

Is Delay Defensible in the Fight to Protect Epsom's Green Belt?

1 November 2024



As Epsom and Ewell Borough Council deliberates its Local Plan in the face of imminent, significantly higher government housing targets, the council's slow-paced approach raises crucial questions about its strategy to protect our borough's green spaces. Led by the Residents' Association, the council is balancing on a tightrope between procedural rigour and an increasingly urgent need for action. But with higher housing quotas looming, is this balance tipping too far towards delay, at the cost of our precious Green Belt?

Nine opposition councillors have proposed an Emergency Full Council Meeting, arguing that swift action is essential to avoid a target increase to 817 new homes annually—double the current requirement. They rightly point out the risks to Epsom's character and environmental integrity. With development pressure escalating, the loss of even a small proportion of green spaces would have lasting consequences, affecting not just our landscape but also the local ecology and community fabric.

Residents' Association leaders, meanwhile, cite the need for strict adherence to regulatory procedures, with Councillor **Peter O'Donovan** (Chair of the Licensing Policy and Planning Committee, RA Ewell Court) cautioning against shortcuts that might render the plan "unsound" in the eyes of government inspectors. RA Leader Councillor **Hannah Dalton** (Stoneleigh) echoes this sentiment, emphasising the need for quality and robustness in the plan to withstand scrutiny. But, does adherence to every procedural step outweigh the immediate urgency to avoid a government-imposed target that could open up the Green Belt for development?

If every councillor claims to prioritise the protection of our green spaces, it's difficult to justify the RA's slow and careful approach. What would be lost by speeding up the process, even at the risk of minor regulatory issues? The Local Plan's objective is clear: it must serve the community's best interests by ensuring sustainable development, but without jeopardising the green spaces that make Epsom unique. Rushing to complete this plan before the higher targets take effect doesn't mean compromising on quality—it means acknowledging the urgency of our current position.

The RA's insistence on caution may reflect their commitment to procedural integrity, but in the face of a looming housing target that threatens everything they aim to protect, this stance appears increasingly illogical. The stakes are high, and with public consultation already delayed due to a halt in 2023, it is hard to see what further delay achieves. As **Janice Baker** of the Epsom Green Party rightly points out, legal pathways exist to expedite the consultation phase, saving precious weeks and potentially allowing the community to dodge the higher target.

In the end, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council must decide if this cautious approach truly serves our borough's best interests. Every resident who treasures our green spaces deserves a council that can act quickly and decisively in their defence. The council's commitment to procedural correctness is admirable, but it must be weighed against the real and immediate threat of intensified development. It's time to ask, "What are we willing to risk?" Because in this case, the greatest risk might just be the price of waiting.

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Call to Epsom and Ewell Council to speed plan denied

1 November 2024



Nine opposition councillors on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council are calling for an Emergency Full Council Meeting to fast-track the final stages of the borough's Local Plan amid looming concerns over potential new housing targets set by the central government. The councillors—comprising members of the Liberal Democrats, Labour, and Conservative parties—are urging swift action, fearing that delays could lead to increased housing quotas that would place significant pressure on the borough's cherished green spaces.

The councillors' proposal, initially set out in a formal request dated 24th October, has stirred considerable debate across the council. They propose that the emergency meeting be held immediately following the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) meeting on 20th November or, failing that, on the evening of the 21st November. In doing so, they hope to expedite the draft Local Plan's approval, enabling the next public consultation phase to commence before the year's end.

The Case for Urgency: New Housing Targets and Local Development

At the heart of the opposition councillors' concerns are potential changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which could soon enforce a higher housing target of 817 new homes annually—over double the borough's existing requirement. One opposition councillor highlighted the urgency, warning, "If the Local Plan fails or is found unsound, we will be subject to the Labour government's new targets, which are 817 dwellings per annum."

These new targets, if implemented, could lead to development encroaching on the borough's green spaces, a possibility that has mobilised both councillors and local residents. This anxiety is reflected in the recent appeals from local groups, including the Epsom Green Belt Group, which advocates for focusing on brownfield sites rather than encroaching on protected land.

Council's Response: A Call for Procedural Compliance

In response, council leaders from the Residents' Association majority group have expressed concerns about rushing the Local Plan process, citing the necessity of adhering to legal and procedural requirements. Chair of the LPPC, Councillor **Peter O'Donovan**, (RA Ewell Court) emphasised the importance of a comprehensive review process to ensure that any amendments to the draft Local Plan comply with regulations before it proceeds to public consultation. He stated, "The documents which will form the Regulation 19 consultation must be prepared in accordance with the regulations, including the legally required Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment."

O'Donovan added that should any changes be proposed during the LPPC's 20th November meeting, additional time would be necessary for council officers to update the documentation. Failure to address these requirements, he warned, could result in the plan being deemed "unsound" by government inspectors.

Residents' Association View: Balancing Timeliness and Quality

Residents' Association Leader Councillor **Hannah Dalton** (Stoneleigh), in her response to the opposition's proposal, reiterated the council's commitment to both transparency and quality in the Local Plan's development. Dalton acknowledged the delay caused by a temporary halt in 2023 but argued that accelerating the current schedule could compromise the quality and legal robustness of the plan. "We can't simply 'speed up' to replace six months of lost time," she remarked, noting that the council remains committed to commencing the Regulation 19 public consultation "at the earliest possible opportunity after the November meeting of the LPPC."

In a letter addressing a recent call from the Epsom Green Party, Dalton also noted that bypassing the LPPC's role could undermine the Local Plan's overall integrity. She explained, "Circumventing the LPP meeting... bypasses LPP, which has been tasked with the development of the Local Plan." Any changes agreed upon by Full Council would still require further work to comply with legally mandated procedures, she added.

Epsom Green Party's Intervention: Legal Pathways to Expedite Consultation

Meanwhile, **Janice Baker**, Chair of the Epsom Green Party, recently suggested an alternative approach. In a letter to Dalton, Baker proposed a legally permissible pathway for Full Council to assume the LPPC's role, potentially scheduling a Full Council meeting in place of the LPPC's 20th November session. This approach, she argued, could save several weeks and allow the Regulation 19 consultation to conclude by early January 2025, ahead of the potential NPPF changes.

"Many residents have been frustrated by the lack of open discussion," Baker stated, adding that the proposed approach "provides a chance to avoid this disaster." She further urged that any potential legal impediments to this plan be swiftly addressed by the council's legal team, emphasising that delays could lead to increased housing requirements that would place "extremely significant environmental, financial, and social costs" on the borough.

Residents and Environmental Campaigners Express Growing Concern

The debate has galvanised local community groups and residents who are deeply invested in the borough's planning future. The Epsom Green Belt Group has argued for prioritising brownfield sites to protect greenfield areas and prevent the urban sprawl that they fear could follow under new NPPF guidelines. Their concerns were echoed during the LPPC's October meeting, where residents spoke passionately against any development that could jeopardise the area's green spaces.

Adding further weight to the opposition's argument, local Liberal Democrat leader Councillor **Julie Morris** (College) criticised Mayor **Steven Bridger's** (RA Stamford) refusal to consider an Emergency Council Meeting (ECM) for 21st November. Bridger had stated that an ECM would not allow sufficient time for officers to finalise the necessary documentation and for councillors to adequately review it. However, Morris rebutted that the ECM was intended "to allow Council as a whole to sign off the draft Local Plan AND any amendments agreed on 20th November," thus expediting the consultation's start before the end of the year.

The opposition councillors are now considering other procedural avenues to press forward with the Local Plan,

underscoring their commitment to avoid the looming 817-unit target.

What's Next? A Community on Edge

The path forward for Epsom and Ewell's Local Plan remains uncertain, as councillors and community members await the LPPC's 20th November meeting. The stakes are high for the borough, with questions about housing supply, environmental conservation, and procedural integrity all coming to the fore. The decisions made in the coming weeks will not only determine the scale of future developments but will also shape the borough's character for years to come.

In the words of Councillor Dalton, "Balancing development with the preservation of our borough's character is challenging but essential." With the pressure mounting from opposition members and concerned residents alike, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council faces critical choices as it navigates the complex and often conflicting demands of local governance and sustainable growth.

Related reports:

Opposition Calls for Emergency Council Meeting Over Epsom and Ewell Local Plan

Epsom Local Plan controversy heats up

Time to press the gas on Epsom's Local Plan?

Epsom and Ewell Brace for Government Housing Targets

Surrey support for the "financially challenged"

1 November 2024



Surrey County Council welcomes the extension by government of the Household Support Fund in this year's Autumn Statement, after 86,000 Surrey households were supported by the fund last year.

In addition to the Household Support fund this autumn and winter, the council will continue to support residents with financial help, support and information. The council has, alongside partners, established a priority focus on 21 key neighbourhoods identified as having the highest levels of disadvantage, aligning with the organisation's aim to enable as many people as possible to access the right support.

Councillor Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Public Health said: *"We recognise times are still financially challenging for both Surrey residents and local government. As an organisation we commit to do the best we can with the resources we have available to us - working with system-wide partners across Surrey to ensure No One Is Left Behind. We therefore welcome the continuing support the Household Fund provides us to help Surrey's most vulnerable residents and organisations such as SGN who have once again supported us with funding."*

Other support available to residents includes:

- Continued provision of the **Surrey Crisis Fund**. Thanks to funding from SGN, the council is able to offer the continued provision of the Surrey Crisis Fund. The Surrey Crisis Fund provides financial help to Surrey residents who have nowhere else to turn in an emergency or following a disaster. It also can provide assistance to set up a home in the community where no other funds or resources are available.
- **Warm Welcomes** launch again in November across the county as places where residents can enjoy a safe, warm, friendly environment to have a hot drink, read a book, socialise with others and receive energy saving information and advice.
- Surrey County Council have been working with **Citizens Advice** who can provide free advice and support on benefits, housing, debt and a range of other problems that people might be experiencing.
- The online **Financial, Welfare and Health and Wellbeing Hub** has been updated with the all the latest information to help with everyday living expenses surreycc.gov.uk/welfare.
- Free online **Energy Advice Tool** for information and advice on a range of topics including debt relief grants and fuel vouchers.
- Surrey County Council is working in partnership with FurbNow to launch a Home Energy Improvement 'One-Stop Shop' offering **subsidised 'Home Energy Plans'** and hassle-free energy saving measure installations.

- Continue to work closely with the **Voluntary Community Social Enterprise** sector to ensure the right support gets to Surrey's most vulnerable residents.
- 52 **Libraries** across Surrey continue to provide face-to-face support in communities for those who may be struggling. Providing a space to meet others, offering free Wi-Fi, access to computers, digital upskilling, volunteers who can help with digital support.
- Surrey Fire and Rescue Service **Safe and Well** visits out in the community often identify vulnerable residents and where they think appropriate, they can provide winter essentials, heaters, fuel vouchers and electric blankets thanks to our partnership with SGN.
- Working with the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to provide a number of cost-of-living initiatives to support disabled residents with rising energy bills.
- In October, as part of the organisation's ongoing priority of ensuring No One Is Left Behind, Surrey County Council signed the Good Company's End Poverty Pledge - **Surrey County Council signs the End Poverty Pledge | Surrey News**

The Community Helpline is also available to talk to someone to help residents check that they are getting all the financial support they are entitled to and maximising their income. The Community Helpline is available on **0300 200 1008** 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday except bank holidays.

Photo by Timur Weber

Epsom school fined for finger loss

1 November 2024



A school trust in Surrey has been fined after part of a pupil's finger was amputated.

The five-year-old boy, a Year 1 pupil at Danetree Primary School in Epsom, had been leaving the toilet on 15 June 2022 when his right hand slipped and went into the hinge side of a door.

There was no door guard installed and he trapped his right hand in the door.

This led to the tip of his middle finger becoming detached as his right hand was stuck in the door.

A teacher found the tip of his middle finger, and the boy underwent surgery to re-attach his finger at St Georges Hospital in Tooting, London.

Although younger pupils in Key Stage 1 were taught in a newer building where hinge guards had been fitted on the doors, the incident occurred in a separate building where the older children in Key Stage 2 were taught.

The Key Stage 1 pupils would use the Key Stage 2 building at least once a week to use its library and learn about music and science. While in this building, the Key Stage 1 pupils were allowed to use the toilets unsupervised.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into the incident found GLF Schools, the trust that runs Danetree Primary School, had failed to identify the risk to its Key Stage 1 pupils while using the toilets. This meant hinge guards were not installed on the toilet doors of the building where Key Stage 2 pupils were taught.

GLF Schools, of Picquets Way, Banstead, Surrey, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The trust was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay £6,875.70 in costs at Staines Magistrates' Court on 30 October 2024.

HSE principal inspector Emma Stiles said: "This little boy and his family could have been spared a lot of pain and upset if the trust had installed widely available, effective and inexpensive hinge guards on the doors the young children had access to. I would ask all schools to review their estates to make sure they have hinge guards where needed so no other children are hurt in this way when at school."

The Horton Hid Hiring From Regulator

1 November 2024



Controversy surrounded the appointment of the salaried Centre Manager of Epsom and Ewell's new arts and exhibition venue, The Horton Arts Centre.

Documents obtained by the Epsom and Ewell Times under Freedom of Information Act requests reveal that the Charity Commission found that the trustees of the Horton Chapel Arts and Heritage Society did not seek its prior permission to employ the wife of a trustee.

A recently retired trustee, a trustee or a person connected to a trustee through marriage may not be given paid employment by their charity without prior Charity Commission approval.

The Commission found that Maria Reeves, the wife of founding chairman of the Charity, Ian Reeves, who was herself previously a trustee, was appointed to the manager role without its permission.

In these circumstances the Commission would normally order the trustees to pay the Charity the salary of the employee in question. However, in this case the Commission determined that the appointment had been hidden from the Commission for so long that such an order would be "disproportionate".

The Commission also determined that the eventual appointment was "made in good faith", but refused to answer how that finding was compatible with the failure to seek its permission. It has also refused to disclose the justification submitted to it by the trustees for the retrospective Commission approval.

Other documents obtained by the Epsom and Ewell Times show that an earlier recruitment exercise, described by an expert as "exemplary", was reversed on the intervention of trustees, including the then Chair Ian Reeves and his next door neighbour and trustee, Rupert Salmon.

That process had not short-listed the Chair's wife Maria Reeves.

One former short-listed candidate who asked not to be named said: "I was of course disappointed that the recruitment process for The Horton Centre Director role was aborted as I had been shortlisted to the second round and was expecting to attend a second interview.

With regards to the Charity Commission's role - it is disappointing that the Charity Commission's own guidelines were difficult to enforce in this instance."

None of the short-listed candidates from the aborted recruitment process were invited to re-apply and it appears that the recruitment process that led to the appointment of Maria Reeves was from a candidate list of one.

Ian Reeves and Rupert Salmon have been requested on a number of occasions to provide their response. Our press regulator confirmed that they had been provided with a reasonable opportunity to do so.

One former trustee stated: "Mr and Mrs Reeves deserved a reward for all the unpaid effort they had put into converting this disused chapel into a beautiful arts centre".

Lionel Blackman, a former trustee and chair of the initial 6 strong recruitment committee, that consisted of three independent trustees and three independent external experts, said "I only wish to make a general observation that trustees of charities should comply with the rules. That expectation is somewhat heightened when a charity has been given £3 million of public money."

Caring Mentors in Epsom and Ewell sought for young

1 November 2024



MCR Pathways, (Mentoring, Charity, Relationships) an award-winning charity dedicated to transforming the lives of young people through mentorship, is looking for volunteer mentors to support a young person throughout their education.

The charity addresses the widening gap in educational and employment outcomes between care-experienced young people and their peers. Research shows that those who do not receive MCR Pathways mentorship are 23% less likely to progress to college, university, or employment compared to their mentored peers. By connecting young people with caring mentors, MCR Pathways helps bridge the gap between aspiration and achievement.

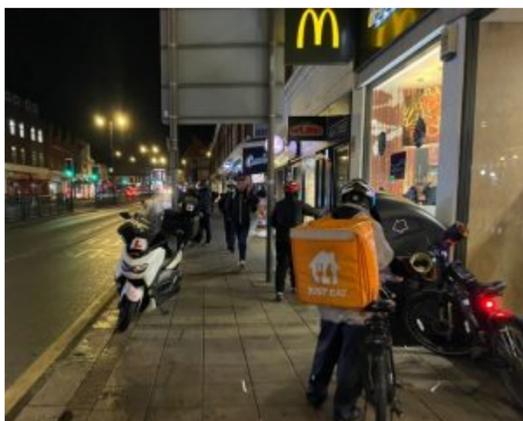
Mentors meet with their mentees for just one hour each week in school. This consistent interaction provides a valuable opportunity for young people to focus on their future, discuss any concerns, and share their thoughts and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Research shows that even one hour a week with a caring adult can significantly boost a young person’s confidence, improve academic performance, and open doors to a brighter future.

Since its founding in 2007, MCR Pathways has made a significant impact, launching its programme in Surrey in 2021 and establishing partnerships with seven schools across the county. With the growing demand for mentors, MCR Pathways is actively seeking new volunteers in **Epsom and Ewell**. If you’re ready to make a meaningful impact in your community, find a school near you by visiting mcrpathways.org/school-locator.

To find out more about the programme and to register, head to mcrpathways.org/whats-stopping-you or for any enquiries about becoming a mentor, please reach out to Liz Grace, MCR Pathways’ Surrey Volunteer Recruitment Manager, at liz.grace@mcrpathways.org or call 07483 390702. Together, we can help create a future where every young person has the opportunity to thrive. Join MCR Pathways today and be the change in a young person’s life!

Epsom High St in need of more love?

1 November 2024



Driving safely, parking appropriately. Romy Sustar reports:

This is the second article in my series following on from “Epsom town as a safe place to Live”. It seemed to me that for the second article it was worth looking at a specific business issue around anti-social behaviour in Epsom High St, that is currently being discussed widely. And one that currently projects an image of decline and lawlessness in our High St.

My all-time favourite McDonald’s meal has always been—and still is—the Filet-O-Fish Combo. I’m “lovin’ it” and really want to hold onto this positive feeling. However, like so many others, McDonald’s seems to have forgotten its leadership role.

Last Friday night, on my way to the cinema, I walked by McDonald’s and counted 23 drivers parked on the pavement, completely blocking the pavement between Creams and McDonald’s, extending along the High Street towards the crossing. Pedestrians had no choice but to either walk on the busy street or navigate through the maze of motorcycles. It made me feel very unsafe and angry, but I don’t blame the drivers.

Drivers for UberEats, Just Eat, and Deliveroo frequently express their frustrations on platforms like Glassdoor and Indeed, highlighting their shared challenges with residents impacted by these services. While UberEats drivers appreciate the quick onboarding process, this excitement soon fades as many struggle to earn even £10 during entire shifts, facing inadequate customer support that leaves them feeling isolated and undervalued. Deliveroo riders share similar grievances, describing their experiences as akin to “slave labour,” contending with low pay and fierce competition for orders. Issues with app reliability and poor management responsiveness only deepen their dissatisfaction. Just Eat feedback on Glassdoor clearly states that management doesn’t really understand the performance of the business. I wonder how many of the drivers are aware that the minimum hourly rate for 2024/25 in the UK is £11.44 for age group 21

and over.

Let's consider McDonald's in Epsom High St, it's been a pillar of the community for more than two decades, in that time most of us have come to understand the fantastic benefits brought by Ronald McDonald House allowing parents to stay with their sick children. We have seen the support for thousands of UK and Irish farmers in very difficult times, and for the organic farmers as their industry developed. We have noticed the healthy options appearing in the menu, the sugar content reducing, and have been reassured as recycled cardboard content has increased. All of this happening, whilst most of us simply continued to enjoy the product as one of the love brands in our local economy.

Are they truly so insensitive that they fail to recognise the damage they're inflicting? Or is it that they simply don't care about the residents and migrants at all, revealing their brand identity to be a facade? When I mention "residents," I mean everyone—from young children and mothers with baby pushers to the elderly and those with disabilities, the blind and those in wheelchairs.

We reached out to McDonald's and a spokesperson: "At McDonald's we strive to be a good neighbour in the communities we serve, and the management team at our Epsom restaurant are continuously working with local stakeholders to help find a solution to the on-going parking issues which are affecting a number of businesses in the town. The safety and wellbeing of our people, customers and local residents remains our top priority and as such we have asked our delivery partners to ensure that all couriers continue to drive safely and park appropriately."

When the views of the local manager were sought McDonald's asked for nothing to be added to its spokesperson's response.

The phrase "Continue to drive safely and park appropriately" seems more like a message to maintain a facade than a reflection of daily reality in Epsom. This raises my curiosity about which local stakeholders McDonald's claims to be "continuously working with." It suggests a disconnect between their messaging and the actual experiences of the community.

So I contacted Russell Bailey from Swail House, a local Blind charity severely affected by the issues: "I am in touch with the Surrey Council parking enforcement team and councillors and our MP Helen Maguire regularly about the issue, but there does not seem to be any progress. It seems to be that it will take an accident before any real action is going to be taken".

Then I contacted the Ebbisham Centre owners of the land just behind McDonalds who said: "We are as frustrated as residents and customers of Epsom Square about the prevalence of mopeds parked on our premises and at the entrance to our squares, on council pavements. The mopeds themselves are unsightly and a hazard. The congregation of moped drivers, usually with full face helmets still worn, creates an intimidating and threatening atmosphere in the town and at the entrance to our squares. This is not good for the economy or for the wellbeing of residents, and seems to serve only the benefit of one or two national-multiple fast food outlets on the High Street".

The Council are now vocal on the issue and are reacting to pressure from the community. **Steve McCormick** (an RA Surrey County and Borough Councillor) passed a unanimous motion at the County to deal with the problem. So who is McDonald's actually talking to and how could it possibly be, that McDonalds, our love brand, is still entirely oblivious to the oncoming storm if it is "continuously working with local stakeholders to help find a solution"?

Town Ward RA Councillor **Neil Dallen** is aware of the problem but a Council led solution is proving elusive.

Epsom and Ewell Times sent a simple survey to all Epsom and Ewell Councillors. These are the few responses received to the questions how many times in the last year have you used these services and what is your solution?

Date	Name	Party and Ward	Orders last year	Do you have a solution to the problem of many delivery riders on two-wheels obstructing roads and pathways in Epsom? If so, please describe the solution briefly
12/10	Steve Bridger	RA Stamford (Mayor)	0	Dedicated area for them to park - NOT obstructing the pavement at one of the busiest areas with a bus stop! Also to check the insurance, licences and validity of the electric scooters of the drivers
12/10	Julie Morris	LibDem College	12	Create dedicated parking areas for delivery bikes. For example, Epsom Square, taxi bay in Upper High St, convert small sections of pavement where it's wide enough and use that for delivery.bike parking, etc. eventually deliveries will come via drones and it won't be so bad. After segregated parking has been put in place, enforce illegal parking from delivery bikes
12/10	James Lawrence	LibDem College	1	There need to be dedicated parking bays for them, similar to the bays outside Dreams (near the Odeon). Enforcement then needs to be used to ensure these bays are used. This will allow them to continue their very useful activities of providing delivery services to businesses and residents, without blocking the pavement or being an obstruction for pedestrians.
12/10	Robert Geleit	Labour Court	15	Find them a place to go. Make sure that they don't have to work 12 hours a day 7 days a week.

13/10	Phil Neale	RA Cuddington	0	Have a system where the riders can be reported to the company that employs them then operate a three strikes and out policy.
16/10	Alison Kelly	LibDem Stamford	0	There needs to be a designated parking zone for the delivery drivers. It is clear that many people want home delivery. The solution is not asking the police to continually move them on.
18/10	Chris Ames	Labour Court	12	Police enforcement, including stopping riders with illegally powered bikes

And finally we contacted the closest local residential management company whose residents are most affected by the issues on a daily basis.

“Nobody from McDonald’s has ever contacted us. Our residents are almost 100% in favour of a thriving High St. We live in Town ward because we like the hustle and bustle, the bars, the businesses, and yes even a cheeky Mac and chips, along with the immediate access to all the wonderful things on offer in Epsom.

It should however never be forgotten that this is our manor, it does not belong to corporations and they do not have any right to ruin our environment, subject our families to unacceptable risk or to impede our disabled, simply because it is convenient and profitable to do so. McDonald’s should be reminded that you can only kick a dog so many times and that once kicked the dog is unlikely to care, if someone else is kicking it as well.”

In conclusion, my investigation indicates that McDonald’s has not engaged with the local stakeholders most affected by its new business model. Merely claiming that other businesses are doing the same raises ethical concerns, and the message that “all couriers continue to drive safely and park appropriately” seems both absurd and disingenuous. This suggests that McDonald’s has indeed lost touch with its core values. As a result, local stakeholders may soon be expressing their discontent by singing, “Ba Da Ba Ba Bah, Not Lovin’ It.”

Frozen Shoulder Link to Menopause

1 November 2024



Frozen shoulder, also known as adhesive capsulitis, is a painful condition that restricts movement in the shoulder joint due to adhesion and inflammation in the joint capsule. While this condition can affect anyone, it is particularly common in women aged 40 to 60, with many cases coinciding with menopause.

What Is Frozen Shoulder?

Frozen shoulder is characterised by pain and stiffness in the shoulder joint. It progresses through two main stages: the **painful stage**, where movement becomes uncomfortable and often disrupts sleep, and the **stiffness stage**, where shoulder mobility is severely restricted. The exact cause isn’t always clear, but there are certain risk factors.

The Menopause Connection

Frozen shoulder tends to occur more frequently in women, especially during menopause. Hormonal changes, particularly declining oestrogen levels, can impact connective tissues, making them more prone to inflammation and stiffness. This hormonal shift may partly explain why women in midlife are at higher risk of developing the condition.

Signs and Symptoms

Key symptoms of frozen shoulder include:

- **Pain:** A deep, aching pain that worsens with movement. Night pain is common.
- **Stiffness:** As the condition progresses, shoulder movements become more restricted, making daily activities like dressing or reaching overhead challenging.
- **Limited Range of Motion:** Both active and passive movements are affected.

Risk Factors for Frozen Shoulder

- **Age and Gender:** Women between 40 and 60, especially those going through menopause, are at higher risk.

- **Diabetes:** Those with diabetes are more susceptible and often experience a more prolonged course of frozen shoulder.
- **Thyroid Disorders:** Hypothyroidism and other thyroid issues are linked to a higher likelihood of developing frozen shoulder.
- **Immobilisation:** Lack of movement after an injury or surgery can trigger the condition.

Treatment and Management Options

Physiotherapy: The Gold Standard

Physiotherapy is the cornerstone and is supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). It includes a combination of manual therapy, exercise, and education to relieve symptoms and improve shoulder function.

- **Manual Therapy:** Techniques like joint mobilisation and stretching are used to reduce stiffness and increase mobility.
- **Exercise Therapy:** A personalised exercise plan can help restore shoulder movement and build strength. Early in the painful stage, exercises are gentle, with intensity increasing as the shoulder improves.
- **Patient Education:** Understanding frozen shoulder, its natural progression, and expected recovery time is vital. Many patients worry about the severity of their pain, especially during menopause, but education can reassure them that frozen shoulder is manageable and temporary.

Injection Therapy: Corticosteroids and Hydrodilatation

For those whose pain severely limits rehabilitation, injection therapy can be an effective complement to physiotherapy.

- **Corticosteroid Injections:** These are most useful in the early painful stage, providing significant pain relief and reducing inflammation. This helps patients participate more actively in physiotherapy.
- **Hydrodilatation:** This procedure involves injecting a saline solution, often combined with a corticosteroid, into the joint capsule to stretch it and improve mobility. It's typically used during the stiffness phase.

Can Frozen Shoulder Be Prevented?

While not always preventable, staying active and maintaining shoulder mobility can reduce the risk of developing frozen shoulder, particularly during menopause when hormonal changes increase vulnerability. If you experience early signs of stiffness or discomfort, seeking physiotherapy promptly can prevent the condition from worsening.

Role of Menopause in Frozen Shoulder Recovery

Due to hormonal changes, women going through menopause may experience a longer recovery time. However, with early intervention, including physiotherapy and, if necessary, injection therapy, most women see significant improvements within one to three years. Managing underlying conditions like diabetes or thyroid issues can also speed up recovery.

Conclusion

Frozen shoulder is a painful and limiting condition, but with the right treatment, particularly physiotherapy, most people can regain their shoulder mobility over time. For women experiencing menopause, the added risk makes it important to be proactive in addressing early symptoms. Whether through manual therapy, tailored exercises, or injection therapy, effective treatment can help you regain shoulder function and return to your regular activities.

Up hill struggle to stop oil drilling in Surrey - pays off?

1 November 2024



A clash between environmental advocates and oil developers at Horse Hill in Surrey has resurfaced as local campaigners question why oil production continues despite a lack of planning permission. The Weald Action Group, which represents numerous community groups opposing fossil fuel extraction across Southeast England, has raised concerns over ongoing operations by Horse Hill Developments Ltd (HHDL). The site, located in the Surrey Hills, is still producing oil even though the Supreme Court recently ruled that planning permission was granted unlawfully, citing omissions in the environmental

impact assessment.

This summer, the UK Supreme Court upheld a challenge brought by environmentalist Sarah Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group. The ruling faulted Surrey County Council for not considering indirect greenhouse gas emissions linked to the burning of the oil produced at Horse Hill when they approved the application. Consequently, the planning approval was nullified, marking a significant win for the environmental action group and setting a precedent that has since impacted other oil and gas sites across the UK.

In response to continued production at Horse Hill, the Weald Action Group's legal team has written to Surrey County Council, requesting clarity on whether HHDL's operations are indeed unauthorized and if the council intends to enforce a halt to production until retrospective planning permissions are secured. "It's not clear why UKOG are still producing oil at Horse Hill despite having no planning permission to do so," the group's spokesperson stated. Meanwhile, Chris Coghlan, the newly elected MP for Dorking and Horley, has also pressed the council for answers.

The council's statement confirmed it is aware of the issue, stressing that without planning permission, HHDL's production activities may indeed be unlawful. It stated: "Following the Supreme Court decision, there is no planning permission for oil production at the site... The County Council is continuing its enforcement investigation and will determine whether formal enforcement action is expedient." While the council refrained from offering a definitive timeline, it confirmed that formal enforcement remains a possibility, pending the ongoing investigation.

For the Weald Action Group and concerned residents, the situation underscores broader frustrations with fossil fuel projects in rural areas. Their efforts highlight a commitment to maintaining local accountability and environmental protections, especially in ecologically sensitive areas like the Surrey Hills.

UPDATE:

In a major development in the ongoing Horse Hill oil drilling controversy, UK Oil & Gas PLC (UKOG) has ordered the cessation of oil production at its Horse Hill site following intense public and political pressure. The decision comes after weeks of scrutiny, with mounting calls from local activists, national environmental groups, media outlets, and the newly elected MP for Dorking and Horley, Chris Coghlan, urging an end to operations that lacked valid planning permission.

The Weald Action Group, which represents a network of community groups opposed to oil and gas development in the Southeast, welcomed the decision but condemned the circumstances that led to it. "We are pleased that they have now suspended operations," they stated, "but we are appalled that it took protests by Extinction Rebellion, news coverage, questions from the local MP, and the threat of legal action by Friends of the Earth to bring them to this conclusion." According to the group, the suspension followed sustained pressure and widespread public outrage over UKOG's ongoing activities despite the Supreme Court's ruling that rendered Horse Hill's planning permission invalid.

Brian Alexander, Communications Director for UKOG, initially defended the company's position, claiming on Channel 4 that production at Horse Hill was compliant. "It's not unlawful. We would not be doing it if it was unlawful... We are of the understanding, certainly from Surrey, that we are doing what we should be doing," Alexander told the media.

In a statement issued after halting production, UKOG announced: "After recent discussions with Surrey County Council (SCC) and in keeping with the Company's strategic move from oil & gas into material scale clean hydrogen storage projects, we instructed our subsidiary Horse Hill Developments Ltd (HHDL) to voluntarily suspend oil production at the Horse Hill site." The suspension, effective as of Friday, October 25, reportedly aligns with the company's new focus on hydrogen storage projects, reflecting a shift away from oil and gas.

UKOG emphasized that its actions regarding Horse Hill had been lawful, adding that HHDL has maintained regulatory compliance throughout its six years of operations. The company noted that discussions with Surrey County Council had been ongoing since June 2024 and included a recent site visit by council officials on October 16. UKOG stated it will now work closely with Surrey County Council to ensure a thorough suspension process and to support the planning redetermination process. This includes safely securing and decommissioning the Horse Hill site in compliance with environmental regulations.

The Weald Action Group, meanwhile, remains vigilant, stressing that it will continue to monitor UKOG's activities and press for accountability at Horse Hill and other oil sites across the region. The group's focus now turns to ensuring that any future decisions align with environmental protections and the community's demands for transparency and local oversight.

Related reports:

[The Hills Are Alive With the Sound of Drilling... ?](#)

[Justice Stops Oil](#)

Image is AI generated imaginary picture of oil drilling in hills.

Miracle with Medway

1 November 2024



For the hosts it was a Saturday of availability Armageddon with an injury list mounting that targeted the front and back rows. Players of yesteryear were called to arms and the 2nd XV was ransacked as such resources would have been familiar to Old Mother Hubbard. Jac Davies was the only debutant as the scrum half pitched in as an open-side flanker. In contrast, Medway who have enjoyed a remarkable consistency in selection, with their sizeable travelling support from Priestfields, looked forward to another showing of "The Usual Suspects". To add to the task the Kent side topped the table having only lost their opening game of the campaign. Confounding all expectations Sutton & Epsom, for the second match in a row at Rugby Lane, lowered the colours of the league leaders to be victorious by 22-18.

On an overcast but still afternoon that hinted at future rain Freddy Bunting kicked off towards the Cabbage Patch. Understandably confident from their five game winning streak the visitors were immediately on the attack. The eponymous Bullock charged down the paddock from his own 22. Passes were interchanged and a dramatic opening score was denied by the scrambling defence in the S&E 22. Sutton were also lively in the opening exchanges and after five minutes they were awarded a kickable penalty. In a tactical shift of tectonic proportions Freddy Bunting went for goal and put his team 3-0 up.

This minor irritation did not derail the Medway machine as they stormed into action.

The closer to the line they got the harder the hosts tackled. The ball was spun wide and a try looked probable. The visitors employed that popular rugby elision, the long miss pass, that was met by that familiar foe, the interception. Adam Bibby set off for glory eliciting roars of encouragement as he sped past the grandstand. Frantic defenders closed in from all angles and brought him down ten metres short. However, Mr Richardson's whistle offered the consolation of a second penalty. With ten minutes on the clock Freddy Bunting doubled the advantage to 6-0. Five minutes later, another indiscretion, another penalty and another Bunting three points for 9-0.

The visitors were determined to put the upstart hosts firmly in their place. Almost fifteen minutes of unbroken possession, pressure and territorial dominance ensued.

Galvanised by their lead and confident in their defensive unity the Black & White line held fast. A couple of penalties were kicked by Medway for lineouts. Unfortunately, during this passage of play Sutton lost outside centre Finlay Scott to injury and were forced to reshuffle the backs as Adam Bibby went to 13 and Alfie Baker came off the bench to play on the wing. On the half hour the table-toppers were awarded another penalty and decided on going for gold. Harrison Fermor bisected the uprights to trail 3-9.

It was Sutton & Epsom's turn to attack but a probing Bunting kick keep appeared to nestle harmlessly in the in-goal area under the supervision of John Sipawa. Remarkably the winger knocked on the stationary ball to gift Sutton a 5-metre scrum. The home team ran into a red and amber wall and were turned over and Medway kicked the subsequent penalty to the

The lineout was overthrown and eager Sutton hands gathered the ball. Replacement prop Richard Madadangoma rampaged forward before the backs were released. Slick hands and accurate passing was rewarded as fullback Austin Bell timed his entry into the line to perfection to score. Freddy Bunting converted from the flank and S&E led 16-3.

Medway went in search of a score before the break. A neat lineout move thrown to the front man tried to catch Sutton napping but it came to nought. Soon afterwards there was another penalty to the Black & Whites followed by a stern lecture to Medway lock Peter Cole. The first half ended without any further additions to the scoreboard. The teams turned around with S&E leading 16-3. The makeshift Sutton & Epsom XV were on course for a major upset but everyone at Rugby Lane was expecting more of the same in the second half, relentless Medway pressure. Both sides gathered in a huddle unleashing a primal scream and prepared for battle in the second period.

The opening five minutes were very positive for the Black & Whites, from the secure Glanville take of the restart to winning a scrum against the head. S&E had a free ball and Freddie Bunting attempted a drop goal from distance. It drifted wide but he had the consolation of a long-range penalty to extend the lead. The distance was just beyond his limit and Medway touched down under their posts. Soon the visitors were refreshing their XV from the bench and pinning Sutton in their 22 with searching kicks. The vital first score of the half went to the league leaders after a dozen minutes. A determined run down the touchline by John Sipawa burst through the initial tackle and though he was felled by the cover he did wonderfully well to stretch out a telescopic arm as his momentum took the ball over the line.

Harrison Fermor's touchline conversion failed but the morale-boosting try made it 16-8. Moments later Medway conceded yet another kickable penalty and Freddy Bunting obliged with three more points for 19-8. The visitors' frustration with the arbiter of truth and justice overflowed and a couple of minutes later a vocal objection to a decision from Mr Richardson led to an additional 10-metre stroll for the defenders. Once more Captain Bunting tested his kicking powers and again it fell short and the game restarted with a 22 drop out. The game entered the final quarter and ominously for the home supporters Medway scored their second try. Excellent support play was rewarded as Harrison Fermor was on hand to score in the corner despite the desperate defence. The 15 was unable to add the extras to his try but his side at 13-19 were within a score with plenty of time left on the clock. The Black & White defence girded their collective loins and continued to tackle ferociously and win vital turnovers. Additionally the pack were causing Medway problems at the scrum. Another blast of the whistle, another penalty near halfway and another shot at goal for Sutton. These penalties may not have impacted the scoreboard but they frustrated the visitors, took vital time off the clock and made them initiate their attacks from their own

The game was becoming more open and there was no rest from the red and amber attacks and pressure. Sutton were most fortuitous when Tom Lennard was charged down that the loose ball returned to the miscreant kicker. The crowd, living every moment, roared on their sides. As the game entered time added on Freddy Bunting had the opportunity to make it a two-score game with a penalty adjacent to the uprights just outside the 22. He voraciously accepted this tasty offering for 22-13.

Medway now threw the entire contents of the kitchen at the Sutton defences. John Sipawa was greeted by three tacklers and bundled into touch. Jac Davies made a wonderful cover tackle as a line break was extinguished. Every phase repelled ate into the clock until the final play. The Kent side were rewarded with a Max Bullock try in the corner and a bonus point but a delighted S&E side knew that the conversion would be followed by the final whistle. The kick failed and the joyous celebrations began for an outstanding 22-18 victory.

The Sutton defence appeared to have been constructed by Aniketos and Alexiares as the Black & Whites summoned up their inner Heracles. It was a classic example of just what can be achieved with team spirit, defensive resolve and commitment to the cause. Medway never stopped attacking and this was epitomised by winger John Sipawa who bounced off tacklers and swatted away defenders in an effort to breach the Sutton defence. The two teams now get a most welcome week off. The season resumes on 9th November when Sutton & Epsom travel to Dartfordians whilst Medway are on the road again with a trip to Thurrock. Sutton & Epsom

Bell, Bibby, Scott, Bunting ©, Findlay, Lennard, Munford, Johnson, Jones, Hilton, Glanville, McTaggart, Gerhard, Davies & Hegarty.

Replacements: Madadangoma, Williams & Baker.

Medway

Fermor, Chalmers, Bullock, Clement ©, Sipawa, Wardzynski, Grice, Nickalls, Knight, Campbell, Cole, Stubbington, Jackson, Gibson & Purslow.

Replacements: Hyde J, Hyde N & Reeves.

Epsom and Ewell Council bank on street art

1 November 2024



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has completed two new community arts projects in Epsom and Stoneleigh during September and October, in collaboration with globally recognised street artists Positive Arts, local charity We Power On and GLF students. The vibrant designs are part of a series of public art installations organised by the council, aimed at revitalising areas within the borough that are tired and in need of improvement.

We Power On, a local charity that supports men with their mental health, worked with artists to create one of the murals near Clandon Close in Stoneleigh which depicts themes inspired by the local area, including the Hogsmill River and neighbourhood architecture.

Chris Waller, Founder of the community group We Power On said,

“We were honoured to be asked to be part of this wonderful initiative between Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and the

guys from Positive Arts. We mucked in to help spread a bit of colour and positivity to an otherwise dark space which aligns perfectly with what We Power On is all about. The beauty of initiatives such as this is it brings people together to do good for the local community. We're not sure we will make it as graffiti artists, but it was fun to have a go and be a part of something brilliant."

A small cohort of students from a GLF School were also given the opportunity to develop their creative skills and contribute to the transformation of a walkway between Miles Road and Stones Road in Epsom with artists from Positive Arts by creating a mural that gives a nod to Epsom's racing heritage.

Speaking of the project, a student from a GLF School said,

"I've really enjoyed (creating) the picture we're drawing of racing horses on The Downs. It's taught me how to control a spray can for artistic purposes. It should really brighten up the underpass and I hope local residents enjoy seeing our work".

Clive Woodbridge, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council added,

"The amazing thing about these projects is that they've allowed the participants to develop their social and technical skills simultaneously. I really hope that everyone who's had contact with Positive Arts through the creation of these murals has walked away feeling as though they've unlocked a skill they didn't have before - whether that's practical, via painting the area or socially via the teamwork that was essential for success!"

Both murals have been fully funded via the Arts, Culture and Heritage UKSPF 2024/25 allocation and contribute to the council's overall vision for curating art projects that build pride with local community stakeholders.

Licensed to walk

1 November 2024



The Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee has voted to launch a 12-month pilot Commercial Dog Walking Licensing Scheme in Nonsuch Park, starting in April 2025, following a consultation with the public and dog walkers.

The licensing scheme will bring dog walking in line with other commercial activities in the park and help reassure the public that commercial dog walking in Nonsuch Park is responsibly carried out and regulated.

An annual licence will cost £200 and limits the number of dogs that can be walked at one time to a maximum of six. As with other commercial activities in the park, dog walkers will be required to provide proof of public liability insurance, risk assessments and sign an agreement which sets out how commercial dog walking can be undertaken.

The committee also set out plans to develop a Dog Walking Code of Conduct in collaboration with the dog walking community and enforcement where there is evidence of non-compliance.

Councillor Julian Freeman, who was Chair of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee at the start of the consultation said:

"We'd like to thank everybody who participated in the public consultation. The aim of the consultation was to make sure Nonsuch Park is a safe environment for all park users, after concerns were raised about the increase in dog walkers with multiple dogs.

"With feedback from almost 1,000 people, including commercial dog walkers using the park already, it is clear that this is an important issue to many people."

Councillor Louise Phelan, from Sutton Council, current Chair of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, added:

"We know that the professional dog walkers who visit Nonsuch Park take the responsibility of walking multiple dogs in a public area extremely seriously and support the introduction of a licensing scheme that helps protect the reputation and standards of their profession."

"We hope the subsequent licensing scheme will go some way to create an open space which everyone can enjoy."

Related report:

Should Nonsuch Park go to the dogs?

Nominate heroic businesswomen of Epsom and Ewell

1 November 2024



A new scheme entitled “**MP HERoes**“, *In Partnership with NatWest* and Supported by the Women & Enterprise All-Party Parliamentary Group has been introduced.

A cross-party Parliamentary programme that celebrates local women-owned businesses throughout the UK. MP HERoes enables each MP to highlight the vital contribution of women entrepreneurs to the local economy and beyond, generating positive PR for the business and for the nominating MP.

By nominating a woman business owner in the Epsom and Ewell Constituency, the goal is to create and celebrate local role models and encourage other women to start and grow a business. All HERoes become part of the MPH community, with regular events and workshops both online and in person, which support the business owner and their business.

Helen Maguire, Epsom and Ewell’s new MP, can nominate a local woman business owner from any sector or industry, the only requirement is they are based in your constituency.

If you wish to suggest someone to Helen Maguire email helen.maguire.mp@parliament.uk

NB There is no closing date, business owners can be nominated throughout the year.

Points you may wish to consider when nominating your HERO woman business owner

- established in the area
- provides a useful product or service
- employs local people
- supports the local community

What happens next

We contact the business to let them know about the Award. It’s not a competition, all MP HERoes nominated businesses (one per constituency) are award-winners and welcome within the MPH community. The MPH Award runs across 2-years, currently 2024/25.

Next steps for MPs

Once the business is confirmed, each MP and their HERO is featured on www.mpheroes.com and highlighted throughout the local press and on social media. It’s great for the business, the local economy, and an opportunity for MPs to promote their support for local business.

Celebration and Awards event at Westminster - 3.00pm November 20, 2024

MPs and their HERoes are invited to a celebration event at Parliament during Global Entrepreneurship Week. A Certificate is presented to each HERO and we hope as an MP you’re able to pop in during the afternoon to grab a photo with your business HERO. Should you nominate a business in the next year, the next Celebration takes place in spring 2025.

Image: local women led business Oracle PR

Epsom and Ewell see more red in away defeat

1 November 2024



Abbey Rangers 2-1 Epsom and Ewell FC. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 26th October 2024.

Eleven months ago we visited Addlestone Moor and lost 2-1 in a controversial match that contained three converted penalties. This latest visit ended with the same scoreline, although this time we had to finish the match with nine men and still nearly got a draw out of it.

Arguably this match was less controversial than that previous encounter at the Moor, despite the dismissals, which it was hard for anyone to argue with. The match programme referred to some nasty games in the past between the clubs, and that things had mellowed somewhat since then, but this one was a typically old school niggly Abbey v Epsom match; full of commitment and plenty of solid challenges that the referee did his best to keep a lid on, even towards the end when things began to get a bit fractious.

In terms of personnel we made five changes. Dan O'Donovan came in between the posts for Faebian Witter, while Niall Stillwell and Callum Wilson returned at the back in place of the injury-hit Ethan Brazier and David Romer. Further forward Luke Miller came in on the left wing, requiring Ethan Nelson-Roberts to drop back and leaving Kionte Gillfillian-Waul on the bench. Finally, it was great to see Will Kendall back in the line up after spending a lot of time abroad recently. Although not match-fit yet, his return to the squad will boost our striking options and was particularly timely as I was advised that Carl Oblitey was at a wedding, so he slotted straight in without any significant change to our formation. For Abbey Rangers, there were a couple of former Salts in the line up in keeper Shay Honey and left back Jerry Antwi, the latter of which had had a couple of spells with us in recent years.

The tone for this match was set as early as the third minute when Stillwell put in a thumping and completely fair challenge out on the touchline, although a few minutes later he received a yellow card for a handball that would have repercussions for him later on. On the quarter hour mark Ali Fofahan, operating on the right wing to start with, skewed a cross which then became a shot, although Honey was ready and caught the ball on the goal line. Our former keeper also had to be alert to punch a near post Adam Green corner away, while at the other end O'Donovan was able to deal fairly comfortably with a long range effort.

In truth, this was the pattern of the first half, with very few real chances as both teams looked fairly secure at the back. However, it was from one of these that the hosts too the lead as a nice move ended with Finley Warren who rode a couple of challenges and drilled the ball low to O'Donovan's right from just inside the penalty area to open the scoring in the 29th minute. It nearly got worse as Jordan Ikala robbed Anthony Nazareth and ran through on goal, trying to curl the ball left footed around the advancing O'Donovan, which he was able to do from thirty yards, only to see the ball strike our post and go out for a goal kick.

In response a Miller header set up Kendall for a chance that he hooked just over the bar on the turn from twelve yards and in the final minute of the half Nelson-Roberts tried his luck from around thirty-five yards out at an angle, but Honey was alert to tip the ball over for a fruitless Epsom corner. We went in at the break trailing by that single goal, despite the match being very even to that point.

We re-started the brighter of the two teams and Miller saw his cross/shot from a narrow angle tipped over, but the game soon settled into the same pattern as the first half with both teams cancelling each other out and restricting goal scoring opportunities, but things took a turn for the worse in the 61st minute when a long ball caught O'Donovan out badly and despite being some twenty-five yards out from his goal, he chose to stop the ball from going over his head with both hands, incurring the fairly obvious red card as a result. It was impossible to argue with this decision and of course led to the next question of who would replace him? Kailan North was the man for the job and he took over the role to become our first outfield player in goal since Nick Wilson against Hailsham Town in February of 2023.

Despite the player disadvantage, the match continued to be fairly even in front of an attendance that was advised as 43 by Football Web Pages and 59 by the FA Full Time site, even though there were around 80 in attendance! Abbey clearly decided they were going to test the "new" keeper out and a few long range efforts were sent in North's direction, although he dealt with them fairly well, particularly a free kick that he kept out at the near post after Green had taken one for the team by bringing down an Abbey attacker just outside the penalty area.

We changed our formation in the 75th minute and gambled with three at the back with Nelson-Roberts in a more advanced role, but the home side began to create more opportunities. Green did really well to get in the way of a powerful strike in goal for a corner, but the subsequent set piece was pulled back to Brad Marshall who struck the ball powerfully past North at the near post from twenty yards to give the hosts a two goal lead in the 78th minute.

Conrad Essilfie-Conduah came on in relief of Craig Dundas and we won a free kick just outside the area after a foul on Green that earned Antwi a yellow card. Miller then struck the free kick around the wall, forcing Honey to make a good save, but the ball bounced up off him and struck the retreating Marshall squarely in the chest and sending the ball over the line before he could clear it to reduce the arrears in the 84th minute. Marshall had scored at both ends in the space of just six minutes!

This was the fourth own goal in our favour in the last eight matches, but our chances of forcing an equaliser were hampered when the home side broke away and Stillwell was adjudged to have brought him down. It looked from where I was standing as though he got the ball, but he also appeared to get a part of the player too and the second yellow card

was inevitable once the referee had deemed the challenge as a foul. Both of our players will miss the Sheerwater League match next Saturday. For those who love their stats, this was the tenth time in our history that we had been reduced to nine men, the most recent of which came on that infamous day at Dorking Wanderers Reserves back in December 2021. These were our fifth and sixth red cards of the season already though, and maybe we need to give a little bit more thought to our discipline going forward as we are already over half way to passing our rather high club record of eleven in a season.

Ikala sent a good opportunity high and wide from a good position, while another home forward picked up a yellow card for a blatant dive and we nearly levelled it up in the seventh and final minute of injury time when a Miller free kick was deflected for a corner, from which Honey punched the ball clear at the second attempt. On another day we might well have got that equaliser too, and it is hard to argue that Abbey Rangers truly earned all three points here on the balance of play, but they managed to keep all eleven players on the pitch and for that reason alone, they deserved the points more than we did.

This was our first defeat in eight matches and whilst all four of the League contests in that sequence have been draws, it is now six Combined Counties League matches without a win. However, no real harm was done to our position as we currently sit well clear of the bottom two clubs, who both also lost this day. Sheerwater are another of the four clubs below us right now and they will be our next League opponents at the KGF on Saturday, but before then we have a Monday Surrey Senior Cup trip to Carshalton Athletic. We'll definitely need all eleven men for that contest, as we haven't beaten them since 1955!!

Epsom & Ewell: Dan O'Donovan, Niall Stillwell, Ethan Nelson-Roberts, Adam Green (c), Anthony Nazareth, Callum Wilson, Luke Miller, Craig Dundas, Will Kendall, Kailan North, Ali Fofahan

Subs: Jason Bloor for Kendall (73), Conrad Essilfie-Conduah for Dundas (80)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Surrey smokers quitting for free

1 November 2024



Ex-smoker Councillor Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, and Public Health, visited the One You Surrey stop smoking service to find out how we're supporting smokers to quit.

Around 12% of adults in Surrey smoke, and from personal experience Mark knows that it can be tough to give up smoking. When he visited Stop Smoking Advisors Lottie and Tutua from the One You Surrey Stop Smoking Service, he found that there is lots of support available to help people in Surrey make this life-changing choice.

One You Surrey offer a free quitting service, to help residents make the first step towards a healthier and smoke-free life. With access to free quitting aids, including e-cigarettes, nicotine replacement patches and gum, as well as encouragement and support to guide smokers through their quitting journey, One You Surrey are there every step of the way. One You Surrey offer a personalised service, including 1:1 sessions and online support. Whether this is someone's first shot at quitting smoking, or whether they feel like they've tried it all, the advisors at One You Surrey are here to find what works. Smokers who quit with the help of a stop smoking service are 4 times more likely to quit for good, as Mark found.

Mark told us: *"The benefits of quitting smoking make this challenging journey well worth it!" After just 72 hours, you will already be able to breathe better and will have more energy. Your sense of taste and smell will improve, and quitting can boost your mood and help you to feel less stressed. And you could save close to £2000 a year, enough for a holiday or towards a new car."*

Smoking Cessation Lead Tutua shared: *"Last year we were able to support over 1500 people in Surrey to successfully quit smoking. I love seeing the benefits our clients gain through their time with us, from the positive financial impact of quitting right through to people being able to run around with their children or grandchildren without getting out of breath as easily."*

To find out how One You Surrey can support you, or someone you know, in your smoke-free journey, visit <https://oneyoursurrey.org.uk/programmes/stop-smoking/>. It's well worth it!

Opposition Calls for Emergency Council Meeting Over Epsom and Ewell Local Plan

1 November 2024



In a move that underscores growing concerns over the future of development in Epsom and Ewell, nine opposition councillors from the borough council have requested an Emergency Full Council Meeting to accelerate the adoption of the Local Plan. The councillors—comprising four Liberal Democrats, three Labour members, and two Conservatives—are calling for the meeting to take place immediately after the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) on 20th November, or alternatively, on the evening of 21st November.

The opposition's objective is clear: to expedite the council's voting on the draft Local Plan to ensure that the next round of public consultation can proceed swiftly. Councillors are particularly concerned that any delays in finalising the plan could subject Epsom and Ewell to new government-imposed housing targets. These targets, outlined by the current Labour government, could increase the borough's required new dwellings to 817 per year, a significant rise from the existing figure.

One opposition councillor stated, "We all know that if the Local Plan fails or is found unsound or non-compliant, we will be subject to the Labour government's new targets, which are 817 dwellings per annum." The councillors are urging the council leadership to act now to avoid this outcome.

Council's Position: Balancing Housing Needs and Green Space

In response, the leadership of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, led by the Residents' Association, has emphasised the importance of balancing development with the preservation of the borough's character. Councillor Hannah Dalton, Chair of the Residents' Association, spoke recently about the challenge of providing much-needed housing—particularly affordable housing—while safeguarding the borough's treasured green spaces.

Councillor Peter O'Donovan, Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, has reiterated that the council is adhering to a clear timetable. The LPPC is expected to review the Pre-Submission Local Plan at its November meeting, following which the next public consultation phase will commence. O'Donovan stressed the need for a robust evidence base to ensure the Local Plan withstands scrutiny and avoids challenges that could delay or derail the process.

The council is also grappling with an increase in homelessness, which has risen by 95% over the past year, further highlighting the need for new housing, particularly for families. Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee, outlined the council's efforts to mitigate homelessness, including working with private landlords and providing support to those at risk.

The Stakes: Higher Housing Targets and Green Belt at Risk

The backdrop to this debate is the government's proposed revision to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which includes higher housing targets and reduced protections for Green Belt land. If the Local Plan is not submitted for approval before these changes come into effect, the borough could face the new target of 817 homes per year. For many residents, this raises the spectre of large-scale developments encroaching on green spaces that are integral to the borough's identity.

At a previous LPPC meeting in October, tensions ran high as residents voiced concerns about the potential loss of Green Belt land. The Epsom Green Belt Group, a local campaign organisation, has proposed an alternative plan that focuses on developing brownfield sites instead. They argue that this approach would meet housing targets without sacrificing green spaces.

What Next?

The requested Emergency Full Council Meeting, if granted, would allow all councillors to debate and vote on the draft Local Plan. Whether the meeting will be scheduled remains to be seen, but with growing pressure from both the opposition and the public, the council's next steps will be closely watched.

The stakes are high for Epsom and Ewell. The decisions made in the coming weeks will shape the borough's future, determining how it meets housing demands while preserving the community's much-loved green spaces.