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# Epsom High St in need of more love?

29 October 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 spokespeson’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

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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.

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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 |

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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."

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# Frozen Shoulder Link to Menopause

29 October 2024

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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

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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.

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

29 October 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

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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.

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# Miracle with Medway

29 October 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 is 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

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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.

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# Epsom and Ewell Council bank on street art

29 October 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

29 October 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

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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?**

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# Nominate heroic businesswomen of Epsom and Ewell

29 October 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

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(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

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# Epsom and Ewell see more red in away defeat

29 October 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

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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

29 October 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

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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://oneyousurrey.org.uk/programmes/stop-smoking/**. It's well worth it!

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

29 October 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.

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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.

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# Fresh New Look for Ernest Jones Epsom

29 October 2024




Sponsored article:

A refreshed Ernest Jones store, designed for Epsom's shoppers, has opened its doors in the Ashley Centre.

Customers are welcomed into a bright interior, with a host of new features to improve and enhance their shopping experience.

Every aspect of the refurbishment has been thoughtfully designed with local shoppers in mind.

"We wanted our Epsom customers to feel right at home from the moment they enter our store," said store manager, Denise Ducasse.

"As a trusted jeweller with a reputation for quality, craftmanship and expertise, we're here to help our customers celebrate milestone moments and so we really wanted to heighten that sense of occasion in our store," she said.

"We're really excited and hope our customers, will love our makeover," she added.




**To celebrate the opening of the new-look store, this weekend from October 25th-27th, Ernest Jones is inviting shoppers to join them for a glass of bubbly with an opportunity to view the latest collections, learn more about the range of jewellery and watch services available as well as an enjoying an extra 10% off the final weekend of sale.**

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Ernest Jones Epsom is part of a multimillion-pound store investment programme by parent company Signet Jewelers UK and Ireland. A total of 14 Ernest Jones stores and 41 H Samuel stores across the UK are being refurbished.

“This significant investment underscores our dedication to local high streets and shopping centres across the country. We believe that a vibrant retail sector is a vital part of a thriving community and we hope our refurbished stores will be warmly welcomed by local shoppers,” said Neil Old, Managing Director Signet Jewelers UK and Ireland.

**Ernest Jones Ashley Centre, 10 Central Square, Epsom KT18 5DA**

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# No wonder Woking went bankrupt. Scandal of private school loans

29 October 2024



A private school was loaned millions of pounds at favourable rates by Woking Borough Council before it went bankrupt. Now questions are being asked as to whether an independent inquiry will be launched into the “extraordinary use of taxpayer’s money”.

Greenfield School in Old Woking has loans of £13,257,756 according to full accounts published in September on Companies House.

Interest is just one percentage point above the Public Works Loans Board rate. The cash was originally borrowed by Woking Borough Council for “capital projects” before being passed on to the school.

Since then the council’s finances have collapsed under the weight of its unprecedented multi-billion debt from all the money it can not afford to repay – and its investment decisions have come under close scrutiny.

The matter of its role as effectively a bank was raised during the October 17 full meeting of Woking Borough Council.

The local authority was asked directly if it would set-up an independent inquiry into the extraordinary use of taxpayers’ money into the 2019 loan to Greenfield preparatory school, reportedly topping £11m.

According to the school’s set of accounts, its fees, which brought in more than £5m last year, are very carefully controlled and exceptional value for money.

Greenfield, the accounts said,  is highly competitive when compared to other independent educational establishments within the wider Woking area.

In January 2021, Greenfield opened Little School,  a 50.4 week a year day-care for children aged from six months to four years. In April 2022 the school opened its new buildings and took on extra staff.

The council’s loan was challenged on the grounds that the money was not used  for regeneration and education is not in the remit of a borough council.

Woking Borough Council was asked: “Will the council set-up an independent inquiry into the extraordinary use of taxpayers’ money into the loan to the single entity, Greenfield preparatory school?”

Councillor Ann-Marie Barker, who took over as leader of Woking Borough Council after the loans had been agreed.

She said:  “In July 2023, the council asked Grant Thornton, its newly appointed external auditors, to undertake a ‘Value for Money’ review, looking into the governance arrangements that relate to the council’s historic investment strategy.

“This is an independent report which is reviewing how past decisions (such as those related to Greenfield School) were made and the financial impact of these decisions on the Council’s financial sustainability.

“Grant Thornton have indicated that the Value for Money report will likely be published in October 2024.

“The council will make the Value for Money review report, alongside our response to its recommendations, available on our website at the earliest opportunity.

“It is important to wait for the findings of the independent review before coming to any conclusions regarding individual decisions.”

The school is a registered charity in Old Woking and has the benefit of extensive playing fields. In addition it takes advantage of Woking’s Pool in the Park to offer swimming lessons.

The school hosts community events including annual maths and English challenges, anti-bullying training, and football tournaments.

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Pupil numbers are growing at a rapid rate and income from charitable activities increased by £582,037 to £5.3m- of which £5.2m was through school fees.

Overall the school made a loss of £502,562 last year according to its accounts and it has loans totalling £13,316,871,  of which £13,257,756 is listed as “other loans”.

Its annual set of accounts read: “The loans were obtained to purchase a new site for the school. The loans are secured on property owned by the school and are for a total period of up to 50 years.

“During the first three years, no repayments will be made but interest will accrue and then it will be repaid over the next 47 years.

“The interest rate applicable will be one  per cent point above the 47 year Public Works Loan Board Annuity Rate.”

The Public Works Loan Board  provides loans to local authorities for capital projects – usually in the form of regeneration projects such as Victoria Square or Sheerwater.

The UK Debt Management website reads: “Decisions over which capital projects to pursue and whether to borrow for these investments are the responsibility of the elected council of each local authority, who are accountable to their electorates.

“Local authorities are free to borrow so long as the finance director is satisfied that they are acting in line with statute and can afford to repay the loan.

“The PWLB is a non-discretionary lender: it does not ask the purpose of a loan, as this would duplicate the decision-making structures of the individual local authorities.”

The Grant Thornton report could be ready for release by the end of this month.

Greenfield School Woking (image Google)

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# Epsom and St Helier Hospitals in Desperate Need of Repairs

29 October 2024




Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals are in need of urgent repairs, with more than £150 million required to address crumbling infrastructure, according to the latest NHS data. Epsom and Ewell MP **Helen Maguire** has urged the Government to prioritise investment in the upcoming Budget to tackle these issues.

The data highlights that nearly £70 million of the required repairs are classified as ‘high risk,’ meaning a failure to address them promptly could lead to serious injury and significant disruption to healthcare services. Both hospitals have been struggling with deteriorating facilities for years, with St Helier Hospital facing particularly severe challenges, such as falling ceilings and condemned buildings.

One major issue is the division of emergency care teams across both sites, a problem that the proposed specialist emergency care hospital in Sutton is intended to resolve. However, delays in funding mean that these plans have not yet come to fruition, leaving local residents reliant on facilities that are increasingly unable to meet modern healthcare needs.

Ahead of the Autumn Budget, Liberal Democrat MP Helen Maguire has renewed her call for urgent financial support to clear the backlog of repairs and ensure that the hospitals can provide safe and effective care for local communities.

“It is scandalous that people in Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead, and Leatherhead are being treated in hospitals that need millions of pounds in repairs,” said Maguire. “When someone goes to the hospital, they should expect to be treated in a building that is safe. This is the bare minimum. We need to do far better. It is now down to this Government to rescue our NHS, which is why, at the Budget, the Chancellor must urgently use any changes to the borrowing rules to invest in hospitals here in Epsom and Ewell.”

## NHS Response

A spokesperson for the **Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust** acknowledged the extent of the challenges, stating: “We’ve spent £60 million in the past five years improving the facilities in our ageing hospitals, which are deteriorating faster than we can fix them. Local people deserve better, and we’re ready to build a new state-of-the-art hospital and upgrade our existing sites, but urgently need investment to make this a reality.”

The spokesperson also highlighted the outdated nature of parts of the hospital infrastructure, some of which predate the founding of the NHS. “The age of our buildings means they flood regularly, and when our lifts break down, we can’t fix

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them because they don’t make the parts anymore.”

Plans for the new specialist emergency care hospital in Sutton aim to address these issues by consolidating highly skilled medical teams, providing round-the-clock care. This would alleviate the strain on the existing Epsom and St Helier hospitals, which will continue to provide 85% of local services, including outpatient appointments and scans.

## The Way Forward

The pressing need for investment in the local NHS infrastructure is clear, with both the MP and the hospital trust calling for urgent action. As the Budget approaches, the focus will be on whether the Government will step up and provide the necessary funds to ensure that residents of Epsom and surrounding areas receive the healthcare services they deserve in safe and modern facilities.

Local residents will be closely watching developments in the Budget announcement, hoping that long-awaited improvements to the area’s hospitals will finally become a reality.

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# Epsom’s neighbour cracks on with its Local Plan

29 October 2024



More than 6,000 new homes will be built in the Surrey borough of Mole Valley, with Leatherhead taking on the largest share after the district council approved its long-term planning bible.

**Mole Valley District Council** has agreed to build an average of 336 homes a year between 2020 and 2039 with town centre sites in Leatherhead, such as Bull Hill, and Dorking being set aside for large scale housing-led redevelopment.

Office complexes in Ashstead and Dorking have also been earmarked for regeneration, and green belt land in Ashstead, Bookham, Dorking and Leatherhead released so developers can build homes.

The council has also agreed to hand over green belt land for housing within and around Hookwood to “complement” economic growth near Gatwick.

Villages within the green belt, namely Beare Green, Brockham, Capel, Charlwood, and Westcott will have their boundaries amended to allow “appropriate development” after Mole Valley District Council formally adopted its local plan last week (October 15).

In all, Leatherhead is expected to take on 30 per cent of the new homes (1,914), followed by the areas around  Dorking 23 per cent (1,467) , Hookwood, 15 per cent (957) , Ashtead, 11 per cent (701)  and Bookham, seven per cent (446).

The remaining 14 per cent (893) will be spread across the rest of the district.

In Leatherhead the council wants to create what it calls, a Riverside Quarter, at Claire House and James House in Bridge Street. This would go alongside an Urban Quarter at the redevelopment of the Bull Hill.

For Dorking, the Pippbrook House refurbishment remains its flagship development as well as plans to redevelop the Foundry Museum and Church Street workshops.

More locally, housing requirements for neighbourhood areas are as follows:

- Ashtead – 652 net new dwellings
- Bookham – 513 net new dwellings
- Capel Parish – 198 net new dwellings
- Ockley Parish – 135 net new dwellings
- Westcott – 123 net new dwellings

Mole Valley District Council, which passed its local plan by  28 votes to five with one abstention, said that 40 per cent of all new units would be affordable, and all come with at least one EV charging point.

The meeting heard that about 76 per cent of Mole Valley land was designated as Metropolitan Green Belt and  protected from most forms of development.

Under its new plan, it said it has been able to deliver sites for housing while relinquishing less than one per cent of that.

Had the local plan not been agreed, developers would have had carte blanche to build without restrictions.

Cllr Margaret Cooksey, portfolio holder for planning on the Liberal Democrat run council, said: “It gives me enormous

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pleasure to be able to bring the local plan to this council for adoption at last.

“The local plan is about much more than a document about meeting housing need but a good deal of time and effort is taken up by worrying about specific development sites, particularly green belt sites,

“It’s worth noting again that only 0.65 per cent of the existing green belt in the district has been identified to be released for future development.

“There are sites in most of our wards that we wish were not there however I did say, that I felt that it was a fair plan in as much as what could be seen as pain was spread as evenly as possible across the district.”

Local plans go through long drawn-out processes before they are formally adopted, requiring sign off from planning inspectors.

Councils need to identify land for development and demonstrate it can meet housing targets. Often there is a trade off between town centre intensification or protecting green belt.

As well as the housing, the Mole Valley plan creates 230 new locally listed buildings and grants 27 parks and open spaces extra protection.

Dissenting voices in the chamber felt the council could have gone further to limit the impact on green belt while Cllr Chris Hunt (Independent, Ashtead Lanes and Common) said more could be done to curb building heights to stop town’s from becoming the next Woking.

He told the meeting: “This is not a sugar coated pill for us to take, it’s got some very good things, affordable housing, the commitment for better health and education facilities, those are very positive things.

“But it’s also got some really hard to agree things.

He added: “There is still quite a lot of uncertainty about whether a key site in our key town of Leatherhead can actually be developed or not.”

Adding: “It’s effectively saying that the plan’s foundations are uncertain in that regard and unfortunately it does echo something else, that there are no clearly defined density agreements.

“It has lots of good things but if I was on Strictly [Come Dancing] it would not be 10 out of 10, it would be a seven.”

Cllr Cooksey said: “We’re not Woking, Mole Valley is not Woking and we don’t want to look like Woking but there’s the dilemma between do we build in the green belt (or in the towns?)”

Cllr Leah Mursaleen-Plank (Liberal Democrat, Mickleham, Westcott and Okewood) said her ward has been hit by uncontrolled development “again and again” and called out at those asking to delay the plan’s adoption in order to protect more green belt.

She said: “There is no alternative here.

“We have been in a position in my ward where we haven’t had a local plan and we’ve had uncontrolled developments going through over and over again.

“We’re losing green belt by delaying further.

“To say that we need more time just means more development on green belt sites, the opposite of what you would like to achieve.”

Summing up Cllr Cooksey said: “I’m disappointed that we can’t say that it’s the overwhelming view of the whole council, it would have been very much stronger if we could have had support from the whole chamber.

‘However we have an excellent plan here, I truly believe it and really think it’s probably the best we could probably have come up with under all the circumstances that we’ve had to deal with over the years.”

Mole Valley covers 25,832 hectares, 16 per cent of Surrey as a whole and is the third largest borough in the county.

Its population of 87,245 accounts for seven per cent of Surrey’s total, while the average house price of £505,000 makes it second most expensive district in the county.

The ratio of house prices to residents’ salaries was 14:1 in March 2020, the fifth most unaffordable district in Surrey.

Between 2014 and 2019, 1,265 new homes were completed in Mole Valley – 230 of which were affordable.

Related reports:

Mole Valley ‘won’t bend’ to petitioners

Mole Valley Plan Paused

Artistic Impression Of The Arrival Square from North Street, south east corner. (Credit: Mole Valley District Council and Keir Property)

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# Loads of coaches for Epsom tennis

29 October 2024

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Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Environment committee has authorised the contracts for three tennis coaching providers in Epsom.

R&A Sport will be carrying out coaching sessions at Auriol Park, Sutton Tennis Coaching will be offering sessions at Alexandra Park and Callum Macarty Coaching operating at Court Recreation Ground.

From April, the council moved to a pay-to-play scheme on all its tennis courts. The decision was taken to make the courts self-sufficient with all funds raised being reinvested in maintenance and future improvements.

Since the pay-to-play system was introduced, the council has been committed to ensuring those of all ages, experience, and socio-economic backgrounds are able to participate in tennis. The council offered free tennis sessions throughout the summer, when 173 residents played free of charge.

In addition to this, as part of the tennis coaching contract, all tennis coaching providers are required to take part in the Barclays Free Park Tennis Initiative, offering at least one hour of free, supervised, community tennis activity at their designated location each weekend.

The council is also looking for local volunteers willing to be tennis activators. These activators will lead free tennis sessions in the parks on Saturday mornings. Until these sessions are up and running in all tennis courts across the borough, the council is offering two free, bookable sessions between 9-10am and 10-11am each Saturday.

Councillor **Liz Frost**, (RA Langley and Woodcote) Chair of the Environment Committee said:

"We are committed to the pay to play model which will future-proof our courts so that residents can enjoy access to tennis now and in years to come.

Residents can pay to play or purchase a membership, including a discounted membership for those or in receipt of Universal Credit or Full Time Carers Allowance or with a disability.

We would also urge anyone interested in volunteering as a tennis activator at one of our courts to get in touch – we'd love to hear from you.

We're pleased to sign up three coaching providers, which not only provides extra investment income for the courts but also more opportunities for free coaching sessions."

Related reports:

Anyone for tennis?

LibDems call "Love All" for local tennis

Anyone for tennis? If you pay.

Tennis at 95 is the norm.

Image – C. Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd

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# Modern Yard Revitalizes Epsom's Historic Racing Scene

29 October 2024




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**The Daily Telegraph** (Monday 21st October) has highlighted a significant revival for Epsom's historic role in British horse racing, reporting on the recent developments at **Downs House**, a training yard with a prestigious past. According to the *Telegraph*'s racing correspondent, **Marcus Armytage**, the once derelict site is now undergoing a transformation into a modern facility, spearheading efforts to attract London-based owners back to the area.

The report details how New Zealander **Mark Travers**, who has lived in the UK for two decades, undertook the ambitious seven-year project to restore Downs House. Situated just a quarter of a mile from the start of the Derby, Downs House had long symbolized Epsom's decline as a training hub, having lost its prominence as a centre for racehorse training decades ago. However, the newly revamped facility, now boasting space for 70 horses and cutting-edge amenities, is positioned to revive the town's fortunes.

The *Daily Telegraph* also reports that **George Bake**r, a Stewards' Cup-winning trainer, will move his operation to Downs House in January. Baker, along with his wife Candida, was struck by the state-of-the-art facilities and the untapped potential of the nearby gallops. The move signals a bold step forward for Epsom's equine industry, which has long played second fiddle to more prominent centres like Newmarket and Lambourn.

Baker, who has trained horses from his base in Chiddingfold, shared with the *Telegraph* how unlikely the move to Epsom once seemed. Yet, the combination of modern infrastructure and proximity to London convinced him to seize the opportunity. In an era when racehorse ownership is increasingly attractive to Londoners, Downs House's accessibility could be a game-changer.

As reported, Baker hopes that his move will contribute to the broader rejuvenation of Epsom as a competitive training centre. With room for 50 horses initially, Baker is aiming to fill the yard within two years, making the facility a top choice for owners seeking convenience and quality.

While Epsom's journey back to its glory days remains a work in progress, the ambitious restoration of Downs House, as highlighted in *The Daily Telegraph*, marks a pivotal step in the town's efforts to reclaim its place on the racing map.

Image: Downs House aerial – Google

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# Only the cashless will be "on the Hook" Road car park Epsom

29 October 2024




A town centre car par centre is set to go cashless after plans to upgrade its ticket machines were approved.

Pay metres at the Hook Road multi-storey car park in Epsom are nearing the end of their functioning life-span and need to be replaced.

The problem facing Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is that any new pay-and-display machines at the site only have a limited lifespan as the car park is earmarked for redevelopment – which could begin as soon as September 2025.

Redeveloping the car park will not be a straightforward job however as it was built directly on a historic coal and gas manufacturing site, dating from the 1870s.

A report presented to the council's environment committee in July read: "Gas works are some of the most contaminated sites in the UK with the council's car park situated above a concrete capped former tar pit.

"Tar pits have a very high level of contamination, and it is possible that the car park caps are the most contaminated part of the wider gas works site.

"The car park was built in the mid-1980s when it was environmentally acceptable to concrete over former contaminated land uses."

Earlier this year the council announced it had entered into an agreement with the developers of the SGN Gas Works next door as part of its long-standing ambition to build a new town centre.

The combined sites are part the council's masterplan for Epsom, and features in its draft Local Plan -which sets out where, and the type, of development that will take place in the borough.

Until then, however, the car park will remain in use – and moves to replace its worn out machines are now underway.

Those who are unwilling to go cashless, or cannot, have been advised to park elsewhere, with Depot Road and the high street named as the most likely alternatives.

Councillor **Liz Frost**, (RA Woodcote and Langley) chair of the Environment Committee, said: "The current barrier control

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payment scheme for the car park is at the end of their life and needs to be replaced and the life of this car park is limited."

The committee had at one stage planned to spend £20,000 on a like-for-like replacement but this was thrown out and the new cheaper alternative agreed.

In 2023/24 the council made £60,000 from the car park – far below the £137,000 it had budgeted for and less than the £65,000 it costs to run and maintain.

The council's October environment committee heard that many of those using the car park were season ticket holders and would not need the new system. Of those who do , 81 per cent already pay by card.

Ringo, which was selected to replace the pay-and-display machines, adds a 20p 'convenience charge' to each transaction. The committee said it would look at parking charges, and whether to pass the full increase on to motorists, at a later date.

Related report:

Epsom and Ewell Council answers parking complaint immediately

Hook Road Car Park, Epsom (Image Google)

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