Launches New Family Mediation Service

Relate Mid and East Surrey is thrilled to announce the launch of its new family mediation service, designed to help families resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively. This service reflects our commitment to offering practical, affordable solutions for families in our community.

What Is Mediation?

Mediation is a process where an independent, professional mediator helps families work through disagreements over parenting, property, or finances following separation. Unlike court proceedings, mediation focuses on collaboration, ensuring all parties have a voice and reach mutually beneficial solutions. It's quicker, less stressful, and often far less expensive than legal action.

How Mediation Helps

Mediation provides a structured and supportive environment where families can address issues such as parenting arrangements, property division, and financial agreements. It is quicker, less stressful, and significantly cheaper than going to court, allowing families to maintain control over their decisions.

Key Benefits:

- Helps you make arrangements about parenting, property, and money.
- Is less stressful than going to court.



- Saves you money as it's usually much cheaper than being represented in court.
- Puts your child's interests first.
- Helps you move on quickly to the next stage of your life.

Debbie Holden, Chief Executive of Relate Mid and East Surrey, explains:

"Family mediation is about empowering people to create solutions that work for everyone involved. Our mediators guide families through difficult conversations, ensuring children's needs remain at the forefront while reducing the emotional and financial burden of conflict."

Flexible and Affordable Options

Our new service includes private assessment meetings and joint mediation sessions, tailored to meet each family's unique needs. We offer a sliding scale of fees to ensure affordability, with additional support through the Family Mediation Voucher Scheme, providing up to £500 for child arrangement cases.

Key Features:

- **Child-inclusive mediation** to give children a voice in the process.
- **Rapid appointments**, often within a week.
- A focus on **long-term solutions** that foster positive co-parenting relationships.

Join Us for Family Mediation Week

Family Mediation Week (27-31 January) highlights the importance of mediation in resolving family disputes. We encourage families to explore how this service can support them during life transitions.

More information can be found at:

<https://relatemitandeast Surrey.co.uk/family-mediation/>

Contact Us

To book a mediation session or learn more, contact us at:

- **Reigate Office:** 01737 245212 | admin@relatemitandeast Surrey.co.uk
- **Epsom Office:** 01372 722976 | epsomadmin@relatemitandeast Surrey.co.uk

Image – illustration only.

Surrey village to suffer a lot more Heathrow flights

Residents could suffer "an unacceptable amount of noise" from an airport as flight directions change, meaning the number of landing planes could increase from 36 to over 300 a day in a Surrey village.

Heathrow Airport is proposing to change its flight patterns to share noise more equally to communities around the site. This involves alternating between the southern and northern runways when the airport operates flights eastwards.

Most of the time (70 per cent) the airport runs on westerly operation, meaning planes take off and land towards the west as the wind favours the west direction at Heathrow. From 7am-3pm, planes land on the northern runway and depart on the southern runway. Halfway through the airport's day, at 3pm, Heathrow switches runways to give neighbouring residents a break.

This is because of the Cranford Agreement in 1952 which restricted departures over Cranford. But the government ripped up the Cranford agreement in 2009 to bring more equal noise distribution in the residential areas around Heathrow.

As planes are now allowed to take off over Cranford (to the north-east of the airport) Heathrow is proposing to make changes to the airfield to allow for easterly operations of planes taking off and landing from the east. These include: building a noise barrier,



up to seven foot high, near Longford, as well as changing the taxiways where planes turn on the runway to reduce ground noise.

The applicant states the redistribution of noise around Heathrow Airport will result in lower noise effects in some locations and higher noise effects in others, but it will enable noise from aircraft operations to be more fairly distributed around the airport than it is currently.

Despite the overall aim meant to have a more even spread of noise, Spelthorne council's noise officer has objected to the changes as it will adversely impact Spelthorne and especially Stanwell Moor.

Currently only 36 planes arrive over Stanwell Moor on an easterly operation but if plans go ahead it could skyrocket to 328 landing a day, according to council documents. Councillor Joanne Sexton (Independent Spelthorne Group/ Ashford East), leader of Spelthorne council, said it was "quite a shock" to see the dramatic increase.

Heathrow submitted a planning proposal to Hillingdon Borough in October 2024, which is now in the consultation stage. Councillors wholeheartedly voted to object to the scheme, citing unacceptable noise impacts on the borough, at an environment and sustainability council meeting on January 14. These comments will be passed on to Spelthorne's planning committee.

Only Cllr Paul Woodward (Conservative/ Ashford Town) approved Heathrow's proposal, arguing: "Landing is the quietest part of the operation until you put the airbrakes halfway down the runway."

Stanwell Moor runs directly parallel to Heathrow's southern runway which leaves residents with a "constant stream of aircraft noise" for half the day, according to council documents. But if the airport uses full easterly alternation, the noise officer said this would "significantly increase the noise and frequency of overflights and significantly affect [Stanwell Moor] residents".

Although Cllr Sexton raised concerns of Ashford becoming increasingly louder with plane noises, the noise officer said the changes would not harmfully impact Ashford or Sunbury.

Applauding the council for objecting to the project, Cllr Sue Doran (Labour/ Stanwell North) said: "It doesn't matter which way [the planes] fly, the noise is terrible all the time." Cllr Doran said she had lived in Stanwell for 15 years and said there is noise "virtually 24 hours a day".

Heathrow Airport is aiming to introduce easterly runway alternation by 2028. Currently there is no proposed increase in the number of flights taking off or landing from the airport, just changes in the direction.

A Heathrow spokesperson said: "We know that noise is an important issue for local communities which is why we have published clear reduction targets in our Noise Action Plan. Our noise footprint has reduced by 41 per cent since 2006 and we expect to see further reductions. Easterly alternation is aimed at delivering predictable noise respite to more communities and is coupled with our ongoing work to install noise insulation for our nearest neighbours."

Heathrow Airport. Credit Heathrow Airports Limited.

Tackling health inequalities in Surrey

Surrey County Council has been awarded 5 years of funding by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to create a **Health Determinants Research Collaboration** (HDRC). The £5m funding will help the local authority to build capacity to do research on prevention and create a culture of using evidence in making decisions.

NIHR HDRC Surrey's vision is to improve health of our residents and reduce health inequalities which are driven by the social determinants of health. To achieve this, the HDRC Surrey will use the funding to enhance local research capacity, drive research on prevention and public health where evidence isn't yet available. It will also embed a culture of evidence-informed decision-making which is based on local knowledge underpinned by community involvement and issues that matter most to our residents.

HDRC Surrey is a partnership between the council, the University of Surrey, and voluntary and community partners. Together, over the next five years, we will focus on:

- Improving our research governance and infrastructure
- Building research capacity and providing training support
- Supporting knowledge mobilisation
- Conducting robust research that reflects the needs and experiences of local communities
- Embedding meaningful public involvement at the heart of Surrey HDRC's work



Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council, said: *"This ambitious project will facilitate a rigorous focus on health inequalities in Surrey. The substantial funding will ensure sustainability in our approach. We already work closely with the University of Surrey and this research programme will build on our existing relationship to provide people locally with better opportunities and outcomes."*

Councillor Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing, and Public Health, said: *"Improving the wellbeing of residents across Surrey is something that we all strive to achieve. Prevention is the key to a better and healthier place to live and to achieve this we need to know where and how best to invest money and resources. This new funding will enable a fantastic partnership between the council, the University of Surrey and voluntary and community sector to strengthen our research infrastructure. The new research infrastructure will be invaluable in guiding and informing decision-making that will have a real, positive impact on our residents' lives leaving no one left behind."*

Professor Lisa Collins Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation at University of Surrey, said: *"The University of Surrey is thrilled to partner with the local authority and involve the community on this vital health research collaboration. The funding will empower us to conduct impactful research that addresses the unique health challenges faced by residents."*

Ruth Hutchinson, Surrey County Council's Director of Public Health, said: *"The NIHR grant is exciting as it will enable us to work more collaboratively with the University of Surrey, Districts and Boroughs and local communities to directly meet people's health needs in Surrey, leading to better outcomes."*

Why Surrey?

Although Surrey is seen to be one of the most affluent parts of the UK, there are areas with high levels of deprivation associated with poor health. In 2020, someone living in the most deprived area of Surrey is likely to live 10 years less than someone living in the most affluent part of the county. To address this, we need to better understand how factors like the built environment, housing and the economy affect people's health in Surrey. Our Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) will help us to do this.

HDRC Surrey will improve how, as a local authority, we use research to get a better understanding of what works and for whom to reduce health inequalities.

Image courtesy: RDNE Stock project

Will Surrey potholes outwit AI?

Surrey County Council will now use AI to detect potholes to help speed up road repairs across the county.

Computer vision cameras fitted to dashboards inside highways vehicles will spot and photograph potholes which will then be automatically recorded for repair. Future enhancements will see other defects such as missing signs and foliage overgrowth also programmed for repair.

Highways Inspectors will no longer need to step onto the road to manually carry out inspections which will make the process safer and more efficient. Potholes that don't need immediate attention will also be regularly tracked to ensure they are dealt with when needed.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said, *"We have some of the country's busiest roads and we're working incredibly hard to improve them, with nearly £300m allocated to repairing and improving Surrey's roads and pavements over the next five years (2023 - 2028)."*

"Adopting this technology will mean we can proactively log and fix potholes, helping to ensure we have well-maintained roads across the county for our residents."

"We're also resurfacing more roads and pavements than ever with 100 miles of roads and 30 miles of pavements resurfaced by our highways teams from April - December 2024 alone. This will make our highway network more resilient which will reduce the number of potholes that develop on our roads in the first place."

"I'm also pleased that we are pioneering AI technology to detect potholes as championed by the government just this week."

Connell McLaughlin, CEO of Route Reports said, *"We're thrilled to formalise this long-term partnership with Surrey County Council, who were among our earliest supporters and collaborators in developing Route Reports' AI road maintenance platform."*



"Their feedback and hands-on involvement played a key role in refining our defect detection technology to ensure it meets the real-world needs of the community. This partnership exemplifies how innovative solutions and local expertise can come together to make roads safer, more efficient, and more sustainable."

Surrey County Council is the first local authority in the UK to move away from manual inspections and solely use video and AI technology to log and programme pothole repairs. The council has worked with provider, Route Reports, to trial and develop the software.

Residents can also report and track road and pavement issues on **Surrey County Council's website**.

Image: Pothole in Woodcote Road Epsom

Will planners say "Sori, mun moka"? *

Dear Editor,

The report in the Epsom & Ewell Times (9th January) about Historic England placing the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area on its 'at risk register' is extremely timely, given the current application to demolish **Cafe Moka**, Unit 60 of the Ashley Centre and the damaging impact this would have on the setting of what is undoubtedly one of Epsom's most important listed buildings.

So far two formal objections have been lodged against the proposed demolition of the current turreted Café Moka - both highlighting the architectural reasons why its removal and replacement with a modern, glass and steel unit would not only spoil the visual harmony of the square but also negatively affect the setting of Waterloo House.

The objections focus on several key issues:

1. **Architectural Incompatibility:** The proposal's replacement of the turreted Café Moka with a stark, utilitarian design would disrupt the character of Ashley Square, a blend of brick facades and tiled roofs. The original design, which still stands the test of time, complements the adjacent Market Place and reflects the history of the area. The turreted Moka unit, along with the similarly turreted (but now sadly spoiled) High Street entrance, are carefully considered features that referenced the sadly lost King's Head Hotel coaching inn, which once stood on the site of Boots.
2. **Impact on Views:** The turreted structure helps screen the expansive service area behind the café, shielding views of the unattractive back facades of buildings on South Street. Its demolition would expose these eyesores and diminish the square's architectural integrity.
3. **Negative Impact on Waterloo House:** Most importantly, the removal of the turreted Café Moka would harm the setting of Waterloo House's historic carriage entrance. The building is a rare surviving example of a 17th-century spa town assembly rooms and has been sensitively restored (and appropriately renamed) by Wetherspoons. An ill-suited modern development next door would undermine this significant restoration.

Only a couple of years ago a highly questionable decision was made by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council to approve the recladding of the Ashley Centre's main entrance in blatantly fake stone - a move that already detracts from the original architectural concept of the 1980s shopping centre and the local history it subtly references.

Losing the turreted Café Moka would be another regrettable step backward, diminishing the area's historical and aesthetic value - and it's therefore vital that the Council doesn't inadvertently support another proposal that would further compound Historic England's current concerns.

I encourage all those who care about preserving Epsom's heritage to voice their opposition to this unnecessary and damaging proposal.

Yours faithfully,

Simon Alford

Epsom

Related reports:



Heritage at Risk: Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area Faces Challenges

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council response to Historic England's Report on local heritage

*"Sori, mun moka" is a colloquial term meaning "Sorry, my bad". "Moka" is also a coffee pot.

Surrey University leading on alternative ADHD treatment

A multisite clinical trial has launched in the United States to investigate whether non-pharmaceutical methods can be used to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children ages 7-12. This trial is currently recruiting new patients and seeking FDA clearance.

The trial uses a wearable device - Novostim 2 - developed by Innosphere Engineering Ltd. The company anticipates FDA clearance by Q3 of 2025 and has already received approval for sales in Israel.

The novel treatment builds upon years of research into non-invasive brain stimulation techniques led by the University of Surrey's Professor Roi Cohen Kadosh. The research team carried out multiple studies in which children with ADHD were treated with transcranial Random Noise Stimulation (tRNS) coupled with cognitive training (CT).

tRNS is a non-invasive technique that delivers a weak and painless electrical signal to the brain to enhance activity in regions associated with attention. In the studies, children who received tRNS and CT experienced significant improvements in their ADHD symptoms, working memory, and processing speed, along with changes in their brain activity, which could be linked to the improvement of their symptoms in the long-term.

Two clinical trials have been completed using Novostim 2 at Hadassah Medical Center in children aged 7-12, which showed significant improvement in ADHD symptoms, including a 43% reduction in ADHD symptom severity and overall symptom alleviation.

The trial, over a two-week period, involves 20-minute treatment sessions in which Novostim 2 is used to deliver tRNS over specific regions in the brain associated with ADHD and during which participants engage in attention-based digital games.

For more information on the latest trial, visit ADHDtrial.com

Professor Roi Cohen Kadosh, Head of the School of Psychology at the University of Surrey, said:

"We were thrilled by the success of the previous clinical trials, which brought us one step closer to providing a safe and effective non-pharmaceutical option for children with ADHD. The device's ability to modulate brain activity and enhance cognitive functions may hold the key to long-lasting benefits, potentially reshaping the landscape of ADHD treatment. By harnessing the power of psychology, neuroscience, and technology, we can empower young patients to improve their focus, attention and overall wellbeing. The need continues to grow, and I hope to see this technology become available to many children and their families soon."

Rami Shacour, co-Founder and CEO of Innosphere, adds:

"For decades, stimulant medications have been the cornerstone of ADHD treatment. At Innosphere, we're parents first, driven by a mission to give families more personalized, effective options for their children. With Novostim 2, we're redefining what's possible in ADHD care. We're thrilled to announce sales approval in Israel and eagerly anticipate FDA clearance this year. This is just the beginning, as we explore Novostim 2's potential to complement existing therapies and transform lives."

Image: Professor **Roi Cohen Kadosh**