

# Close result in match of fluctuating fortunes

17 September 2023



The Black and White bandwagon descended Saturday 16th upon the Geoffrey Knight Fields for the third round of the Regional 2 South East season. Old Reigatian (OR) are one of three clubs, along with London Cornish and Old Alleynians, who crossed Sutton and Epsom's path during their brief dalliance with Level 7 in 2012-13. For Rugby Lane supporters of a certain vintage there was a link to the club's former glory. The OR captain was Reilly Franklin-Talbot the son of erstwhile Sutton Number 8 Sean who, amongst many Herculean deeds, scored the last gasp try in the 1990 Surrey Cup final to defeat Old Mid-Whitgiftians by 16-11. Now returning to the present from some rose-tinted nostalgia, the hosts had begun the year with impressive wins over Sidcup and London Cornish in sharp contrast to the suburbanites' start. The early form guide was just maintained as OR edged past the visitors 35-29 in a game of fluctuating fortunes.

On another glorious summer afternoon, that had a refreshing breeze that was more sympathetic to the travails of the participants than last weekend's cauldron, the crowd gathered to revel in an afternoon made for running rugby. Freddy Bunting's lofted kick off was superbly tapped back by Michael Davies to initiate an opening period of Sutton control. Following multiple phases and profitable probing by Sutton and Epsom they were awarded a penalty. Freddy Bunting did the necessary and Sutton led 3-0. The Black and Whites returned to the OR 22 looking to build on their early advantage but in a crowded midfield Reigatian centre Tom Allen made a timely intervention to intercept and race away to score under the posts. The unchallenging offering was accepted by Conor Woods as the home crowd applauded their 7-3 lead after an enthralling eight minutes.

An accidental, but avoidable, offside by Sutton and Epsom gave the Reigate team the opportunity to test the visitors' defence as they kicked into the 22. The defence stood firm and won a scrummage that enabled them to exit via Chris Ballard's boot. However, a kick is only as good as its chase. A pitiful challenge encouraged a wonderful counter and in the blink of an eye a try looked to be a certainty until a crucial pass hit the deck with the line at the mercy of OR who compounded their misery by giving away a penalty. Their disappointment was assuaged within scrum they deservedly scored. The backs created the overlap for flanker Finlay Lock to apply the coup de grâce. A sweetly struck conversion by Conor Woods made it 14-3.

The Old Reigatian backs were in full swing and it was a thrilling sight to behold. The combination of pace, evasive footwork and wonderful passing was devastating. In addition, the ubiquitous flanker Finlay Lock linked play with deft touches and was supported ably by captain Reilly Franklin-Talbot's powerful carrying. Attacking once more this potent potion for success was denied on the line by a Will Lloyd tackle. This was only a temporary stay of execution as OR scored from the 5-metre scrum. Winger Max Coyle stood up the defence and stepped past would be tacklers to finish with aplomb. Conor Woods bisected the uprights and the unstoppable Old Reigatian XV had an impressive and deserved 21-3 lead.

Sutton and Epsom tinkered with their front row as Tom Boaden was replaced by Tariq Al Khaldi. Then five minutes later the Sutton pack was forced into another change when Number 8 Kean Orchard injured his knee and the visitors brought Dan Jones off the bench. The Black and Whites now employed the boot to great effect. Firstly, a Bunting kick forced a drop out then an O'Brien effort set up a lineout in the 22. A jinking run by Gareth O'Brien had the hosts in retreat. The Sutton pack recycled the ball and George London forced his way over. Captain Bunting added the extras to cut the lead to 21-10. The next opportunity to add to the score went to the home team.

However, the Rugby Lane men resolutely defended a 5-metre line and the timely intervention of centre Ross Parsons won the visitors a relieving penalty. At the other end the Black and Whites were awarded a penalty and, in a rare demonstration of fallibility, Freddy Bunting's kick drifted by on the crosswind. The kicking machine returned to working order when the Sutton skipper slotted over his next opportunity that concluded the first period with Old Reigatian 21-13 to the good.

Within five minutes of the restart Freddy Bunting had reduced the deficit to 5 points with his third penalty of the afternoon. Sutton were playing with control and with astute application of their kicking game. The key to their improving fortunes was the set scrum as Messrs Al Khaldi, Howes and Lloyd were utterly dominant. Indeed it was from a scrum that Sutton and Epsom took the lead.

The Black and White pack marched back their opponents by 10 metres in a ruthless demonstration of power and control. Michael Davies took advantage of the back-peddling defence and the visitors were halted on the line. Sutton were not to be denied and hooker Jack Howes was able to reach over to score. Bunting's conversion put Sutton ahead by 23-21. They had overturned the 18-point margin by starving the Reigatian team of possession.

Sutton and Epsom extended their lead when the scrum was awarded a penalty in front of the posts and Freddy Bunting chipped it over to stretch the lead to 26-21. OR awoke from their slumber in startling fashion. From the restart Chris Ballard cleared to the host's half and the ball was gathered by Max Coyle who set off on a scything run that exploited

Sutton's poor cover. Scrum half Alex Skinner was on hand to finish off the sweeping move and Conor Woods added the simplest of conversions. Reinvigorated by regaining the lead at 28-26, with a bonus point in the bank, OR's struck again moments later. Skipper Reilly Franklin-Talbot marauded into the 22 and passed to winger Harrison Mitchell who dotted down. Conor Woods made it five conversions from five attempts as Old Reigatian led 35-26 as the game entered the final quarter.

Sutton and Epsom were soon gifted a way back into the game with a penalty in front of the posts. However, Chris Ballard took a quick tap penalty trying to exploit the defensive disarray. The gamble did not go to glory and the Reigate men survived. Soon after a wonderful chance to extend their lead was butchered when centre Tom Allen's passing let him down following his brilliant break that denied the home crowd a third try in a devastating ten minute spell. With the game in time added on Dan Jones was manhandled at the breakdown and Sutton and Epsom had a penalty. This time the points were taken to give the visitors a potential losing bonus point as the lead was reduced to 35-29. A minute later the Rugby Lane supporters were crestfallen when Old Reigatian were awarded a penalty in front of the posts. The previously perfect Conor Woods erred and the score remained the same. Despite frantic efforts from the Black and Whites there was no eleventh hour drama and the game concluded moments later with OR triumphant by 35-29.

Old Reigatian's backs played some thrilling rugby on a perfect day in the wonderful setting of the Geoffrey Knight Fields. In addition, the tireless Finlay Lock excelled on the flank as OR outscored Sutton and Epsom by five goals to two. In a game of contrasting styles the hosts certainly monopolised the highlights package but there are many ways to flay a feline. The Sutton pack with Tariq Al Khaldi making a most significant contribution off the bench made it an intriguing contest.

With 19 points from the bludgeoning Bunting boot the game could have gone either way. For the visitors there were improvements from the previous outing. Ross Parsons in the centres epitomised the improved work at the breakdown. Jack Howes at hooker had a 100% record with his lineout throwing. However, the garlands are reserved for the fabulous front row who created the platform from which all their success came.

Old Reigatian remain unbeaten, second in the table on points difference having garnered the maximum 15 from their three matches. Sutton have now lost to three of the four unbeaten XVs. Next Saturday they host the other unbeaten side, Battersea Ironsides, who top the table.

Sutton and Epsom:

Michael Davies, Jack Briggs, Ross Parsons, Freddy Bunting ©, Max Russell, Gareth O'Brien, Chris Ballard, Tom Boaden, Jack Howes, Will Lloyd, Ewan McTaggart, Josh Glanville, George London, Rob Hegarty and Kean Orchard.

Replacements: Tariq Al Khaldi, Dan Jones and Alfie Baker. XXX

Old Reigatian: Sam Turner, Harrison Mitchell, Gareth Stephens, Tom Allen, Max Coyle, Conor Woods, Alex Skinner, Ciaran Lee, Ciaran Nestor, Toby Collister, Reilly Franklin-Talbot ©, Dan Grant, Seb Courteney-Walker, Finlay Lock and Oli Brooks.

Replacements: Ethan Monk, Sam Lenihan and Max Nichol.

## Angels sing their hearts out for Ukraine

17 September 2023



Epsom Social in the Epsom Square was the heart of Epsom last night as rock band The Angels beat loudly for Ukraine aid. Organised by Epsom based Surrey Stands with Ukraine (SSWU), 9 piece band The Angels rocked a packed Epsom Social with a broad range of great songs. The Angels and Epsom Social donated their time and premises to the latest project of SSWU: a fire engine for Ukraine.

**Roy Deadman**, who chairs SSWU reminded everyone that the war goes on, the need for aid continues. "No one in the charity receives a penny. We are all volunteers. But what we do is nothing compared with what Ukrainians are doing to protect Europe from Putin."

He went on to praise partners Medical Life Lines Ukraine (MLLU) who have to date sent 36 ambulances and a crane to the war-torn country.

Courtesy of The Ashley Centre SSWU runs its operations from offices in Global House, Ashley Avenue in Epsom. Premises shared with the Epsom Refugee Network (ERN) and used for English classes and advice sessions for refugees in the area.

The public can visit the SSWU kiosk at anytime in the main mall of the Ashley Centre and continue to donate money and necessities.



New volunteers are always welcome to help all these charitable efforts.

SSWU and MLLU are names for volunteer groups working through registered charity Harrop HR Missions Ltd (1117155), a charity founded and directed by Epsom solicitor Lionel Blackman.

ERN operates under the Epsom based registered charity The Good Company (Surrey) 1197493 directed by Jonathan Lees.

## Epsom's football team concede 4 goals

17 September 2023



Epsom & Ewell FC 2 - 4 Sheerwater. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 16th September 2023.

Last week I wrote that our match against Sheerwater was likely to be a more telling indicator of where we are this season and whilst the football club may sugar coat things, I will be honest here as I always am and state what everyone else at the match was thinking, which is that we are now clearly in a relegation battle before the end of September as we shipped four goals to a team that hadn't scored one in the League for 341 minutes before this match in a truly disheartening 4-2 defeat.

Some people might say that the cup matches are important and we have done well in them this season so far, but our bread and butter is the League and four losses to start the season was not even close to the start we would have wanted. However, it could have been argued in our defence that we had played some good teams this season so far. Regrettably, all of those arguments went up in smoke as we faced a team as low on confidence as we were and still lost in this pivotal match.

There may have been mitigating circumstances. Our first choice back three that played only two weeks ago at Eastbourne United were all out of the starting line up as Callum Wilson and Zach Powell were not available, while Ash Snadden was sitting on the bench. In their places came Ollie Thompson, Nick Inwugwu and Reece Tierney and whilst all have been decent this season, this lack of consistency must have had a bearing on why we conceded four goals for the first time this season. Throw in a jittery performance from our keeper Harvey Keogh behind them and some indiscipline from Ethan Nelson-Roberts and Ade Batula who both found themselves in the sin-bin for unnecessary comments and this all contributed to a home defeat that leaves us in serious trouble at the foot of the table and in danger of being cut adrift.

With Captain and Vice-Captain absent, Chester Clothier took on the armband and in front of a disappointing attendance of 70, despite a perfect day for football we started fairly well. Batula was probably our best player and he made a good run on the ten minute mark which ended with a good pass over to Nelson-Roberts who chose to shoot high from an angle and sent the ball over Billy Wilson's crossbar.

A few minutes later Tommy Whitby sent a free kick over our bar, but Keogh then took his goal kick and passed it straight to an opposition striker just eighteen yards out! As he then ran in clear on goal, Keogh redeemed himself with a good save for a corner that fortunately came to nothing.

We recovered from this near fatal setback and started to create more with Batula prominent, playing more down the right than in his usual central role, but our momentum was checked when we lost Nelson-Roberts to the sin bin for comments he made. Clothier was protesting his teammate's innocence but the referee wasn't interested and off he went for a ten minute break.

Once we were back up to full strength though we had our best period of the game and Batula forced Wilson to tip over his strike from 20 yards. Although the subsequent corner was half cleared, the ball fell to Tommy Williams out on our left hand side who curled an unstoppable strike beyond Wilson and into the top corner via the far post to register an early candidate for goal of the season in the 36th minute.

We looked strong at this point which made the equaliser just seven minutes later a complete surprise to me. The most disappointing aspect was how easily the goal came about, as we appeared to think that a foul on Williams would be given, but the game was not stopped and a ball played out to the right found a player in space and his low ball in was swept past Keogh from just inside the penalty area into the far corner by Theo White. This was the visitors first goal for 384 minutes in League action and it had been so simple. There was no further action of note and the teams went off at the break with a goal each, but a feeling that we had missed our chance.

The second half started with some good interplay between Williams and Batula but the cross into the danger area was headed out. A minute later Batula fed the advancing Inwugwu just eight yards out but his touch let him down badly and the ball was cleared when we really should have had at least a shot on target. Regrettably Batula blotted his copybook when he made a sarcastic remark to the Assistant after being denied a throw in and found himself sitting down for ten minutes. Although Tino Carpene had a great chance in the 56th minute well blocked by Wilson while we were a man short, our opponents took the lead just sixty seconds later when Elliott York was put through on the left and he lifted the

ball over Keogh to go 2-1 up.

The game drifted for a while, but with eleven men back on the field we secured the equaliser in the 73rd minute after Carpena won the ball just outside the area and he fed Jaan Stanley on the left whose delivery was side footed into the roof of the net from six yards by the unmarked Batula.

Just as it felt like we had got back into the match and were about to kick on for a winning goal, we were behind once again as a 75th minute free kick from White was met at the far post by the unmarked Rhys Paul who gave Keogh no chance from fairly close range and a minute later White tried his luck from 20 yards and the ball sailed into the roof of the net to make the score 4-2.

We had a couple of half chances as we tried to fight back with substitute Ben Amissah unlucky to see his near post header flick off a defender and drop just wide from a Kiyo Brown left wing cross and Wilson was down well to keep out a Brown drive, but the visitors had their moments too with Keogh doing well to keep out a close range effort at the near post.

We then had the very rare sight of a board advertising that six minutes of extra time would be played and in that period Batula struck wide from a good position before Amissah headed a left wing cross just over the bar. The chances were gone and the final whistle confirmed a depressing score line.

Overall, and in terms of possession and chances you could argue that we were no worse than Sheerwater, who themselves were not that impressive, but we made enough errors, both mental and physical over the ninety minutes to say that we probably deserved what we got. It was interesting at full time to see the players holding an inquest on the field with all the Coaches and Management having walked away by that point. I'll be honest though, I don't think our squad is strong enough right now and it will be key to see whether we will have any new faces in the next week or two, because without any we are going to be in a big struggle for the rest of the season.

Epsom & Ewell: Harvey Keogh, Tommy Williams, Ethan Nelson-Roberts, Nick Inwugwu, Ollie Thompson, Reece Tierney, Ade Batula, Chester Clothier, Tino Carpena, Thompson Adeyemi, Jaan Stanley

Subs: Rory Edwards for Adeyemi (63), Ben Amissah for Carpena (77), Kiyo Brown for Stanley (77), Ash Snadden for Tierney (83), Ayran Kugathas for Williams (89)

Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk)

## Gove flexing his muscle on a Local Plan?

17 September 2023



A last-minute intervention from **Michael Gove** continued the uncertainty around the Surrey Borough Council of **Spelthorne's** plan for 9,000 new homes. The **Surrey Heath MP** ordered the council not to pause its local plan, in a letter sent by the housing and planning minister, limiting Spelthorne's options at a crucial meeting.

After what the council's chief executive described as an urgent ministerial meeting at 3pm on Thursday (September 15), a letter was sent to the council's leader setting out Mr Gove's intentions.

An extraordinary meeting of the council on the same day was set to vote on the options to continue with the plan, keep it on pause, or withdraw it altogether. The plan has been on pause since councillors asked the government inspector for a hiatus in June, after hearings had started at the end of May.

The letter from MP **Rachael Maclean** stated Mr Gove had legal powers to intervene if necessary if he thought an authority was "failing or omitting to do anything it is necessary to do" regarding preparing, revising or adopting its local plan.

While the chamber was told voting to withdraw its plan, outlining where new homes will be built in the borough up to 2037, was no longer a lawful action, councillors ultimately voted to extend the pause on the plan.

They also voted to seek further legal advice to "confirm the validity of the minister's directive".

The council voted by 20 votes to 16 to extend the pause, pending the publication of changes to national policy, due this autumn.

The council's leader, Councillor **Joanne Sexton** (Independent Spelthorne Group, Ashford East) said the council would seek further clarification from Mr Gove on the reasons behind the direction. She added: "We will endeavour, in the name of democracy, that we will produce a plan benefiting the residents of Spelthorne by the government's deadline of June 2025."

Cllr Sexton said unresolved flood issues in Staines, a plan that delivered "beautiful places" and with the "communities at

the heart of it” were some of the concerns and reasons behind the plan that would be made clear to the government.

The question of the cost to the council of seeking further legal advice was also raised. Councillor **Karen Howkins** (Conservative, Laleham and Shepperton Green) asked how much money further legal advice relating to the local plan would cost. She asked: “Haven’t we spent enough on legal advice regarding the local plan, haven’t we wasted enough money? Isn’t it time that we stopped wasting money that we haven’t got?”

Officers confirmed the cost of further legal advice should be “not more” than £2,000.

While other councillors raised the “cost to the local community” both of putting through the “wrong plan” or of further delays.

The current draft plan allocates more than 5,400 of the borough’s 9,270 new homes to be built in Staines.

Councillor **Howard Williams** (Independent Spelthorne Group, Staines) said of the council’s plans to pause its own house building projects indefinitely that it impacted around a third of the flats planned for Staines. The current plan did not protect the green belt, he said, did “nothing” to deliver affordable or social housing and included more than 5,000 flats be built where they were “likely to flood”.

He asked the meeting: “If we stick to the current targets of building 9,000 flats, where are all the flats that can’t now be built in Staines going to go instead? Sunbury, Stanwell, Ashford, Shepperton? They will all have to be built in other towns in the borough. So setting unrealistic targets for Staines does not protect other people’s towns or the green belt. That is a fallacy.”

## Classic growth versus environment dilemma

17 September 2023



Just 20 miles from **Epsom** weekend flights at **Farnborough Airport** could more than double if expansion plans go ahead.

The airport’s owners are seeking to increase the annual number of flights from 50,000 to 70,000 a year – including a jump in weekend traffic from 8,900 to 18,900. They also hope to have aeroplanes taking off and landing from 7am to 9pm on weekends and public holidays, an hour earlier – and later – than currently permitted.

They say the increase in flights is needed to meet shifting needs of business travellers, opponents say the airport is trying to cash in on leisure and holiday travel. Airport bosses say the move will create thousands of new jobs in the area and are urging people to have their say on the proposals at a series of consultation events.

**John Eriksson**, chairperson of the Farnborough Noise action group said the people in the area already have no respite from the jet engines. He said his main concerns over the expansion were that it was yet another consultation before a review into the impact of airspace changes had concluded.

The claimed economic benefits, he said, were still being assessed by **Rushmoor Borough Council**’s oversight and scrutiny committee, and that the Government’s own climate change committee stated there should be no increase in aviation until the industry was able to reduce emissions.

He said that on average, planes from Farnborough carried 2.5 passengers per flight, with many not carrying any. Mr Eriksson said: “We’re going to have a continuous drone of aircraft noise. They already fly at a lower altitude to get under Heathrow and Gatwick airspace.”

**Richard Nobbs**, another Farnborough Noise member, said the growth of the airport had been “highly detrimental for the area”. He added: “We are going to end up with an increase in pollution, an increase in noise. Farnborough Airport will say this is needed because it will make a big contribution to the local area, but I don’t see that. Most of the flights are to holiday destinations.”

The airport, one of the largest employment sites in the area, has said it would publish detailed information about its proposals from September 20. They claim the changes would enable it to be a “catalyst for long-term economic prosperity in the region” and support 4,100 jobs by 2040.

Opponents say it serves mostly private clients with jets averaging 2.5 passengers per trip. Campaigners said this makes it difficult to justify the airport expansion’s economic argument.

The airport argues it contributes £200m to the local economy each year, which in turn supports thousands of direct and indirect jobs in the process.

**Simon Geere**, Farnborough Airport chief executive, said: “By satisfying the growing demand for connectivity from Farnborough Airport, our proposals will create hundreds of new jobs within the local community and give a boost to the



unique aerospace cluster that we are part of. This will be vitally important for the future economic prosperity of the region. At the same time, Farnborough Airport is leading the way on airport sustainability.

“We recently achieved Level 4+ Carbon Neutrality which is the highest possible accolade, and last year we set ourselves one of the most ambitious targets in the industry, by committing to be Net Zero across our controllable emissions by 2030 or sooner. We are looking forward to sharing our proposals for the future of the Airport with the local community and receiving feedback on how we can continue to contribute to the ongoing economic prosperity of the communities we serve.

Further details are available at [FarnboroughAirport2040.com](https://FarnboroughAirport2040.com).

The consultation will close on October 18 2023.

Following the consultation, the airport intends to submit its planning application in November 2023 after which a 16-week statutory consultation will follow.

It expects the first planning decision to be made in March 2024.

Image: MilborneOne CC BY-SA 3.0

---

## Spelthorne’s neediest lose out on housing

17 September 2023



“Those who need it most” will be the people who suffer most from a council’s plans to abandon its home building projects, according to one councillor.

---

Spelthorne is a Surrey Borough and its main town is Staines-Upon-Thames. Epsom and Ewell Times occasionally publishes reports about other Surrey districts as they enlighten issues all Councils can face and contrast with experience in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell.

---

Rising interest rates adding £360million to the cost of developments, increased construction costs and reduced building heights have all contributed to the shelving of the council’s projects.

It means **Spelthorne Borough Council** is likely to halt projects to provide affordable and social housing and homes for key workers in the borough, where there are nearly 4,000 people on the housing register.

The authority had plans for developments at Oast House and Thameside House in Staines, as well as at the White House in Ashford and Benwell House in Sunbury.

Those developments will now be stopped “to protect the council” from the increased costs.

Meeting documents show the council’s group leaders had decided it was not appropriate for the council to “directly bear the risk and additional financial exposure” from increased borrowing to deliver the schemes.

Ashford North and Stanwell South Councillor Sean Beatty (Labour) said his ward was not only one of the poorest in the borough, but in the whole county. He described it as “extremely galling” that whether in the short, medium, or long term the people who would suffer would be those who needed housing.

Cllr Beatty told a meeting of the council’s corporate policy and resources committee on Monday (September 11) that the only people that would build social housing would be the council. He added that in his experience “very, very rarely” would private providers build social housing. He told the meeting: “It really concerns me that the people in Spelthorne who need it the most, are the ones that are going to suffer the most.”

The council will look at various options for the planned schemes, which could include selling the sites or progressing them with other providers. But councillors were warned that the less risk the council took on in each development, in handing over to a private developer, the less control they would have about how the final projects turned out.

Councillor Howard Williams (Independent Spelthorne Group, Staines) questioned how the council should approach the issue. He said: “I don’t think the residents of Staines would be very impressed if we sold the Oast House site to a developer only on the basis that they can shove 15-storey buildings in there and we walk away with the least cost to ourselves.”

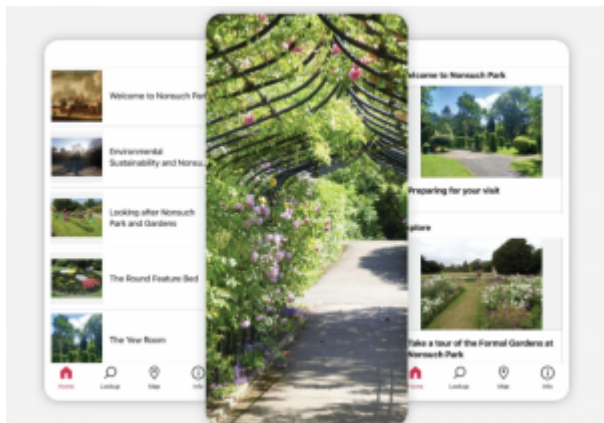
Councillors heard it was unlikely to be a “one size fits all” approach, and each site would be looked at in detail, to have options presented to the committee and to council. But the authority’s chief accountant, Paul Taylor, gave a stark warning about the rising interest rates on government-backed loans, as well as the lower heights of projects going through the planning stages that he said had wiped £70million of revenue out. He told councillors: “We must take action now to protect the council.”

Related reports:

Spelthorne’s thorny property problems spelt out

## Digital guide to Nonsuch gardens unveiled

17 September 2023



**Nonsuch Park** has joined more than 250 cultural institutions around the globe in providing a new digital guide to the formal gardens on Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and culture app created by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

This is the first digital tour of its kind for **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**, and is packed full of information, interesting facts, photos, history and more. It is the perfect accompaniment to enhance the experience of those visiting the park, and also makes Nonsuch Park accessible to people anytime, anywhere. Content will be updated throughout the year, adapting to the changing seasons at Nonsuch Park.

The tour is an important part of the council’s Cultural Strategy, which is currently in development. One of the key aims of the Strategy is to increase access to culture and heritage in Epsom & Ewell and to allow people to engage with its colourful and varied cultural past in new and engaging ways.

The Bloomberg Connects app, which also features sites such as Central Park Conservancy, London’s National Portrait Gallery and Anne Frank House, is available to download free of charge from Google Play or the App Store.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, Chair of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s Community and Wellbeing Committee, said “I am delighted to support this new venture which will allow our residents and visitors to access so much more in our wonderful Nonsuch Park. It is exciting that it puts us on the global map of stunning and historic cultural locations and allows people to see a much-loved part of our borough in a new way.”

Councillor **Julian Freeman**, Chair of the Joint Management Committee of Nonsuch Park, added,

“It’s a pleasure to not only be able to showcase some of the most beautiful areas of the formal gardens to people both in and outside the borough, but also to be able to do this in a format which allows people to journey around the area at their own pace.”

Bloomberg Connects offers free digital guides to cultural organizations around the world. The app platform is part of Bloomberg Philanthropies’ longstanding commitment to supporting digital innovation in the arts. Bloomberg Connects makes it easy to access and engage with arts and culture from mobile devices when visiting in person, or anytime from anywhere. With dynamic content exclusive to each partner organization, the app provides a range of features including video, audio, text, images with alt text to assist the visually impaired; expert commentary; and way-finding maps.

The digital tour has been developed with support from the council’s Arts, Heritage and Culture team, Friends of Nonsuch, Nonsuch Voles, the council’s Operational Services team and Bourne Hall Museum.

### About Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies invests in 700 cities and 150 countries around the world to ensure better, longer lives for the greatest number of people. The organization focuses on five key areas for creating lasting change: the Arts, Education, Environment, Government Innovation, and Public Health.

## New art fair comes to Epsom

17 September 2023



A new contemporary art fair is coming to The Duchess Stand, Epsom Downs Racecourse, 6 – 8 October 2023.

**Art Surrey** opens on Friday 6th October with a Preview Evening and a complimentary glass of fizz from 6pm to 9pm and opens over the weekend on Saturday 7 October 10am-6pm and Sunday 8 October 10am-5pm.

This inaugural art fair, curated by Art Surrey and **Ewell** based Art Adviser and Gallery, **Caiger Art**, offers art lovers and collectors the chance to browse and purchase artworks from over 80 of the most exciting contemporary and traditional artists selling today, many of whom are Surrey based artists.

As final preparations get under way, Carol Caiger, Director of Art Surrey, is understandably very excited about this new Epsom venture, “Being one of the largest art fairs within the south east of England, this new contemporary art fair will be the perfect place to find artwork to start your art collection, or add to your collection if you are already an art enthusiast!”

There will be over 3000 works of art to see, paintings, drawings, prints, digital art, mixed media art, photography, sculpture, glassworks and ceramics. With all artwork ranging from £50 to over £3000, there will be something for everyone.

This year the invited showcase is Surrey Sculpture Society, who will be showing a selection of their artists sculptures for sale.

Carol Caiger adds, “The bonus is, as well as awesome artwork, the Caiger Art and Art Surrey Team are on hand to give expert advice on the best artwork to buy for your home, too.”

Weekend facilities include a bar and café serving teas, coffee and food throughout Saturday and Sunday, so you can easily spend a whole day there! The venue has ample onsite parking and is wheelchair accessible.

You can have see the limited edition art fair brochure here: <https://artsurrey.co.uk/brochure-2023/>.

Tickets are available to buy for the Friday Preview Evening, Saturday and Sunday from <https://artsurrey.co.uk/tickets/>

## Crime and Disorder committee gets policies in order

17 September 2023



Three important items were debated at the **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Crime and Disorder Committee** meeting on 12 September 2023. The Video Surveillance System Policy (VSS), the Community Safety Intervention Policy, and the Community Safety Action Plan. The press and public were excluded from The Community Safety Review Report discussion.

The Public Protection Manager, introduced the Video Surveillance System Policy (VSS). He clarified the need for the council to update its policy on video surveillance systems, highlighting the growing public concern as well as changing laws and regulations. “This item is really to start to address that,” he said. “By studying the route to adopt a policy which will govern the use of video surveillance for the entire council,” The proposed policy would regulate the use of video surveillance throughout the council, including body-worn cameras, CCTV, and potential emerging technologies like drones and artificial intelligence (AI).

During the discussion, Councillor **Phil Neale** (RA Cuddington) raised questions regarding funding availability. He asked, “Are there funds available from central government? And have we investigated all those routes to get the funding so that we can have a robust and working CCTV system?”



The officer assured that funds were being sourced effectively. “Yes, I can say that the present system in Epsom town is brand new, as of February of this year, replaced a system that was funded by the Home Office seemingly 30 years ago, and was updated also with Home Office funding for this year.”

Councillor **Alex Coley**, (RA Ruxley) the Chair of the Committee added, “That was a sizable grant from the Home Office at £271,000 as part of the safer streets initiative, which that CCTV provision is part.”

After a short discussion, the motion for the Video Surveillance System Policy was passed and is recommended for adoption at Full Council.

The second item discussed was the Community Safety Intervention Policy. The Officer explained that this policy aims to allocate resources efficiently, focusing on high-priority and needy cases, with victims’ interests at the forefront. It seeks to empower individuals to resolve lower-priority issues independently, rather than relying on the council for every concern.

Councillor **James Lawrence** (LibDem College) inquired about the policy’s applicability to councillors facing harassment. Lawrence asked, “I was just wondering, and I understand that resources are short in council, but is the policy for dealing with harassment [of a] councillor? Would that be through the same process as this or would there be a different route or more prioritised routes?”

The Officer clarified that criminal harassment falls under the police’s jurisdiction, but the policy complements it and applies to all members of society. “There is such thing as criminal harassment, and that’s under separate criminal law dealt with exclusively by the police, actually. [...]. So it certainly would apply to any member of society,” Nelson said.

The community safety intervention policy was recommended for adoption at full council.

The third item was the Community Safety Action Plan. At the beginning of the discussion, Councillor Alex Coley, the Chair of the Committee said, “This is something that I’ve asked for. It lays out a series of actions that we are committed to taking over, I believe, a two-year period as part of the CSP (Community Safety Partnership), and it will go to public consultation, so that partners, stakeholders and the public, including councillors, have an opportunity to feedback their thoughts, and that can then be adopted at a future committee.”

The Officer emphasised that this marks the first time their service area has released an action plan with the intent to involve the public in consultations. “We are primarily driven by the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership, which is a statutory coming together of partners in which two non-statutory members have also been invited to take part,” he added. He further explained that while the partnership establishes a high-level strategic plan, individual organisations are encouraged to develop their specific strategies for implementing the overarching policy. In this instance, the council has meticulously extracted practical actions from the policy priorities agreed upon within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Cllr **Bernie Muir** (Conservative - Horton) expressed concerns about the quality of data and suggested formalising data contributions from partners within the plan’s framework,

Cllr Coley clarified, “The community safety action plan is a plan for the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) itself.” He also encouraged Cllr Muir to provide recommendations during the consultation.

All councillors agreed to the draft plan for public consultation and to agree to receive the results of the consultation and any resulting revisions to the action plan at the next meeting of the committee.

The Community Safety Review Report was discussed during the private session of the meeting, which was conducted without press or public participation. The decision is based on legal advice, citing that this portion of the meeting falls under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972. Specifically, it pertains to information related to the financial or business affairs of specific individuals or entities.

Related reports:

[Safer nights in Epsom in sights](#)

[Safer nights ahead in Epsom with funding boost](#)

## Not such a rosy report on Surrey Fire Service

17 September 2023



Earlier today Epsom and Ewell Times published a press release clearly attributed to Surrey County Council. Below is a report from our BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service partner which casts a somewhat different light on the presentation of the Report by Surrey County Council.

Surrey's Fire and Rescue Service "needs to do more" to prepare and train for incidents in tall buildings, such as in the Grenfell tragedy, according to inspectors.

In a report released on Wednesday (September 13) inspectors gave a "requires improvement" rating to seven areas they looked at, with three areas rated "adequate" and one rated "good".

**Roy Wilsher's** report said he was satisfied with some aspects of the service's performance in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks, but said improvement was needed in some areas.

He said: "Given the nature of some of the problems we have identified, we will keep in close contact with the service to monitor its progress."

The fire and rescue service was given a requires improvement rating in the areas of preventing fire and risk, responding to fires and emergencies, best use of resources and promoting fairness and diversity, among others.

The report sets out that Surrey's fire and rescue service covers an area of 645 square miles and 1.2 million people.

An action plan will look at areas for improvement

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service said it was bringing together an "improvement plan" to address all areas for improvement highlighted in the report.

Chief fire officer **Dan Quin** said: "We know that there are areas where we can still improve and we will address these issues as a priority. While we had expected a more positive outcome in certain areas we recognise the benefits of an independent inspectorate. This is an opportunity for us to re-evaluate our current programmes and strategies. Our aim is to address the recommendations and further improve our services.

"I would like to thank the inspectors for taking the time to learn about our work, for their recommendations and for holding us to account. We remain committed to becoming an outstanding service as we continue to put our communities first."

Inspector 'disappointed' with tall building policies and procedures

Under the category of responding to major and multi-agency incidents, Mr Wilsher rated the service "requires improvement".

He said the service needed to do more to "prepare and train for incidents in tall buildings", such as the Grenfell Tower tragedy in which 72 people died in Kensington in 2017. He said only a "limited amount" of realistic training and exercising at tall buildings had been done, and that it hadn't included all staff groups that would be expected to respond to such an incident.

Mr Wilsher's report said: "We were disappointed to find that the service had only developed a limited number of policies and procedures for safely managing this type of incident. It has procedures in place detailing the role of the evacuation officer but no effective tall buildings evacuation policy for operational and control room staff. The service should address these policy gaps as a matter of urgency."

The inspection also saw a new "cause of concern" given, regarding the service not being able to accurately identify how many high-risk premises it has.

The inspector said within 28 days an action plan should be provided which would look at identifying the highest risk premises and making sure all staff were aware of expectations of them.

What has improved?

While Mr Wilsher did say inspectors were "disappointed" more progress hadn't been made since a 2021 inspection, he did say there had been "significant change" in the leadership team as well as the transfer of some workforce to London Fire Brigade last year.

The only area rated "good" was "promoting the right values and culture". According to the report: "We were encouraged by the cultural improvements the service has made. The service is displaying more visible leadership, and the area for improvement we described during our last inspection has been discharged."

He added there was a "clear commitment" from staff and leaders to improve, with "some good foundations in place" but said it was "important the service gains momentum and moves forward".

As well as that, Mr Wilsher said SFRS had good systems in place to inform the public about ongoing incidents, helping keep them safe during and after incidents. This was under a "requires improvement" rating for the "responding to fires and other emergencies" part of the inspection.

Mr Quin said: "I am extremely proud of the hard work happening across our service and want to thank all of our team for playing their part. As a service we are committed to creating a fully inclusive workplace where everybody feels supported. The improvement of the service's culture was a priority for all staff, so we are delighted to see these efforts recognised."

The full breakdown of services in each category is as follows:

Good: Promoting values and culture

Adequate: Understanding fire and risk, future affordability, right people, right skills

Requires improvement: Preventing fire and risk, public safety through fire regulation, responding to fires and emergencies, responding to major incidents, best use of resources, promoting fairness and diversity, managing performance and developing leaders

Inadequate: None

Related report:

Surrey Fire service praised

---

## Will the dust ever settle on Chalk Pit conflict?

17 September 2023



Following years of complaints of dust and noise pollution from the **Chalk Pit** site on **College Road, Epsom**, residents and local campaigners say that stricter council enforcement is still needed amidst claims that site owners are operating outside of the conditions of their planning permission.

The land at The Chalk Pit, College Road, Epsom, Surrey is an industrial and commercial site home to several waste management facilities including **Skip It Epsom Ltd** and **Epsom Skip Hire**.

---

EPSOM AND EWELL TIMES EXCLUSIVE

---

An application to transform what was a waste transfer site to a materials recycling centre was first made in 2017 but such an upscaling of operations remained unlicensed until 2 May 2023 when retrospective planning permission was granted by **Surrey County Council** (SCC). The permission is subject to several conditions including limitations on working hours as well as the containment of operations within a secondary building to mitigate resulting dust and noise pollution.

Reports from locals say that the site is much quieter in recent months attributing this to enforcement from Surrey County Council to turn off a loud trommel which previously operated at the site. However, they also report that operations are taking place outside of the agreed hours of working resulting in continued distress.

Residents and local councillors have expressed repeated concerns since the change of operations in 2020 surrounding the impact of noise and dust to the mental and physical wellbeing of residents, as well as concerns surrounding the impact on the local environment.

At present a building to contain operations is under construction and operations are continuing pending its completion. Skip It made an application to SCC on 4 May seeking permission to continue processing waste outside of a building for up to 6 months whilst the building is under construction. Residents express strong opposition to the redactions.

Campaigners, including MP for Epsom and Ewell, **Chris Grayling**, have asked that tighter council enforcement of the planning conditions be implemented as well as urging the **Environment Agency** (EA) to maintain tight control on the waste permit conditions and to ensure the building to enclose operations is fit for purpose. Residents have also expressed concern over the number of lorries at the site causing noise in neighbouring roads which cannot be contained.

Skip It, who own the recycling centre, claim that their business has been victim to disproportionate targeting of complaints, saying that many of the passing vehicles belong to other site users and that their vehicle numbers are within council guidelines.

Skip It director, **Mo Maan**, told the **Epsom and Ewell Times**: “We modified a few things to suit our operation...no major change, because the building is going up.”

He continued: “If there was illegal activity, the Environment Agency and the council would have shut the site down, which they’re very good at doing. The same situation with dust – if the dust was so bad, don’t you think that we would have been shut down by now?”





Aerial view of the Chalk Pit site cc Google Sat.

Planning documents, which can be found on the Surrey County Council website, show information regarding the extent of noise and dust assessments.

In July 2021 a Noise Impact Assessment by the EA (known as the 'Tofts report') stated that "NJB [land now operated on by Skip It Epsom Ltd] was at least 10dB louder than [Epsom Skip Hire] and was responsible for all of the measured noise" and stated the presence of "noise abnormal and prolonged enough to cause significant effect on human senses".

In November 2021, however, a report by **7th Wave Acoustics** stated that "it is likely that the noise from the on-site active processing operations will not result in adverse noise impact" and the site was "acceptable in noise assessment terms."

Skip It director Mo Maan told Epsom and Ewell Times: "We've had noise assessments done, which cost me a fortune to get done - independently, and by the Environment Agency and the council." Maan continued: "We've got planning permission, we're putting a building up, but they're still complaining."

Former College Ward Epsom Councillor **Nigel Collin** told the Epsom and Ewell Times: "History has shown us that the operator plays the game well when it comes to observing the licence when a planning application is under consideration. Normal disruptive service resumes once the planning outcome is determined."

On 25 July 2023 Councillor **Bernie Muir** put a motion to council proposing that they install professional noise measurement equipment around the Chalk Pit site, leaving the equipment in place for a minimum period of three months, and responding to any breaches of noise regulations on the site with the imposition of a noise abatement order. It was suggested that £60k be allocated to the project. A vote on the motion has been deferred to the next **Environment Committee** on October 17.

Cllr Muir told the Epsom and Ewell Times that previous monitoring had not been sufficient in identifying which landowner was causing the nuisance and hence the results of the assessments were "unactionable".

**Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** (EEBC) has faced criticism from residents for failing to issue an abatement notice to cease operations during the period of unlicensed operations to put a stop to the resulting noise pollution.

Nigel Collin described the council's handling of the situation as "inept" and expressed concern over the lack of an overarching person or body taking responsibility for the situation.

EEBC told the Epsom and Ewell Times: "The areas of responsibility around the Chalk Pit site are complex and EEBC, SCC Planning and the EA all have different roles. EEBC have taken a leading role in co-ordinating a multi-organisational response to the various issues arising from the site. This includes regular multi-agency co-ordination briefings and a commitment to continue working with all agencies in trying to improve the lived experience of those living near to the Chalk Pit."

"EEBC takes its responsibilities to all residents seriously and will always act where sufficient evidence is found of a statutory nuisance. The evidence gathered during the noise monitoring demonstrated that there was certainly audible noise at times from the site which could be considered as having a negative impact on the local amenity, but not enough to be considered a statutory nuisance."

Nigel Collin, who has been a key figure in the fight against the unlicensed operations, said the definition of statutory



nuisance was 'more than met'.

Efforts from councillors to enforce restrictions at the Chalk Pit have been cross-party with councillors Steve McCormick (RA), John Beckett (RA) and Bernie Muir (Con) and Kieran Persand (Con) at the forefront of negotiations.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council said that they have not closed the case and that they will continue to work with the SSC and the Environment Agency to ensure statutory nuisance thresholds are not exceeded.

## Surrey Fire service praised

17 September 2023



Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has received positive feedback for its progress in culture in an official report published today, 13 September 2023.

Following an inspection of the service by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) throughout March and April, inspectors praised the 'positive working culture.'

The report stated that the inspector was 'encouraged' by the cultural improvements that were evident in the service, adding: *"Staff understand the values well and demonstrate positive behaviours. We saw that service leaders have improved their visibility and approachability."*

*"There is a positive working culture throughout the service, with staff empowered and willing to challenge poor behaviours."*

The findings also highlighted that the service is good at keeping the public informed and has an effective Community Risk Management Plan in place.

The report outlines areas where the service has done well, areas for improvement and a 'cause of concern' regarding the risk-based inspection programme. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service are bringing together an improvement plan to address all of the areas for improvement that have been highlighted in the report.

**Chief Fire Officer, Dan Quin said:** *"I am extremely proud of the hard work happening across our service and want to thank all of our team for playing their part. As a service we are committed to creating a fully inclusive workplace where everybody feels supported. The improvement of the service's culture was a priority for all staff, so we are delighted to see these efforts recognised."*

He added: *"We know that there are areas where we can still improve and we will address these issues as a priority."*

*"While we had expected a more positive outcome in certain areas we recognise the benefits of an independent inspectorate. This is an opportunity for us to reevaluate our current programmes and strategies. Our aim is to address the recommendations and further improve our services. I would like to thank the inspectors for taking the time to learn about our work, for their recommendations and for holding us to account. We remain committed to becoming an outstanding service as we continue to put our communities first."*

**Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety, Denise Turner Stewart said:** *"Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Leadership Team have put in place programmes of work to improve all areas since the last inspection in 2021. I am delighted that the inspectors recognised the progress made on SFRS' cultural improvement journey."*

*"I'd like to thank everyone within the service for their continued dedication and for demonstrating our positive working culture to inspectors. Staff showed exceptional commitment to support the inspection process."*

*"It's important to acknowledge that there are areas that demand immediate attention. We are fully committed to addressing these areas with diligence. Our goal is to make substantial and ongoing improvement. We look forward to demonstrating these improvements with HMICFRS."*

Related Report:

Not such a rosy report on Surrey Fire Service

## Independent Surrey SEND school slammed

17 September 2023



A “culture of discrimination and inequality” goes unaddressed at a school for children with additional needs, where pupils “fear reprisals” from some senior staff if they report concerns, according to Ofsted inspectors.

An inspection into the independent school was requested “as promptly as possible” by the Department for Education, following complaints from parents.

Inspectors described a “negative culture” across staff, pupils and parents at the school, pupils subject to “racial and homophobic slurs and sexualised language and behaviours” and leaders not showing the “capacity to lead and improve the school”.

Their findings rated **Wemms Education Centre**, in Long Ditton, inadequate overall and in the areas of behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management, in a report published on Tuesday (September 12).

The quality of education at the school and its sixth form provision were both rated “good”, and inspectors said teachers were clear about what they wanted pupils to learn and how, with curriculum leaders having “expert subject knowledge”.

But inspectors said leaders’ understanding of safeguarding was “weak”, without a shared understanding of what constituted a “serious concern”. Their report said: “Consequently, referrals to other agencies have been too slow, meaning that pupils are placed at risk of harm. Furthermore, senior leaders are not clear about who the most vulnerable pupils in school are.”

Speaking after the report was published Wemms chief executive, **Duncan Murphy**, told the LDRS the report did “not mirror other external reviews of life at Wemms” but accepted that growth has not come without its challenges. He said: “It is no secret that the school challenged some areas of the report; now that it has been published, it is important that we focus on what matters the most – being a school that reflects, learns and ensures that every child has the best possible experience under our tutelage.

“In order to achieve this, we have put together a comprehensive action plan outlining active steps we are taking to amplify our strengths and target areas of improvement. Trustees have added additional capacity to the leadership team, and it is also our aim to diversify and professionalise governance so that there is greater rigour and accountability throughout.”

According to inspectors, “strong work” done at the school was “sullied by a culture of discrimination and inequality that goes unaddressed”.

Pupils at the school are those who have been “unable to cope in mainstream education” and typically have social, emotional and mental health needs with almost all having an education, health and care plan in place.

Inspectors said: “Too many pupils do not feel happy or safe at school. They are fearful of the bullying behaviour of other pupils, which goes unaddressed. During inspection, pupils, staff and parents spoke of the negative impact on pupils of racial and homophobic slurs, inappropriate sexualised language and behaviours. Pupils trust only some adults in school to help them. Many pupils fear a lack of empathy, even reprisals, from certain leaders should they report a concern.”

The Ofsted report said pupils believed they were treated “inconsistently and unfairly” and as such “a culture of intimidation, mistrust and fear abounds”.

Six action points were set out by inspectors for the school, with fees of £50,000 per year, to improve.

Inspectors described relationships within and between all groups of staff as “severely flawed” and said the school was a “deeply fractured community”. They said there was a “a widespread lack of trust and confidence” in the school’s leadership and that parents too were “deeply divided” in their views of the school, particularly its leadership.

According to the Wemms website, the school was “proud to declare itself a ‘marmite’ school... you will love us or hate us”. It said: “Our school is for individuals and mavericks who yearn for a bespoke education, which allows them to learn in their own way and at their own pace.”

With parents able to write to the inspectors as part of the process, the Ofsted report said positive and negative opinions were equally received, and a smaller number wrote with neutral views.

Three quarters of parents who completed Ofsted’s online survey said they would recommend the school, but common themes were raised regarding “unsupportive behaviour towards pupils and parents, particularly regarding the management of concerns”.

Less than a quarter of staff who completed a survey said that the school was well led and managed, and only one third believed they were treated fairly and with respect.

But inspectors said around two thirds remained happy to work at the school and believed leaders were considerate of their workload.

Inspectors said: “A negative culture pervades the school and permeates across staff, pupil and parent groups. Some staff, parents and pupils are wary of leaders and feel unable to air their views or concerns. “Leaders should take urgent action



to ensure that members of the school community are able to express their views without fear of reprisals. Leaders should work to establish a positive, shared school ethos.” As well as this, there were concerns that leaders’ responses to pupils’ breaking the rules were “inconsistent and unfair” and that sanctions were not applied consistently.

The report said: “Inspectors heard repeatedly from staff, pupils and parents that pupils are not kept safe from bullying and abuse, including the use of racial and homophobic slurs and sexualised language and behaviours.”

They added that there were no established strategies to address these behaviours and that behaviour and anti-bullying policies were not effectively implemented.

The school’s nurse left the organisation during the course of the inspection in May as a result of her concerns, put in writing to the school in March 2023, relating to safeguarding, medication, staff training and a lack of autonomy to practise as a school nurse.

Staff, pupils and parents also raised concerns about the school’s response to pupils’ medical needs.

What does the school do well?

Inspectors said the pupils’ experiences at the school varied widely, and that the move from a site in Leatherhead to Long Ditton in 2022 had “proved popular”.

They said the pupils generally behaved well in lessons, whether working individually or in twos with a teacher and that there was “high academic ambition” across the school.

The report added: “Pupils achieve strongly across a range of subjects, frequently beyond their own and their family’s expectations. Older pupils learn to drive, helping them to be prepared for their futures. However, these successes are not mirrored in other aspects of school life.”

The LDRS understands some parents do not support the inspector’s findings and are looking into lodging a formal complaint about the Ofsted report. One parent said the school had been a “life changer” for their family.

How the school responded

**Duncan Murphy**, chief executive of Wemms Education Centre, said the school had a “proud history of supporting children with complex and challenging needs” and two positive previous inspections were the reason for moving to the bigger site.

He said the report did not mirror other external reviews of the school, but added that the school “wholly accept and understand that growth has not come without its challenges”.

With the school having challenged aspects of the report, he also pointed to pupils who “achieve strongly” and that many parents would be happy to recommend the school to others.

Mr Murphy said: “However, there have rightly been questions of consistency which we will seek to address with pace and purpose as we build for the future.”

The school would focus on being one that would reflect, learn and ensure that every child at Wemms had “the best possible experience”, he added.

With an action plan outlining steps being taken, as well as changes to governance for “greater rigour and accountability throughout”, Mr Murphy also said concerns regarding discrimination and inequality were being tackled.

He added: “We firmly believe that our community can once more be united behind a shared vision of excellence for those pupils who need a school like ours the most. It is a source of great regret to us that the essence of this aim has been misplaced since the move to a new site last year, but now is an opportunity to drive improvement and ensure a long and successful future for our school and its community.”

## Cycle hub in Dorking development

17 September 2023



A football academy, a 130-place children’s nursery, and a cycling hub, have all been approved in Dorking as the Pixham Lane masterplan steps up a gear.

The site had been seen as an opportunity for a new Dorking Wanderers FC stadium but that was kicked into the long grass when it became clear the club’s future was at Meadowbank.

Now, developers Stonegate Homes have been granted planning permission by Mole Valley councillors for three new community buildings as part of a grander vision for the site that could also feature a senior living home for about 200 people and 300 new homes.

The largest of the buildings approved last week is a 414 square metre nursery, which will be built over two floors, and have space for up to 130 children across four classrooms.

A new youth academy will be used by Dorking Wanderers Football Club and features classrooms for up to 40 students at any time.

The final building will become a cycling hub after the plans sailed through the Wednesday, September 6 meeting with only minor objections from councillors.

The council said it expected the hub to be a hit with cyclists as “a place to meet and relax, as well as a place to repair and purchase cycling equipment and accessories”.

Speaking at the meeting was Councillor **Simon Budd** who questioned the need for a nursery after two had closed within the past year, suggesting a lack of demand and that “we would be much better building and SEN school rather than a nursery school”.

The site is surrounded by Dorking railway station as well as a train line running north to London and south to Horsham.

---

The application site (measuring 0.68ha) lies to the south of Pixham Lane, just east of the A24 and north of Dorking; within the Built up Area. The site, which lies at the south-western corner of the overall ‘AVIVA site’, comprises car parking which served the former office use. The ground level is generally flat. The site is bounded to the south west by Dorking Railway Station and rail line running north to London and south to Horsham and beyond. To the south east is a public footpath whilst to the north is the remaining part of the Aviva campus. The site itself is in the Built-up Area; adjoining to the east is land designated Metropolitan Green Belt. It is broadly level throughout. Access to the site can be obtained from the eastern end of Lincoln Road.

---

Cllr **Rosemary Hobbs** said: “If anyone has visited this site and walked in from Lincoln Road, they’ll know this is a particularly unpleasant looking, very messy looking, area of Dorking. It will greatly enhance the appearance of that part of the town and I think it is a good use of the land. The nursery will presumably get some business from the number of residents in the properties on the site.”

Cllr **Chris Hunt** said: “The cycling hub, who can speak against that as a principle?”

The football academy, he said was also for sports, and a nursery would be used by new families moving into the area. He added – given the use of the site “I think its a good proposal”.

**Mole Valley Borough Council** is currently preparing its new long-term planning bible, the Local Plan, which sets out the types and levels of permitted development in the area.

The council said it has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and is currently under examination by an Inspector. The draft earmarks the site for 276 dwellings and at least three Gypsy and traveller pitches.

---

## Bullish performance beats the Salts

17 September 2023



Jersey Bulls 2-0 Epsom & Ewell – Combined Counties League – Premier Division South – Saturday 9th September 2023.

Our fourth defeat from four League matches was maybe no real surprise for most Epsom supporters as Jersey Bulls defeated us by two goals to nil, even though our failure to register a shot of any concern to the home keeper was a little concerning. On a blisteringly hot day, the home side gradually wore us down and by the end we were a well beaten side, even though I thought we did a good job defensively for much of the match.

In front of an attendance advised as 533; low for Jersey, but in my opinion around a hundred above the actual number who were present, based on a less than half full stand that holds nearly a thousand, we took the field with a few changes from our loss at Eastbourne United. Ayran Kugathas came in for the suspended Tommy Williams, while Ollie Thompson started at the back ahead of Ash Snadden. Further forward Jaan Stanley returned to the starting eleven with Tino Carpena dropping to the bench.

It was Hawaiian day at Jersey and many of the supporters were wearing garlands presented in the Jersey fan zone that opened up before the match. However, there was little for our boys to celebrate and as the players “warmed up” (as if they needed to get warmer!) you could tell that this was going to be a difficult day against a team that passed the ball around for fun.

The first real action occurred in the seventh minute when Harvey Keogh was out quickly to block as a striker broke

through. We won a corner at the other end but there was no one there to finish the delivery on after it was flicked on by a defender. Both sides had another opportunity inside the first twenty minutes as a good run by the Jersey number 11 finished with a shot dragged across goal, before a Rory Edwards corner was cleared at the near post, but only as far as Ethan Nelson-Roberts who struck the ball well enough, but it just cleared the Jersey bar. What we didn't realise at the time was that this would be our best chance of the match.

We had a scare in the 27th minute when a mis-hit shot spun up in the air, and Keogh then dropped it and we had a moment of panic in the six yard area before the danger was cleared. However, we were back on the attack soon after as Zach Powell sent a lovely pass through to Ade Batula on the right, who cut in only to see his shot blocked by a defender.

We had an unusual incident in the 33rd minute. Shortly after completing a five minute water break, the referee called a halt to proceedings once again and it transpired that he was struggling with his vision (insert joke here!), but fortunately a Jersey official was able to fill the breach on the line after one of the Assistants stepped up to take the whistle.

The game continued in a similar pattern with Jersey controlling much of the ball, and their number 10 struck at goal but it went high and in the direction of St Helier High Street with the only danger being to passers by outside the ground. On a more serious note we were beginning to concede some free kicks on the edge of the area and from one of these, the ball clipped the wall and forced Keogh into a fine save, tipping the ball over for a corner. For sure the danger signs were there at the half, but we managed to get in to the shade of the dressing room goalless.

Unfortunately, and much like the previous FA Cup match, we conceded early in the second half after another clumsy foul had conceded a free kick out on the Jersey left. The delivery was met with an unmarked header which Keogh kept out, but the ball fell to Adam Trotter around fifteen yards out and his shot went through a crowd of people into the net with Keogh either unsighted or beaten by a deflection.

This was the signal for the drums and bells to start playing for a while as the previously quiet home support suddenly found their voice. In the carnival atmosphere Keogh kept out another low drive that was just creeping inside the post with his left leg and although we attacked with a good run from Kiyo Brown, his powerful looking shot had all the pace taken off it by a defender and it dribbled through apologetically to the keeper.

The hosts sent another header straight at Keogh midway through the second half as we began to get pushed back further and Powell picked up a yellow card to go with the one Batula had picked up at the start of the half. Fresh legs came on with Carpene, Sirak Negassi, Nick Inwugwu and then Snadden all joined the action, but we were struggling to get out of our half as the Bulls seemed to be toying with us at times. Keogh made another flying full stretch save but in the 84th minute Edwards appeared to be cluttered in the middle of the park and we all stopped, expecting the free kick that never came and they nipped through to score their second goal through Le Quesne. It was the least they deserved, even if we shouldn't have switched off, but fortunately a few minutes later the torture was over. In fact this match was very similar in nature to the identical defeat we suffered on our previous visit in 2019.

Some of our Committee appeared rather over-disappointed by the result after the match, and some even expressed the view that the home side weren't that great, but they did more than enough to secure the win against us and you had the feeling that they had another gear or two if required. We have to be realistic about our ambitions this season and accept that sometimes the opposition are on a different level to us right now. That was definitely the case in this encounter and the only things we took home from Jersey were some garlands and a sun tan!

It could be said that four straight defeats to open the season is a poor start, but in our defence, we have played arguably two of the better sides in the division in Jersey and Redhill and were extremely unlucky to lose in the closing seconds at Fleet Town on the opening day, as a point gained there would have kept us off the foot of the table position we currently occupy. However, we do need to start picking up points soon and whilst I'm not that downhearted about our defeat on the Island, our next match at home to Sheerwater on Saturday is likely to be a much more telling indication of where we actually stand this season.

Epsom & Ewell: Harvey Keogh, Ayran Kugathas, Ethan Nelson-Roberts, Callum Wilson (c), Ollie Thompson, Zach Powell, Ade Batula, Chester Clothier, Jaan Stanley, Rory Edwards, Kiyo Brown

Subs: Tino Carpene for Batula (57), Sirak Negassi for Kugathas (73), Nick Inwugwu for Powell (73), Ash Snadden for Clothier (78)

Report Source: [www.eefconline.co.uk](http://www.eefconline.co.uk)

---

## Surrey's Big Guns ganging up

17 September 2023





Surrey is set to benefit from a deepening of ties between **Surrey County Council** and the **University of Surrey** through a new **Civic University Agreement** being developed between the two institutions.

Opportunities to work even more closely are being discussed at a special event today that hopes to explore new areas for collaboration including initiatives for economic growth, health and sustainability. The event will be opened by University of Surrey President and Vice Chancellor **Max Lu** alongside leader of Surrey County Council, **Tim Oliver**.

Both institutions recognise the huge potential that can flow from more consistently combining Surrey County Council's leadership, capacity and resources with the University of Surrey's research and innovation strengths, enormous economic contribution to the region and multiple global specialisms.

The University of Surrey has a good track record of working in and for the local community from hosting a space industry round table with the Science Minister; delivering air quality research that has benefitted local communities and schools; and carrying out health research that is helping earlier diagnosis of cancers in Surrey residents. The University also makes a significant positive impact on the Surrey economy – supporting 17,500 jobs in the county and contributing £1.3 billion to the county's economy. (Figures taken from a report by independent economic consultants Biggar Economics).

Other examples of current joint working include the Surrey Climate Commission and One Surrey Growth Board – both projects that are key to the sustainable prosperity of the county, and involving significant contributions from academics at the University of Surrey.

Professor Max Lu, President and Vice Chancellor of the University of Surrey, said:

"The University of Surrey is a global community, with our students, staff and collaborators from all over the world, and our research has tremendous global reach and impact. But we are proudly anchored in Guildford and Surrey, and have a symbiotic relationship with our region and county.

"In particular, we have a long and proud record of collaborating with Surrey County Council and many regional stakeholders. The Civic University Agreement that we are launching today will give us a bold and visionary framework for harnessing our world-leading research to help put Surrey on the world map, to help transform lives in Surrey for the better today, and to work together to build Surrey's future prosperity, to enrich lives and protect the planet."

Cllr Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council, said:

"The University of Surrey has long been a powerful asset and a trusted partner for the County. This agreement will take that to the next level. Combining our own high ambitions for Surrey with the Universities world-leading research strengths will help us bring the best of tomorrow to Surrey today, and to project Surrey's greatest strengths on a global stage. Our residents, our communities and our economy will be the beneficiaries of this deepened partnership with the research and education powerhouse with which we share our name."

The new Civic University Agreement is part of a national movement to elevate to a strategic level the relationships between universities and the communities in which they are based. The agreement will focus on enhancing life in Surrey through:

- driving sustainable economic growth
- tackling health inequalities
- enabling a greener future
- empowering thriving communities.

University centres of excellence that will contribute to delivery of these priorities include:

- The Institute for Sustainability – which has been founded to be a critical player in the global transition to sustainable living – through research, innovation, partnerships, education and civic engagement
- The People-Centred Artificial Intelligence Institute – which is driving research and innovation that places people at the heart of the future of AI
- The Centre for Sustainability and Wellbeing in the Visitor Economy – focusing on transport, tourism, hospitality and events
- Interprofessional expertise across human and animal health – including the combined strength of the University's School of Veterinary Medicine, School of Biosciences and new School of Medicine
- Surrey Space Centre – which is a key partner with the growing space sector in the region

- 5G/6G Innovation Centre - representing decades of experience at the forefront of high-speed and reliable mobile communications with multiple economic and societal applications.

Today's event is the first step in building closer ties between organisations that share a strong purpose to help society in the local region, and brings together an experienced team from across the University's faculties, schools and institutes, with leaders from all the directorates of Surrey County Council. It is focused on identifying creative opportunities for deeper collaboration, with the potential to deliver transformational change for our community. Other local stakeholders will be invited to join the agreement in the future.