

Secret 100 acres just north of Epsom and Ewell

7 October 2024



Despite being home to ancient hedgerows, a locally significant population of brown hairstreak butterflies, and a small fragment of wetland, the series of seven meadows spanning 42 hectares (about 100 acres) at Tolworth Court Farm is far from reaching its ecological potential.

Citizen Zoo is working with Kingston Council and The Community Brain to change that! Our shared vision is to establish a dynamic, mixed-mosaic nature reserve that nurtures a more diverse and abundant wildlife population. We will restore and enhance the site's ecological balance while honouring its rich farming heritage through innovative rewilding measures inspired by rural projects such as mixed grazing regimes.

Mixed-Grazing Scheme

Despite its size and location along the green corridor of the Hogsmill, the site is underperforming in terms of the wildlife it supports. After 20 years of annual hay cuts that should increase botanical diversity, the site's plant communities have degraded since the last surveys were conducted in 2003. Additionally, while the 1000+ insects and 40+ bird species recorded sounds an impressive number, this is far below what a site of this should support. Indeed, a few decades back the site was home to nationally rare ground-nesting birds such as skylarks and lapwing, plus increasingly scarce bullfinches.

Adopting the mixed grazing methods of successful rewilding projects in rural areas, such as Knepp and Wild Ken Hill, we are currently preparing the site for the re-introduction of livestock!

We will be introducing a small number of cattle and pigs, which through their varied grazing behaviours, will improve plant diversity, aerate the soil, and create a diversity of habitats. This will create a dynamic ecosystem within Kingston's largest nature reserve helping to restore ecological balance and create a healthier ecosystem for local species and people. With the invaluable support of our dedicated volunteers and local students, we are clearing vegetation around the perimeter of the site, and preparing to install a secure livestock fence. Once in place, the cattle will be free to roam within the designated area. Each individual will be fitted with a GPS tag, allowing us to monitor their movements and make adjustments if needed, ensuring their welfare and the protection of the environment.

We are aware of the vital importance of the site in terms of local people's access to green space as well as its popularity among dog walkers. However, with the presence of cattle, it will be increasingly important to keep dogs on leads. We will be using Sussex cattle, which will have received training around the presence of humans and dogs, and also be individually selected for their docile traits. This is a common breed for grazing in urban areas and means we can be confident of no issues arising, however, as with other projects, we will ask dog walkers to keep their dogs on leads within the enclosure as an extra precaution.

We are recruiting a dedicated team of 'Wild Guardians' to conduct checks on the livestock and their welfare every day. If there are any issues flagged with the individuals or regarding their safety on site we will respond immediately. Do get in touch if you would like to be a part of this group. It will be a wonderful opportunity to get hands-on experience with a traditional breed, and we would love to have you on board!

Wetland Restoration Project

Another key feature of the Wild Tolworth project is the restoration of a large wetland area in the Great Meadow. Historically, the Hogsmill River flowed through the western corner of Tolworth Court Farm Fields, which acted as a floodplain for the site stream. The river was straightened around the 1950s to reduce flooding in the area. This was a commonly used method of flood reduction that counterintuitively passed the risk of flooding on further downstream, as the water flows quicker from A to B. While we would like to have re-diverted the river back through the site, due to electrical, sewage, and gas utilities on site, this was not possible. Instead, we will mimic the flow of the river with an enhanced closed-system wetland. By restoring this important feature, we will rejuvenate the ecological balance of the area, providing vital new habitats for local wildlife while also reconnecting the site with its historical roots. This will increase the presence of many bird species and amphibians on site. Additionally, by storing surface runoff and slowing water entering the river, the wetland will help to prevent flooding downstream. We will increase the accessibility of the site with a wheelchair-friendly boardwalk over the

wetland, offering everyone the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of Tolworth Court Farm and experience this unique habitat up close.

This restoration project required us to gain planning permission from the council (as shown by the green planning notice signs at the entrances to the site). There will be no buildings constructed on site.

Work to Date

This project has been a long time in the making. Citizen Zoo, alongside Kingston Council and the Community Brain, has coordinated comprehensive ecological surveying including engaging with nationally recognised invertebrate experts and botanists. Further to this work, in conjunction with the Field Studies Council and Biological Recording Company, we have run over 10 Community Field Recorders Days, where volunteers can learn from species experts to help survey the site and learn more about the incredible species that can be found within the reserve. This has provided insight into the biodiversity of Tolworth Court Farm and informed the changes that can be made to improve the health of the ecosystem and bring benefits to wildlife and people.

We intend to begin work on our livestock fences and wetland restoration project in late 2024 to early 2025.

Nature-Friendly Dog Walks

Tolworth Court Farm is a cherished local space, and we want everyone to feel informed and involved. If you have any questions regarding the logistics of these changes please come along to one of our Nature-Friendly Dog Walks on site. This provides a great opportunity to ask any questions you have while we show you the vision for the site. You can find more information on these on our website (citizenzoo.org) or our Eventbrite page!

Further Questions

If you are unable to make it to a dog walk but you have any questions regarding the logistics of these changes please see our website by googling 'Citizen Zoo Wild Tolworth' for some FAQs or email hello@citizenzoo.org.

Pia Trevelyan-Ashby

Epsom & Ewell FC draw with leaders

7 October 2024



Redhill 2-2 Epsom and Ewell. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 5th October 2024.

I wrote last week that matches against Redhill and Fleet Town would give us a better idea of where our likely final position would be, and against the league leading Lobsters we recovered from a slow start and a two goal deficit to send a message to the League that we are perfectly capable of holding our own in this division, as we drew 2-2 at Kiln Brow on Saturday afternoon; only the second time this season that they have dropped points.

The sharp eyed amongst you may have noticed that this was our third consecutive 2-2 draw and wondered whether this has happened before, and the answer is NEVER! This week was the eighth time in our history we had recorded a pair of 2-2 draws; the last time in 2010, but this third consecutive "Desmond" was the first time in club history that this had happened.

We made three changes from the draw against Balham on Wednesday. Callum Wilson returned to the squad after some time out injured, ahead of the absent David Romer, while Ali Fofahan came in on the right wing ahead of Luke Miller who was at a wedding and Jason Bloor made his first start for our club in place of Fabio Nunes who was on the bench, possibly in preparation for his upcoming three match suspension. However, best laid plans don't always work out and a pair of injury enforced substitutions ensured that both Nunes and Niall Stillwell were both on the field by the end of the first half.

For the opposition, former Salts Adam Grant and Tommy Smith were in the starting line up, with Gavin Quintyne joining the action in the second half, although another in Jaevon Dyer was injured. The connections weren't restricted to the playing field though, as former Coach and Caretaker Manager Matt Chapman was in the Redhill dugout, along with our former Assistant Manager Jordan Clark, now in charge at Kiln Brow. The hosts were four points clear at the top going into this match, with only Cobham taking points from them to this stage and they kicked off in front of a very decent crowd of 264, which was boosted by a number of children that were invited along, providing an example for our club how to do things like that properly.

The hosts got off to a fast start and a near post corner in the first minute was flicked just over our cross bar, before a raking ball out to the left three minutes later was followed by a great cross, although the Redhill striker wasn't quite able to get enough purchase on the ball. It would have been a superb goal if it had gone in.



Unfortunately, we didn't have to wait long before the ball was in our net as in the ninth minute Kionte Gillfillian-Waul was robbed (mugged?) around the half way line by former Salt Adam Grant, who then set Nathan Hogan off down the right. Wilson almost got across to cut the ball out, but only got half a boot on it and Hogan continued his run and he cut in and smashed the ball past Dan O'Donovan from an angle. Some say a keeper shouldn't be beaten at his near post, but to be fair, this was a very powerful strike and I'm not sure any keeper could have reacted quickly enough as the ball flew into the roof of the net.

Gillfillian-Waul had taken a blow to the head after Grant's robust challenge and required treatment before walking off, clearly dazed and Nunes was thrown on down the left with Ethan Nelson-Roberts dropping to left back. Soon after this O'Donovan was on the deck after he had come out to head the ball clear, only to be clattered after this. There were to be a number of stoppages in this match for treatment and it was clear that Redhill were going to try and outmuscle us. They even struck a free kick directly against a retreating Carl Oblitey before trying to get him booked, which was a little classless and fortunately the referee wasn't interested in such games.

We hadn't created much to this point and Redhill were certainly worth their lead at this stage, but we had our first real opportunity in the 34th minute when a free kick in was met by a Craig Dundas header and as the hosts failed to clear, Wilson knocked it goalwards and it required the intervention of a defender to hook it clear before it crossed the line. For those wondering, it was about a foot away, but did have the momentum to go in, so it was an important clearance.

Regrettably we were unable to build on that chance as our opponents extended their lead just three minutes later with a right wing cross to the far post that was met with a downward header. It wasn't the greatest or most powerful of contacts, yet it still squirmed past O'Donovan who may not have had much chance with the first goal, but will certainly be annoyed with this one.

At 2-0 down this was an important test of our resilience. We really needed something back before the half time break and that's exactly what happened, and from an unlikely source too. In the 43rd minute we won a free kick out wide on the right. Adam Green usually takes most of our set pieces, but appears to have reduced his workload in that area and Fofahan sent the delivery in, but before it could reach one of our players the Redhill Captain Eoin Fraser jumped higher and diverted the ball superbly past Luke Roberts in the Lobsters net from about eight yards out.

We were to play an extra five and a half minutes of injury time but plenty would still happen before the break. Wilson picked up a booking for a foul before Fraser took one for his team by bringing down Bloor as he threatened to break through. In the third minute of injury time we were forced into another replacement as Stillwell came on at right back in place of Brazier who has struggled at times this season with his hamstring and after feeling it was tight, had to make way. Finally, we had the unusual sight of another former Salt in Tommy Smith, cropping up on the right wing to send a decent cross over, although the header wasn't on target, and after O'Donovan had comfortably gathered Ethan Ford's low shot the players finally went for their half time break.

Our boys came out with a little more belief and we had an early chance in the 50th minute when Oblitey saw his shot blocked with the loose ball being struck only just over the bar by Wilson from the edge of the area. Redhill's lead looked vulnerable and a great ball over the top of the defender from Stillwell set Fofahan through on goal before he was brought down by Joe Dyett. Or so everyone else in the ground thought. The referee was clearly awaiting an indication from the Assistant, but it never came and as Fofahan lay crumpled on the ground there was a lot of protestation, particularly from Bloor who was treading a very fine line on the sin-bin rule. It's possible the referee gave him a little more leniency because he too thought that his colleague had got it wrong!

Bloor then told the Assistant to concentrate just ahead of our next free kick, which was ironic as our man was then pulled up for a foul! However, the pressure continued and as we pressed, Oblitey collected the ball and guided it over the advancing Roberts from ten yards to level the match up at 2-2 in the 58th minute.

The hosts looked rather wobbly at this stage and Nunes then got away on the left wing and his delivery found Fofahan just five yards out, but Roberts spread himself to make a superb block of his strike, and he was up quickly to repel the follow up from Green before Bloor's attempt was blocked by a defender. Somehow Redhill survived this and Roberts continued his one man defiance by heading clear from outside of his area before being well positioned to save another strike from Fofahan. Both Bloor and Nunes picked up yellow cards as our threat began to wane and in the final minutes the hosts finished the stronger of the two sides as they made a belated attempt to claim a winner that they didn't deserve. Stillwell cleared from a dangerous position and then Anthony Nazareth produced a great tackle to dispossess a Redhill forward as they pushed, but without success.

Overall, we were well worth at least a point and it looked to me as though we just gave our opponents a bit too much respect to start with. Maybe we do need to start better, as this was the fourth time in eight days that we had gone behind, all in the first half. We have still only scored two League goals in the opening forty-five minutes all season, and one of those was the own goal in this match! However, we didn't lose any of the recent games where we trailed and now have just one defeat in our last nine matches. Another difficult challenge awaits us when Fleet Town visit on Saturday, but another good result will set us up for the League Cup and F.A. Vase ties at home to Berks County. Yes we are playing them at home in both cups!

The final word today goes to the Redhill programme. As a programme editor for thirteen seasons with nearly a dozen top ten finishes in the National awards, I think I'm qualified enough to comment that this was undoubtedly the best I have seen at this level all season, and it is an example to all that a few random photos and "static" pages moved into different places each week do not make for interesting reading, as you need actual articles to go with them, and at just £2 it is far better value than the others I've seen this season. If Redhill go up this season I'll miss their programme, although on this performance it appears to me as though Redhill still have much work to do, regardless of their current League position.

Epsom & Ewell: Dan O'Donovan, Ethan Brazier, Kionte Gillfillian-Waul, Adam Green (c), Callum Wilson, Anthony Nazareth, Ali Fofahan, Craig Dundas, Carl Oblitey, Jason Bloor, Ethan Nelson-Roberts

Subs: Fabio Nunes for Gillfillian-Waul (10), Niall Stillwell for Brazier (45+3)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk

Surrey Cop demoted for racist texts

7 October 2024



A Surrey Police sergeant who shared racist texts and a video of a man attempting to take his own life has been stripped of his rank – but will continue on active front line duties.

Daniel Hebborn admitted to sending a series of Whatsapp messages to friends in 2019 and 2020 which included a video which showed a man attempting to take his own life by jumping from a high rise building. The video showed the male with “devastating injuries” on the floor, a police misconduct panel heard.

During the two-day police misconduct hearing this September, the former sergeant accepted the messages were inappropriate, breached of the standards of authority, respect and courtesy. The panel said his behaviour had the “obvious potential to cause serious harm to the reputational standing of the Surrey Police and national policing in general and undermine public confidence”.

The messages also included an image deemed an “inappropriate racist joke” showing a photo of an elderly black man with his arm around the shoulders of an elderly white man with the accompanying title ‘is this a mugging?’. In a separate message, the officer was asked whether he “beat a guy like you did when you arrested him for littering” to which the officer responded “he was white”.

He also shared an image of an empty articulated lorry trailer with the heading “Trailer for sale, serious offers only, sleeps 39 people”, followed by “Guess my favourite restaurant will be short staffed again too”.

Hebborn continued to serve as a sergeant with Surrey Police in the years between sending the racist messages and the conduct hearing.

The report read: “There was some concern that the ‘banter’ contained in the WhatsApp messages may have extended beyond the private group and into his position as a sergeant and role model to those in his team or station. based on comments made in his own submitted character references including; “Dan’s sense of humour is best described as pushing boundaries that are deliberately controversial but always intended as a joke”.

The panel determined that the multiple breaches of the Standards as admitted, amounted to gross misconduct and were arguably so serious as to justify dismissal. However Hebborn avoided being sacked and was instead given a final warning and reduced to the rank of constable.

The report reads: “A clear message had to be given that where an officer behaved in a way demonstrated by the conduct in this case, such conduct was not tolerated within the police service. There was a strong need to build and maintain public trust in the police.”

The report added that action had to be taken in order to maintain public confidence and respect especially when it came to the police “tackling issues of racism within their forces.”

Head of professional standards, Chief Superintendent Andy Rundle, said; “Surrey Police expects a high level of professionalism from our officers and staff and we will take action when these standards are not met.

“The hearing heard that former PS Dan Hebborn had admitted to the offensive and inappropriate messages and shown significant remorse for his actions. Due to their historic, non-work-related nature, as well as his previous record of service, on this occasion the panel has determined that reducing his rank to PC is an appropriate course of action.

“This decision carries a financial impact as well as potentially impacting any transfer request and future career development. Surrey Police is committed to being an anti-racist organisation, where all forms of discrimination are entirely unacceptable. We place immense value on serving and protecting all our communities with fairness and respect as well as ensuring those who work within our Force enjoy a sense of belonging and respect from their colleagues.

“Earlier this year, we shared our anti-racism statement across the organisation. Our expectation is that all officers, staff, and volunteers uphold the commitments outlined in this statement to challenge injustice and uphold anti-racist principles. We are developing training to deliver to officers and staff that will support the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to ensure respect for all in the service we deliver. In September, we began a series of training sessions that all leaders are required to attend which include a focus on race equality and guidance on how to ensure an inclusive team environment.”

Surrey Police ethics print on wall at Mount Browne HQ. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

There's always Buckland Park for winter swimmers

7 October 2024



Guildford Lido, in Stoke Park, used to be open 12 months a year from 2014, but that ended during the pandemic. This year's summer season ended on September 15.

Nestled between Dorking and Reigate within the picturesque Surrey Hills, the Surrey Hills Activity Centre's (SHAC) private lagoon at Buckland Park offers a 400m loop and is the perfect setting for your open water swimming and cold water training needs.

Outdoor swimming enthusiasts have called on Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and operator Freedom Leisure to reinstate all-year-round swimming in the contract when it is renewed in November.

Reaching over 1,600 signatures, a petition has said restoring the lido's 'off-season' (autumn to spring) will promote health, well-being, and athletic achievement throughout the year.

"Not a financially viable model"

Councillors quizzed the Lead for Commercial Services about the lido at GBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee on September 30. Cllr James Walsh, referencing the petition, asked if a viable compromise could be made where winter swimmers can enjoy the pool without a financial loss.

"I don't know how many of those 1,600 people would like to swim in the winter," said Cllr Catherine Houston, Lead for Commercial Services at GBC. She told the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on September 30, that she went down to the lido a week before it closed and there were only 12 people in the pool. "That is not a financially viable model," Cllr Houston added.

Run at £140k loss in the summer, the lido is still able to operate because it is paired with the Spectrum centre, according to Cllr Houston. She described it as a 'loss leader' model: where the lido is sold at a loss to attract customers to the Spectrum.

Cllr Houston said the lido is "already not a profitable operation in the summer" but the council chooses to run it because "we all love it". She added: "It's such a wonderful facility and it provides a really valuable asset to the residents, visitors and beyond."

Questions were raised about where the money is coming from for the council to invest to keep the pool open. Although there are some super keen winter swimmers, there are not the other leisure swimmers that may spend the whole day in the lido.

Cllr Walsh asked whether letting the pool out to clubs would subsidise the running costs. Officers explained that once the pool is open, the filtration and heating will be on so it is "tough" to see how many clubs and extracurricular sports groups will be needed to offset the costs. GBC would have to pay extra for the staff, heating, energy and catering arrangements.

The "grand old lady" needs upkeep

Around 91 years old, the 50m lido is a "grand old lady" in need of "tender loving care", according to Cllr Houston. The off-season closure allows operators to have a safe area to operate the annual works without people in the pool.

Six new boilers will be installed this winter, as part of the lido's annual maintenance season. Three pool blankets, with an accompanying structure, will also be fitted on the lido to maintain the water's temperature.

GBC invested £2.1m into refurbishing the lido last year, including new changing rooms, improved drainage systems, environmental technologies to reduce energy and water usage, and updated poolside catering. Freedom Leisure also put in £1m towards the upgrade.

Contractual obligations

The contract renewal in November creates a new opportunity for the operator and the council to see if a new out of season activity can be put on offer.

Cllr Houston speculated Freedom Leisure might be asked to extend its opening hours by Friends of Guildford Lido. But the operator would have to look at a financial model to see if it is worth it without the extra cash input.

Operators of the lido are contracted to keep it open for 20 weeks, so the council cannot force it to stay open unless there is a big investment. "We're in financially challenging times so we have to make tough decisions," the Lead for Commercial Services said.

NOTE: Friends of Guildford Lido and the petitioners were contacted for comment. Neither have got back in touch.

Image courtesy SHAC

Surrey schools greenest in England

7 October 2024



Surrey County Council is proud to announce that it continues to lead in England in environmental education, boasting the largest number of Eco-Schools Green Flag awards for the second consecutive year. There are over 170 schools working on the Eco-Schools programme, with 98 schools across the county having earned this internationally recognised accolade, Surrey is at the forefront of fostering a sustainable future through education.

The Eco-Schools programme, the largest education programme globally, provides a structured framework for embedding sustainability into schools.

Surrey's achievement represents the active participation of over 52,000 pupils who are part of a Green Flag school. Approximately 2,200 of these students have played a direct role in their schools' journey to achieving the Green Flag status.

Activities that have taken place include:

- Running switch off campaigns to save energy.
- Growing fruit and vegetables on their school grounds.
- Building new ponds to increase biodiversity.
- Planting trees to encourage more wildlife and improve air quality.
- Making signs for bins to make sure people use the correct bins, to help increase recycling.
- Installing water butts to collect rainwater.
- Monitoring energy use, water use and sustainable transport practices to see where they can improve.
- Following national campaigns such as Walk to School Week and Recycle Week.

The projects have engaged over 52,000 pupils and are already reaping benefits which include:

- Saving a total of 1,196,638 kwh of electricity
- Diverting 90,645 tonnes of waste from landfill
- Creating 12,584 (m2) of natural habitat
- 7,400 pupils participating in walking and cycling initiatives
- Over £10,000 has been raised for environmental projects in schools
- Over 30,000 pupils have taken part in a curriculum based environmental lesson

Marisa Heath, Cabinet Member for Environment at Surrey County Council, said: "We are very proud to have the most schools with Eco-Schools Green Flags in England, and this is a testament to the hard work of those schools. It is vital to ensure the next generation understands how we can look after our environment and is prepared to make informed, environmentally aware choices. Many young people are passionate about the environment from recycling to air quality, and Eco-Schools provides them with a proven platform to make a real difference in their school and local community."

Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning adds: "The Eco-Schools programme empowers students to take the lead in environmental action, encouraging them to become champions of positive change both now and in the future. It's fantastic to see this acknowledgement of their efforts from a globally recognised awards programme."

More information about Eco-Schools in Surrey, including how to sign up can be found **Surrey County Council's**

website.

Image: St Peters CofE Primary in Farnham were recently awarded Green Flag status with support from Surrey County Council

Ashtead heroes recognised by local Rotary

7 October 2024



Ashtead 'local heroes' were recognised for their outstanding service to the community at last night's 2024 Ashtead Rotary Community Awards.

Three awards were made, to people nominated by their peers, for outstanding services to the local community.

The **Individual Community Service award** was given to **Richard Garrard** who, in 2017 set up the Patient Participation Group with Ashlea Medical Practice. The Group was such a success that it won a national award in 2020. Richard is also Chair of Ashtead Good Neighbours, growing the Group to over 100 drivers who provide transport for medical appointments. He also led the Ashtead British Legion Poppy Appeal which raised £12,000 last year.

The **Group Service Award** went to the Trustees of **Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall (APMH)** whose centenary is being celebrated this year. The trustees and volunteers are committed to improving and maintaining the Hall which is an outstanding community facility for the Ashtead community.

The **Service above Self Community Award** was awarded posthumously to **John Woollatt**. John sadly passed away in May 2024. He was the Chair of the Trustees of Dyscover, a local charity for people suffering with aphasia, a complex language disability. John brought a business approach to Dyscover making it a progressive well-known local charity. He was also a very 'hands on' Chairman where no task was too big or too small.

Ashtead Rotary Club President Tony Webb said,

"The Charitable support that Ashtead Rotary Club receives from the local community through Ashtead Village Day, is immense. In large part this is down to individuals and organisations, such as those who we celebrate this evening, for the support they give to our local community.

"This evening, local community nominations have enabled us to go some small way to say a big 'thank you' to those who have undertaken such outstanding work. I would therefore like to pay tribute to them on behalf of Ashtead Rotary Club, and to all of those other volunteers in Ashtead who put in time and effort to help others in our local community".

Art, culture, and science collide in Surrey

7 October 2024



This November, the **University of Surrey** will open its doors to the public as it hosts two prominent research festivals: the **Being Human Festival** and the ESRC Festival of Social Science. As part of the Being Human Festival, the UK's only national festival dedicated to the humanities, Surrey will explore key themes related to identity, culture, and the human condition. This year's festival features a number of intriguing events, including:

- Landmarking through Music: Early Recordings Revealed: Listen to early recordings as heard by your great-grandparents! Connect with early 20th century music through wax cylinders and develop an understanding of their role within society at the time.
- Poetry Play! Performances and Workshops: Think you might be a poet? Do you love poetry? Or maybe you just don't get it. Are you puzzled or excited by the weird ways words work in poems? If you appreciate the power of

language, we made this for you.

- **Landmarking Surrey's Musical Heritage: Dame Ethel Smyth:** Dame Ethel Smyth was a pioneering composer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a prolific author of biographical writing about herself and others, a leading suffragette, and for the majority of her life a resident of the county of Surrey.

Running concurrently is the ESRC Festival of Social Science, which focuses on the real-world impact of social science research. This year's festival at Surrey tackles a wide range of urgent societal issues, including:

- **Green Means Go? Tackling Surrey's climate emergency through deliberative democracy:** Discover the latest sustainability-focused research and innovation initiatives being led by the University of Surrey.
- **Bridging Digital Divides: Building dialogue on online safety between youth and parents:** Discover what the evidence really says about young people's digital lives and the challenges of online safety, parenting and digital citizenship.
- **The Role of AI in Modern Policing:** Key topics will include risk assessment, facial recognition, robotics, data mining, and cybercrime detection, offering a deep dive into the current applications of AI in policing.
- **Eco-Logic: How Can We Make Green Living Easy?** Discover surprisingly simple strategies that transform your daily routine into a sustainable one, without sacrificing comfort or convenience.

Professor Annika Bautz, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences said:

"Both festivals are designed to be interactive, accessible, and thought-provoking. They offer attendees the chance to engage directly with cutting-edge research in ways that are relevant and relatable to all aspects of life. From workshops that let you create your own art or stories to expert panels exploring societal challenges, the festivals are an invitation to explore, question, and rethink the world around us.

"Whether you're passionate about the arts and humanities, curious about the social sciences, or simply looking to engage in meaningful conversations, these events offer something for everyone. The University of Surrey is proud to be a hub for these conversations, and we invite the public to participate in these exciting and enriching festivals."

Key dates:

- **ESRC Festival of Social Science:** 19 October - 9 November 2024
- **Being Human Festival:** 7-16 November 2024

For more information, a full list of topics and events, and to book your free tickets for any of the events, please visit: <https://buytickets.at/universityofsurrey3>

Epsom and Ewell's over 60s win multi-sports

7 October 2024



Wednesday 2 October saw the 16th running of the Better Club Games tournament at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Copper Box Arena.

The annual event put on by charitable social enterprise GLL for the over-60s, saw over 400 older people from 20 local teams descend on the 7,500 seat venue - the 4th largest event space in London.

The 'Battle of the Boroughs' pits contestants from London and the south east in a diverse range of activities - all in friendly competition.

Darts, dominoes, short tennis, short-mat bowls, swimming, badminton, table tennis, cycling, walking netball and walking football all featured - with 200 people taking part in the walking sports held the week before in the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre and 100 in timed swims in local clubs throughout September.

Across all sports and locations, 700 older people took part.

In a tightly fought contest, Team Epsom & Ewell took the ultimate overall title - ahead of Waltham Forest in 2nd and Greenwich in 3rd. Epsom & Ewell were also winners in 2023 in the first gathering of the Better Club Games since Covid.

GLL first decided to put on the Better Club Games back in 2006 when it realised there was no major multi-sports activity in the UK which brought older adults together annually in the spirit of fun competition.

Competitors are drawn from Active Ageing Clubs facilitated by GLL in leisure centres; the activities chime with GLL's mission to improve health and wellbeing as a key community service through physical activity and sport.

Active ageing has since become a major public health priority with noted benefits to physical health, mental health and helping reduce social isolation in the UK's older population. In addition, keeping active reduces the burden on the NHS.

The 2024 Better Club Games Ambassador was actor and radio presenter Christopher Biggins, 76. He added some trademark fun to the proceedings, taking part in a candid Q&A and trying his hand at darts and table tennis.

'Better' is the brand name of the UK's leading leisure charitable social enterprise GLL. The company's ethos is to reinvest in local community health and wellbeing and the Better Club Games is a key part of this commitment.

GLL Deputy CEO Phil Donnay said: "It was inspiring to see over 400 participants at the Copper Box Arena turn out to take part in this year's running of the Better Club Games, compete and have fun.

"The importance of ageing well and living well is huge - both for individuals and wider society.

"As a charitable social enterprise, GLL are proud to show what older people are capable of through our Better Club Games.

"Congratulations to all those who took part and to our worthy winners - Epsom & Ewell."

Speaking from winning team Epsom & Ewell, semi-retired accountant Tony Gayle, 68, from Stoneleigh, took part in the table tennis, the Games enabling him to rediscover his interest in the sport. "The competitive element is fun but the most important thing is to enjoy the day. It's sociable - you see people you met at the Games last year."

Epsom & Ewell Team mate Phil Humphrey, 64, is a retired construction consultant who was involved with building the Stratford Olympic Park. This was his fourth Club Games and though he previously competed in table tennis, he has now switched to short tennis. "I'd never tried it before but they needed someone for the team a couple of years ago," he explains. "Myself and my partner volunteered and we got to like it - so much so that we now play once or twice a week, all year round!"

Better Club Games is organised and funded exclusively by charitable social enterprise GLL - which runs the Olympic legacy competition venues Copper Box Arena and Lee Valley Hockey & Tennis Centre which hosted the sports.

In addition to transport and refreshments, participants enjoy raising awareness for their club, a celebrity ambassador on the day, a team trophy for each individual sport winner and a medal for every competitor.

Teams from Enfield, Mole Valley and Newham competed for the first time.

The event was supported by GLL supplier partners Technogym, Your PT and Brakes.

GLL Communications

Picture caption: 2024 Better Club Games Winners - Epsom & Ewell with GLL Deputy CEO Phil Donnay (4th from right, front row) and Club Games Ambassador Chris Biggins (second row, 4th from left) /Credit: GLL

More or less Surrey Police challenge to Commissioner

7 October 2024



Staffing cuts at Surrey Police could be in the pipeline as the force attempts to fill a potential £23.4 million financial hole.

Surrey Police has to make the savings in the next four years and both government-agreed pay increases for police officers and staff and inflation have added to the difficult financial position.

Recognising the financial pressures on forces, the government has awarded a special grant of £175m in 2024/25 to fund the 4.75% officer pay award. Out of money set aside to cover the pay increases, Surrey has been awarded just £2.1m to cover the costs.

As Surrey gets a smaller slice of government funding, calculated by a formula, there is less money to go around. The police allocation formula (PAF) is worked out through various data sources, including population density and the relative need for policing in areas. The nature of the formula grant system means the annual money allocated to Surrey covers just

45% of the total budget whereas other areas such as Northumbria get 80%.

In a Police and Crime Panel meeting on September 26, Surrey Police's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Kelvin Menon, said "it is too early to say" exactly the savings that will need to be made and where.

The CFO said it is likely the government's funding will only cover pay increases for Surrey's police officers so the force will have to bridge the £2.4m gap to cover the costs of police staff itself. Police staff may be cut as the force has to keep a base number of 2,253 police officers in place.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Richard Wilson (Bagshot and North Windlesham/ Liberal Democrat) said: Due to the government's penalty regime in place to ensure officer numbers are maintained, any reduction can only come from police staff. This means the people helping front-line officers in investigations and forensics."

The CFO told the panel that work was also being done into making savings by changing shift patterns, reducing overtime and forensics, looking at the benefits of upgrading administrative and data systems, potentially reducing vehicle numbers and a detailed budget review by area.

Modelling different scenarios, the CFO said Surrey Police might have to make up to £27.6m gap as a worst-case scenario, or £21.5m on an optimistic basis. Mr Menon added: "The Chief and the PCC are both committed to try and minimise any impact on residents."

If the savings cannot be reduced by the time the budget is set in February 2025, the CFO said Surrey Police will have to use some of its reserves.

Uncertain future for officer numbers

In a national drive to increase police officers, the previous government set Surrey Police an 'uplift' target of 2,253 officers and awarded £48k for every officer recruited above the baseline. Although the force recruited an additional 22 officers it now remains uncertain whether the £48k bonus will be received every year, accounting for the extra officers.

Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend, said: "If [the bonus] ceases to be the case then officer numbers will have to be reduced." She added the reduction would happen through "natural wastage", meaning officers leaving the force for a new job or change in career.

Surrey currently loses an average of 17 officers a month, creating overall a 10% vacancy in the force.

A gloomy atmosphere took over the meeting as the PCC repeated there was a lot of "uncertainty" in the new government's policy going forward so the force is unable to forecast officer numbers beyond 24/25. She said that constables have been told not to expect any more funding.

Cllr Wilson criticised Mrs Townsend during the meeting, stating the PCC ballot paper for her re-election had the description. More police, safer streets'. He asked: "Shouldn't voters take that as a commitment that the number of officers is going to increase?"

Mrs Townsend said the number of officers has increased and is still increasing, and argued it was for the Chief Constable to decide where officers and staff are best deployed. She added: Both the Chief Constable and I have both made commitments to ensure that we have more officers out and about on the streets."

American baseball started in Surrey

7 October 2024



The latest **BBC Secret Surrey podcast** features Julian Pooley, Public Services and Engagement Manager, who tells the story of a previously unknown William Bray diary. Covering 1754-1755, the diary was found in a garden shed in 2007. It is a fascinating document for many reasons but it is particularly interesting as it is the earliest known manuscript reference to baseball, confirming baseball was played in Surrey more than 20 years before American independence.

[Listen here »](#)

Read more from Surrey History Centre [HERE](#).

Text and image courtesy Surrey History Centre

Hampton's Jolly Boatman has more to be jolly about

7 October 2024



Hampton Court and its historic views will be forever changed after the secretary of state approved controversial Jolly Boatman plans to build 97 homes together with an 84 bed hotel and restaurant on the banks of the River Thames.

The landmark ruling on the long-running saga was confirmed this week when Lisa Nandy, Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published her formal decision on Friday, September 27.

The decision comes as welcome for developers who have been battling to regenerate the area around Hampton Court station but is a slap in the face to the campaigners who have fought for decades to stop it.

It comes at the end of a nine week consultation that ran between April and June this year in call for new evidence.

The majority of responses focused on the impact the huge development would have on Hampton Court Palace and surrounding area given its cultural status.

However, much of the evidence presented had already been considered during an earlier planning appeal when inspectors overturned Elmbridge Borough Council decision 2022 and green lit the development, Mrs Nandy said.

Instead the focus on the government's decision related to changes in planning law and the listed statuses of Cigarette Island Park and the Coal Office - as well as arguments over maximum heights of buildings on railway land.

Issuing her decision, the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport said she gave "consent to build the residential-led mixed use scheme on land around Hampton Court Station, specifically the former Jolly Boatman and land adjoining Hampton Court Station, Hampton Court Way, the Western part of Cigarette Island, east of Jolly Boatman and Hampton Court Station site."

She said that since the appeal, Elmbridge Borough Council's supply of deliverable housing had declined, and failure to proceed with the site would be make the problem worse

The government also considered the council's local heritage listing of the land opposite the palace was not a sufficient reason to not approve the development and plans.

The former Jolly Boatman site is next to the River Thames and overlooks the palace.

Elmbridge Borough Council rejected the original application which received more than 1,800 objections due to "excessive height and bulk" and "harm to numerous heritage assets".

However, its decision was challenged and overturned after the planning inspector ruled it fit with surroundings while the hotel, retail units and riverside restaurant would improve the experience for those using the station to visit the palace.

The inspector added that the plans would also support the rest of the town.

Related reports:

Doubtful Henry VIII would have permitted

Preserve your memories in Epsom

7 October 2024



Sponsored article:

In today's digital age, preserving cherished memories is more important than ever. At tape2digital based right in Epsom, we specialize in high-quality video tape transfers, ensuring that your precious moments are safeguarded for generations to come. As a lifelong resident of Epsom, I have a deep personal connection to this community and a passion for helping customers preserve their old memories. Whether you have old VHS tapes, camcorder footage, or other formats, we convert your videos into modern digital formats i.e USB, DVD, MP4 digital file with ease and precision.

Why Choose Us?

Convenient Local Service

Located in the Epsom area, offering a friendly, and convenient easy service that allows you to pick up & drop off your tapes in person. Building good relationships with our local customers, means you can always get in touch.

Fast Turnaround

We know how important it is to relive those memories, so we strive to offer a quick turnaround without compromising on quality. You'll be able to enjoy your digitally preserved videos in no time!

Our Services

VHS to Digital Transfers: Breathe new life into your old VHS tapes.

Camcorder Footage Conversion: Convert those camcorder tapes to easily accessible formats.

Film to Digital: Preserve your family's cinematic history with our film transfer services.

Customer Satisfaction Guaranteed

At tape2digital, we pride ourselves on delivering excellent customer service. Don't just take our word for it—check out our glowing reviews from satisfied customers in Epsom and beyond!

Get Started Today!

Ready to transform your memories? Contact us today to discuss your video transfer needs and receive a free quote. Let us help you preserve your precious moments and ensure they can be enjoyed for years to come. Visit our website www.tape2digital.co.uk to get started!

Your trusted video transfer service in Epsom. Because every memory matters.

Web: <https://www.tape2digital.co.uk>

Email: info@tape2digital.co.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1028388215412532>

Will Epsom get an even higher housing target if it misses the early boat?

7 October 2024



The UK Government is preparing to release a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that could impose mandatory targets for housebuilding, including on Green Belt land, sparking concern among local councils. The revised framework, expected in December 2024, may dramatically increase housing targets for local planning authorities.

A recent consultation on the proposed changes, led by **Angela Rayner** MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, closed on 24 September 2024. One of the most significant changes being considered is a new "Standard Method" for calculating housing targets. For boroughs like **Epsom & Ewell**, this could have major implications.

Currently, Epsom & Ewell builds around 189 new homes per year. Under the borough's developing Local Plan, this would increase to about 300 homes annually, which would result in the loss of around 57 hectares of Green Belt land. However, the new NPPF could demand the construction of 817 homes per year. Any local authority whose housing target falls more than 200 homes per year below this number would be forced to revise its plans. Epsom & Ewell's current proposal falls short of this target.

Transitional arrangements proposed in the draft NPPF state that the new rules will not apply to Local Plans submitted before one month after the framework's publication, likely 20 January 2025. Therefore, Epsom & Ewell has a narrow window to submit its Local Plan and avoid being subject to the new higher housing targets.

However, the borough faces time constraints. The Local Plan consultation process takes about two months, and the council will need additional time to compile and respond to feedback. With meetings scheduled for late November and early December, there is concern that the borough may miss the deadline to avoid the higher targets, which would result in the loss of an estimated 21 hectares of Green Belt per year.

Other councils are moving quickly to avoid being caught by these new regulations. St Albans, for example, has begun a public consultation on its Local Plan even before receiving full council approval, to ensure it stays ahead of the anticipated NPPF changes.

If many Councils beat the deadline and enjoy lower targets, will their Government preferred share then be redistributed to those Councils tardy in submitting their plans?

Response from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

Cllr **Peter O'Donovan**, (RA Ewell Court) Chair of the Licensing, Planning and Policy Committee (LPPC), issued the following statement:

“The Council is preparing its Local Plan in accordance with the timetable set out within its approved Local Development Scheme, this is to ensure that the Regulation 19 Local Plan document is supported by the necessary evidence when it is considered by the Licensing and Planning Committee (LPPC) in November.

The LPPC will debate the Local Plan and make a recommendation to full Council, who will make the final decision on how it wishes to proceed with the Local Plan. This process is required by our constitution.

The Council has submitted a response to the recent ‘proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system,’ which was recently approved by the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (24 September 2024). We understand that a significant number of responses have been submitted to this consultation and that there may be delays in the revised NPPF being published by the government.

It will only be once the revised NPPF is published that we will know what the details are and what the implications are for the borough and our emerging Local Plan. This includes the transitional arrangements that will apply for Local Plans.

Subject to approval by Council, we intend to commence consultation on our Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan in mid-January 2025.”

Katherine Alexander of **Epsom Green Belt** raised serious concerns about the future of the borough, highlighting the delays in renewing the Local Plan, which dates back to 2007. In a statement, she said:

“Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has one of the 10 oldest, and most out-of-date local plans in the country. If Angela Rayner’s proposals are rolled out, the borough’s housing targets will more than quadruple to 817 dwellings per annum. This would fundamentally change Epsom, leading to increased traffic, strained infrastructure, and the loss of over 20 hectares of Green Belt land each year, equivalent to more than 50 football pitches.

Councillors have recognised that the proposed housing target is much too high, writing to Angela Rayner on 13 September 2024 stating ‘these new numbers are immense and could destroy our historic district and market town.’

There is a solution, or at least a stay of execution, if the council accelerates the public consultation and submits the Local Plan to the planning inspector by early January 2025. Otherwise, none of the Green Belt would be safe, and the cost of the Local Plan could rise significantly as the council works to meet these targets.”

Alexander also pointed to other councils, like Winchester and St Albans, that have expedited their processes in order to avoid being caught by the incoming planning reforms.

Related reports:

[Epsom Local Plan controversy heats up](#)

[Challenges to Epsom and Ewell Council’s Handling of Local Plan](#)

[Time to press the gas on Epsom’s Local Plan?](#)

[Epsom and Ewell Brace for Government Housing Targets](#)

[Here we go again on the Local Plan?](#)

and many more. Search “Local Plan.”

Rare rugby draw for Epsom side

7 October 2024



Battersea Ironsides 19 Sutton & Epsom 19. Saturday 28th September

A year ago the 2023-4 Ironsides vintage were on top of the table having opened their account with 80 points against Gravesend and followed that up with bonus point wins over Sidcup and the Cornish. This current Battersea brew have been battle hardened and forged into steel by a trio of nail-biting finishes. Unbeaten at Garratt Green with a one-point and a three-point victory



over Thurrock and Beckenham but bettered by three on the road at Reeds Weybridge. For the high scoring visitors it was a case of wanting to return to winning ways. At the final whistle, after a gripping match, the sides could not be separated as the scoreboard read 19-19.

Players and spectators alike palavered peacefully onwards into the unclouded jollity of the afternoon. Sutton with the slope and the wind in their favour were unleashed by Freddy Bunting's perfectly flighted kick off. The first foray to the Battersea 22 was led by Ewan McTaggart who is fast becoming a most prominent feature in the S&E pack. The lock forward might be lacking in steatopygia, that comforting feature for Number 8s of yesteryear, but he makes up for that deficiency with his athleticism around the park. In reply a penalty and subsequent lineout provided the hosts with their first attacking platform. Outside centre Charles Jacobs' break was supported by hooker Oliver Lewis before Jacobs carried again. Battersea spun it wide and looked favourites to score in the corner but a wonderful covering tackle by captain Bunting led to a hopeful offload inside which was poached by Gareth O'Brien who was felled by a high tackle. It would not be the only occasion that the Black & White line under severe pressure would be relieved by the impatient hosts conceding a costly penalty.

On the quarter hour Battersea Ironsides were again guilty of failing to convert pressure into points. Awarded a brace of penalties in quick succession from a scrum and then a lineout they were in prime position five metres from the Sutton line. The Rugby Lane forwards refused to yield and the ball was sent to the flank. With defenders dwindling in numbers the hosts were stopped agonisingly close and the ball-carrier executed the most unsubtle of double movements to reach over the line. The observant Mr Howe again awarded Sutton the sweet succour of a penalty. From a certain try conceded, a moment later, Freddy Bunting was pouring a sack load of salt into the gaping wound by calmly notching his first penalty of the afternoon to give Sutton a 3-0 lead. Buoyed by this success Gareth O'Brien made a stunning strike to the Home XV's 22. The ball was recycled and sent wide where Ironsides' 10 Charles Stuart nearly intercepted and both sides were left to rue their chances.

With the half hour fast approaching Gibson replaced Mount in the S&E front row and made an immediate impact with a rampaging carry from a lineout. Soon after Freddy Bunting was admiring his second success of the afternoon as his team extended their advantage to 6-0. The effrontery of the lead despite having less territory and possession spurred the Garratt Park team to greater heights. For the third time an error, with a try looking a distinct possibility, ended an attack but this time the knock on was not fatal as Battersea were brought back for their penalty. The green shirts piled in under the Black & White's posts before releasing the backs and winger Ewan Magee scored in the corner. Charles Stuart regally converted from the touchline to take a 7-6 lead. To pile pelion on ossa S&E lost Matt Whitaker to injury and Ben Green entered the fray. There was still time left in the first period for Sutton & Epsom to restore their lead when Freddy Bunting opted for a kick at goal from within his own half with the final play. It had perfect direction but just lacked the yardage. The sides turned around with Battersea leading 7-6. For the second period the hosts would enjoy not only the topographical advantage but also any favours from the wind. There was the possibility that the cultured boot of Charles Stuart might be the significant factor for the remainder of the contest and that Sutton's superb defensive resolve might be tested in extremis during the second half.

The tactical kicking game was initiated from the outset with a bout of kick tennis that ended in Sutton's favour courtesy of a superior offering by Gareth O'Brien. That the boot might have primacy over the running game was amply demonstrated after a couple of minutes when the dangerous Jacobs shunned the opportunity to run the ball back but rifled a marvellous kick to the

22. As the forwards wrestled for supremacy, the commitment, intensity of carrying and tackling was ratcheted up another notch by both packs. Equally the back divisions marshalled their defences as both XV's went in search for the vital opening score of the half. After 15 minutes it took an astutely angled grubber from Freddy Bunting that bounced up perfectly for winger Austin Bell to break the deadlock. It was a classic example of sporting vision, that priceless ability to see in a split second what others do not in order to create the sublime moment. A majestic touchline conversion by Bunting bisected the uprights and S&E led 13-7.

Sutton held the upper hand for five minutes. The Ironsides forced S&E to their line with a probing kick forcing a lineout ten metres out. Clean ball and a well executed catch and drive saw the hosts trundle irresistibly over the line for their second try. Trailing by a solitary point Charles Stuart's conversation oversaw the restoration of their lead by 14-13. As is so often the case the opposition were given an early opportunity with a penalty from the restart. The Black & Whites owed their chance for the lead to a thunderous tackle from flanker Ben Tame. There was a moment of confusion when the height of the Bunting kick exceeded the diminutive stature of the Battersea uprights but Sutton & Epsom now inched ahead by 16-14. Perhaps distracted by that uncertainty the restart sailed out on the full and Sutton scrummaged on halfway. Moments later there was another indication of the tension telling. An Ironside queried Mr Howe's interpretation of the laws in a tone that was not appreciated and the referee ushered the defenders 10 metres back. If loose lips sink ships then loquacious rugby players cost three points. Freddy Bunting added a fourth penalty to his tally for Sutton to lead 19-14 with a dozen minutes to go plus the

extras for stoppages.

Battersea now went in search of points. Their first sortie was cut short when they lost possession on the Sutton 22 and Austin Bell cleared magnificently to the opponent's half. S&E were on the attack but were thwarted by a Charles Stuart interception and kick that rolled into their 22. Austin Bell covered well to secure the ball on the deck and the Black & Whites were gifted a penalty as a chasing Ironside naively fell on the prostrate Bell. As the game entered time added on it was one-way traffic in favour of Battersea. The visitors were magnificent in defence and thought they had earned a turnover but the hosts were awarded the scrum. Closer and closer the Garratt Park pack advanced to the posts. Avoiding the risk of being held up over the line, with admirable patience under the circumstances, they finally forced their way over by the right hand upright. 19 all and the conversion was a mere formality for a kicker of Stuart's stature. However, Charles Stuart, endured the type of unexpected misfortune that would have been familiar to not only Aeschylus but also his historical namesake as the conversion was missed. Shortly afterwards the referee concluded proceedings and the sides shared the points for a 19-19 draw.

It was a fitting result for two teams that had given their all. For Sutton Ben Green's performance off the bench was redolent of Ed Burton at Guildford in 2015. Green's previous contributions had been predominantly inconsequential minutes off the bench but he revelled in the opportunity at a serious stint at Number 8. He carried with aggression, tackled powerfully and symbolised an outstanding effort by the Sutton pack. No doubt this Battersea side will be contenders for promotion again this season as they have quality in all departments.

The league now takes a week off and the action returns to Rugby Lane when league leaders Sidcup visit on 12 th October. What a difference a year makes, on their last trip in November 2023 they arrived bottom of the league and level on points with Sutton & Epsom with both clubs having only a solitary win to their names in seven outings.

Sutton & Epsom

O'Brien, Watkins, Scott, Elliott, Bell, Bunting ©, Munford, Mount, Gordon, Boaden, Glanville, McTaggart, Tame, Jones & Whitaker.

Replacements: Gibson, Green & Unused: Symonds.

Battersea Ironsides

Baker, Magee, Jacobs, Roberts, Craig, Stuart, Barnard, Chetwynd, Lewis, Batstone, MacPherson, Walton, Dollard, Chitan & Martin.

Replacements: Borup, Humphris & Diamond.

Local MP comes to our defence?

7 October 2024



In a significant development in UK party politics, **Helen Maguire**, the Member of Parliament for Epsom & Ewell, has been appointed to the frontbenches of the Liberal Democrats. On September 19th, Liberal Democrat leader Sir **Ed Davey** announced that Maguire would take up the role of spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces. This announcement follows the unveiling of the Lib Dems new 33-member frontbench roster, following the party's success in July's general election, where they secured a record 72 parliamentary seats.

Maguire, a former Army captain in the Royal Military Police, brings extensive real-world experience to her new role. She served in Bosnia on a NATO peacekeeping mission and in Iraq, where she assisted the rebuilding of the Iraqi police force. Maguire took to X (formerly known as Twitter) to express her enthusiasm, stating that she is "delighted and honoured" to take on the role, while also highlighting the need for the UK defence budget to reflect the challenging times we face.

A party spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces plays a crucial role in communicating the party's stance on national security, military strategy, and defence spending. Helen Maguire is likely to become more prominent in debates on these issues in the House of Commons, especially in light of ongoing global conflicts and increasing geopolitical

tensions.

In an era of emerging threats, the public will increasingly turn to the main political parties to ensure the military is effectively managed, underpinned by competent, transparent, and realistic governance. As global conflicts and tensions continue to rise, trust in the leadership and oversight of the armed forces will become a central issue in upcoming elections, with national security playing a critical role in shaping the public's confidence and the country's future stability.

Maguire faces a challenging task, especially as the Liberal Democrats work to rebuild public confidence. The party is likely to be cautious to avoid over-promising on policies, mindful of the damage caused when they reneged on their pledge to scrap tuition fees during their coalition government from 2010 to 2015, a decision that deeply hurt their voter base.

As the third-largest political party in the UK, the Liberal Democrats are attempting to position themselves for further growth. With Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer's approval rating dipping in recent Opinion polls and ongoing uncertainty surrounding the direction of the Conservative Party, the Lib Dems may believe that they are poised for future electoral gains. The political winds of British Politics are constantly shifting, and as Helen Maguire takes a substantial step forward into the spotlight, her performance on the frontbench might just determine if the Lib Dems can ride the wave of electoral success, or end up washed out to the fringes at the next general election.

Drawing conclusions in Epsom and Ewell v Horley tie

7 October 2024



Epsom and Ewell FC 2-2 Horley Town. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 28th September 2024.

An entertaining contest took place at King George's Field on Saturday and although the visitors took a share of the points from this 2-2 draw with a late equaliser, it would have been harsh on them if they had lost, as both teams played their part in a fully committed and competitive encounter.

An official attendance of 94 was advised for this match, even though only 77 were counted half way through the first half, but maybe an inflation of the crowd was inevitable this week, following the poor number of attendees for the midweek win over Hilltop. Either way, our team went into this match in good form, having won five of our last six matches and bearing this in mind, the figure remains a disappointing one.

We made three changes to our line up after the win over Hilltop with Anthony Nazareth coming in for his first start in place of the injured Toby Young, while further forward Fabio Nunes came back in ahead of Luke Taylor. The final change was with Dan O'Donovan back in goal ahead of Faebian Witter, who was destined to be on the bench until he injured himself in the warm up. He was then replaced in the line up just before the kick off by young defender David Romer. He was joined there by fit again Ali Fofahan, following his injury at Tooting & Mitcham United and also Jason Bloor who had scored on his debut before missing the last couple of matches due to a holiday.

The visitors were first to fashion an opportunity when a right wing cross was met with a far post volley, but the ball struck a defender and was cleared. Horley dragged a free kick wide from a good position, but in the ninth minute we created a good chance of our own as Carl Oblitey, showing no effects of the hamstring twinge he suffered four days previously, beat two men and as he drew other defenders towards him, he sent the pass to the right where Luke Miller was in a large amount of space. Our tricky winger would usually bury this chance, but on this occasion he lashed it straight at George Hyde in the Horley goal from just inside the penalty area and he parried the ball to safety.

Then just a minute later a visiting defender sliced the ball straight into Oblitey's path, but he also sent his shot too close to Hyde, who blocked the ball up in the air and was alert to get up quickly and claw the ball away as it threatened to cross the goal line.

We were now well and truly in this match, yet surprisingly we then went behind in the 18th minute and it might well have been avoidable. Nazareth cut his head in a collision and had to leave the field to await the arrival of a clean shirt, which for some reason was still back in the changing room and he was still off the field when a right wing delivery was met by a close range header from former Salt Lewis Pearch that gave O'Donovan no chance.

Another cross was just headed wide by Mason Seagroatt as the visitors threatened to get a second goal and they then sent a low volley just wide of O'Donovan's right hand post. The frustrating thing about this last chance was that we had chosen to attack before losing the ball, yet by kicking the ball out of play, we would have been up to eleven men again. Instead, Nazareth was left standing there on the sideline and waiting to come back on, so to have conceded at this stage would have been a really serious error. Finally after nearly seven minutes off the field, our bandaged up defender finally returned to the field of play. It was all a bit Sunday League!

But with eleven men again we threatened to level things up when Oblitey sent Miller through in the left hand channel,



from where his powerful shot just clipped a defender, sending the ball onto the crossbar and out for a corner. Then from the Adam Green corner, the ball skipped straight through everyone before hitting Ethan Nelson-Roberts at the far post only a couple of yards out, and as the ball rebounded back off him and into the danger area, Nazareth skied the ball from just eight yards out.

Horley were also making chances and a good ball down the right sat up nicely for Pearch to strike a volley towards goal, which O'Donovan just plucked out of the air. Then we had a bit of an issue after Nazareth was accused of stepping on a player. Obviously, we were a long way from the action, and he may well have caught him, but the referee either decided that it was accidental, or maybe he didn't get a great view of it, so no further action was taken. From the subsequent free kick O'Donovan got his hands to the ball but couldn't hold on and required a defensive clearance before we could relax. We nearly equalised right on the half when a deep Nelson-Roberts cross was met by a volley from Miller, but it was from a narrow angle and the ball zipped across the six yard area and out for a goal kick.

A goal down at the break, and with the knowledge that we had missed some really good chances and still hadn't managed to score in the opening half of any of our ten League matches this season, it was important that we didn't concede again, but it nearly happened in the 50th minute when Pearch set up another former Salt in Warren Colman, but the shot at goal had the sting taken out of it by the covering Ethan Brazier and the ball dribbled tamely through to O'Donovan.

The visitors continued to seek a second and a loose header from Reece Tierney forced Nazareth to try and reach the second ball, which he failed to do; colliding with a Horley striker and picking up a yellow card for his troubles. Fortunately, Aaron Moody's free kick from twenty yards was straightforward for O'Donovan.

After this wobbly start to the second half we began to get a foothold in the contest and Oblitey set up Miller for a low shot, although Hyde made a decent save. Then Romer came on for his debut in place of Tierney. It was odd to see the new boy taking the field as the first substitute, seeing as he hadn't even been in the sixteen man squad originally, so I have to assume that Tierney had suffered an injury.

He didn't have much defending to do for a while as we continued to press. Nunes saw his shot take a slight deflection before Hyde was able to palm it beyond the far post on the hour and from the corner Nunes then saw his low shot blocked, but not held by Hyde, although he was up quickly to block the close range effort from Nelson-Roberts just wide. Finally, from the second corner, the ball reached Miller at the far post and his pinpoint cross back into the danger area was met by Oblitey eight yards out with a thumping header that flew into the net in the 61st minute for our equaliser.

We were well on top at this stage and Nelson-Roberts did really well on the left to turn his man and run in, sending an early delivery for the incoming Oblitey, but he had more time than he realised and snatched at the ball, slicing it wide from eighteen yards. Then Nunes saw his shot blocked by Hyde's legs and although it sat up kindly for Green, his header didn't have enough power on it to beat Hyde.

We continued to attack and Miller received a great pass from midfield, only for his cross to be just ahead of Oblitey. Miller was then caught by a defender after his delivery but the referee decided that it wasn't worth a penalty, even though our man was adamant that he had been fouled. Fortunately, it wouldn't make much difference as Bloor had come on in the 71st minute and within 120 seconds he made the breakthrough for his second goal in his second match. It was a nice move, coming from a throw on that Green flicked on, and Oblitey cleverly dummied, which gave Bloor a bit of space and he drilled the ball in at the near post from the edge of the area with Hyde unsighted to give us the lead.

Craig Dundas was next to test Hyde, and although the shot was well saved, Miller then blazed the loose ball high and wide from fairly close in. As time began to tick down though, Horley started to make some chances. Brazier picked up a yellow card for a foul that led to a bit of handbags between the players. One delivery whizzed across our six yard box, before an 85th minute Matt Rapson cross to the far post was met by a looping header from Seagroatt that O'Donovan couldn't reach and Horley were level at 2-2.

Both teams had one good chance in the closing minutes. Horley sent a ball in from the left that was just ahead of their incoming striker, while substitute Fofahan was put through on goal, but Hyde was out quickly to block the shot. Overall though, a draw was a fair result, and whilst the visiting keeper Hyde was the busier of the two keepers, our lack of clinicality meant that we hadn't done enough to deserve the win and we now face a trip to Tooting & Mitcham United on Wednesday where we will face Balham in our next attempt to get three points.

The final word goes to the referee Mr Sotimirin. I have not always been a fan of some of his performances, going all the way back to 2008, but he let the game flow nicely and although the players occasionally threatened to take advantage of his leniency at times, his handling ensured that this was one of the most entertaining matches of the season so far and credit is due for this.

Epsom & Ewell: Dan O'Donovan, Ethan Brazier, Kionte Gillfillian-Waul, Adam Green (c), Reece Tierney, Anthony Nazareth, Luke Miller, Craig Dundas, Carl Oblitey, Fabio Nunes, Ethan Nelson-Roberts

Subs: David Romer for Tierney (59), Jason Bloor for Nunes (71), Ali Fofahan for Oblitey (88)

Report Source: www.eefconline.co.uk