EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

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Wet weather kicks into the long grass

4 July 2024

People fed up with long unsightly overgrown grass and verges can use an interactive map to see when their favourite spots are next due to be cut.

The seemingly endless rainfall this year has heavily affected work across the county as the wet weather shuts down the process – Surrey County Council says this is because its machinery will not cut wet grass properly and can, in some cases, even damage the turf.

Urban areas are due to have six cuts a year by the county – unless they have been designated as a blue heart zone. Rural cuts and high speed roads are chopped twice a year.

Blue hearts are part of Surrey's 3,000 miles of grass verges but have been deliberately left to grow as a way of increasing plant and insect biodiversity.

Reducing the amount of times these areas are cut is intended to allow native plant species to thrive – or even to sow native wildflower seeds.

As well as using the map, the county council has published a table covering each area in Surrey and when it estimates to get on with the job.

The council's website reads: "We are experiencing some delays with our planned grass cutting programme dates in parts of the county as a result of the weather and operational issues.

"We are working with our contractors to improve the situation and are sorry for any inconvenience. Thank you for your patience."

The Blue Campaign, founded in 2014 by wildlife filmmaker Fergus Beeley in response to dramatic declining biodiversity in the UK, lets nature take a bit more control, the county council said.

It encourages the rewilding of green spaces in suitable areas and are marked in blue on the map.

Often they can be identified with a blue heart planted in th ground to show residents grass and flowers are deliberately being left to grow – and the council is encouraging residents to identify new sites and gather local support.

Any areas put forward for blue hearts will be reviewed by the county council and, if approved, contractors told to skip the verge unless some safety work is needed.

All verges, including blue hearts are supposed to have a full cut each autumn.

Surrey County Council spokesperson said: "Our new interactive grass cutting map available here shows residents when their area is due to be cut.

"Our grass cutting programme can however be heavily affected by weather. We cannot cut when it is raining heavily or shortly after as the machinery will not cut the wet grass properly and risks damaging the grass itself.

"Weather and ground conditions permitting, urban spaces are cut six times a year and for rural areas, this takes place twice a year."

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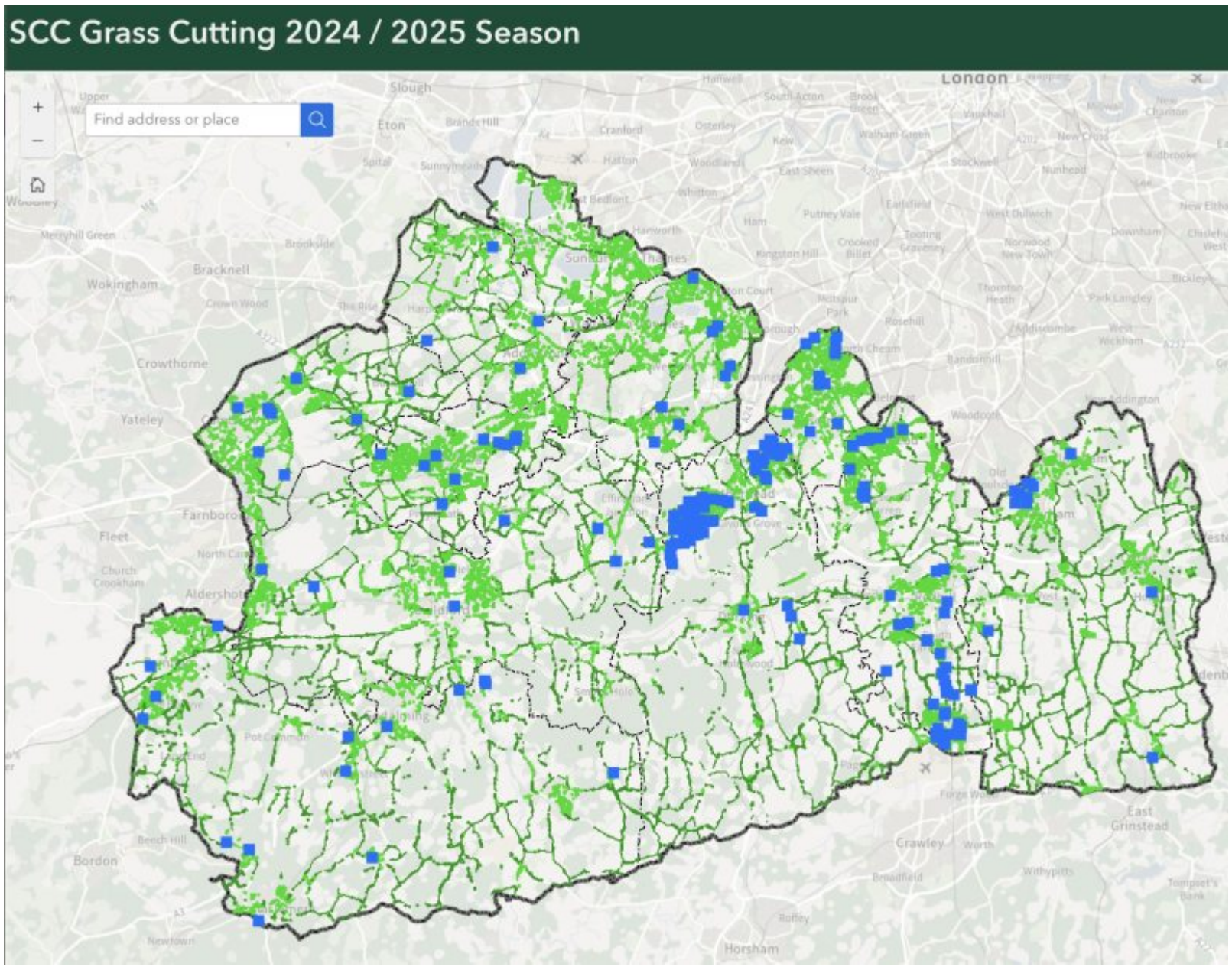

Image: Surrey grass cutting, when your verge is due to be cut. Areas in blue are being left to grow over the summer to encourage biodiversity (image SCC)

INTERACTIVE MAP

Blue Heart

Related reports:

A Greener Future in Partial Sight As Verges To Be Left Unmown

Verging on the ridiculous

Feature photo: *credit Jon Hawkins – Surrey Hills Photography*

May our hustings make up your mind?

4 July 2024



Epsom and Ewell Times staged a six election candidate Parliamentary hustings at the Adrian Mann Theatre, **NESCOT** in Ewell on Wednesday 26th June. With every seat in the 230 seat theatre occupied, **Gina Miller** (True and Fair), **Mark Todd** (Labour), **Mhairi Fraser** (Conservative), **Stephen McKenna** (Green), **Helen Maguire** (Liberal Democrat) and **Mayuran Senthilnathan** (Reform) took the stage, with **Lionel Blackman** in the Chair.

Questions on Brexit, local government financing, arming Israel, where to build houses, crime, tactical voting and proportional representation and others were asked by a lively audience. Many voters from the new southerly Ashtead and Leatherhead areas of the Epsom and Ewell constituency came along.

Below is a recording of the hustings. After introductions the hustings get going after 06:50.

The Epsom and Ewell Times is indebted to NESCOT CEO **Julie Kapsalis** and **Louise Gaskin** of the Creative and Media Department of NESCOT, who worked so hard to make a success of this once in a Parliament event. Special thanks to **Charlie McCarthy** of NESCOT who edited the video recording.

Top image credit Steven McCormick photography.

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[Please note that in error the introducer muddled the Labour candidate Mark Todd with a former Labour MP of the same name.]

Related reports:

Epsom and Ewell Parliament candidates interviewed

Conservative who promises to serve “with integrity”

Mark my words for Labour candidate

Lib Dems’ Helen Maguire – “Getting Things Done”

The Green promises

Reform candidate for Epsom and Ewell

A True and Fair view of the world

The cost of sending pupils to school

4 July 2024



Surrey County Council (SCC) has been ordered to pay out £1,500 by the social care ombudsman for a ‘service failure’ in defaulting its legal duty to provide SEND transport to and from school. The local authority is already predicted an overspend of £7.3m on SEND school transport for its 2024-25 annual budget.

A family has received £1,500 after Surrey County Council (SCC) failed to provide a child with complex medical needs school transport adding pressure to the family. The boy missed 27 days of education as well as special needs provision, causing his mother and the wider family “avoidable” distress.

The provider suspended the child’s transport after no longer feeling able to meet the boy’s change in medical needs, on June 15, 2023. The boy waited for his school transport to pick him up the next morning but it did not arrive to collect him. It was not until lunchtime until the travel provider informed the Council that it had suspended its service.

SCC speedily offered the mum a travel allowance while it explored longer term solutions but she felt ‘pressured’ into taking this as she did not have the time to recruit carers. The travel allowance is a more cost-effective option than managed transport services.

Report documents detail the “avoidable distress, frustration and inconvenience” that the child’s transport withdrawal caused his family. The social ombudsman said “the council did exactly what we would expect in the circumstances it found itself in” and it now has contracts with two ambulance-style providers able to transport children with complex medical needs.

A SCC spokesperson said it would not comment on individual cases and “although the report does recognise that we put appropriate mitigations in place, we accept the findings from the Ombudsman report and sincerely apologise for any distress caused”.

They added: “We know how important it is for children and young people to have access to their education setting, however a lack of suitable providers has meant that some children who require specialist provision for high and/or complex medical needs have had to wait longer for appropriate arrangements than we would like. In these circumstances we always work actively with families to find a solution and offer measures such as personal travel allowances in the interim.”

The ombudsman demanded the council pay his mother £1,000 in recognition of his missed education and SEN provision during the period he had no transport to school, plus £500 for the ‘avoidable distress’ it caused her and her family.

An overspend of £7.3m, all based on home to school transport, is already predicted one month into SCC’s new budget for 2024-25. In 2023, SCC saw an overspend of £12m on SEND transport, with nearly a third of the transport costs being to independent schools outside of Surrey.

Rising demand, more travel days and anticipated increase in the number of children who need transport have contributed to a pressurised budget. SCC said it is reviewing all discretionary travel arrangements, tightening applications and is actively promoting personal travel allowance to manage costs.

A SCC spokesperson added: “We have seen a 64% increase in education, health and care needs assessment requests across Surrey since 2020, which has naturally had a knock on effect with a year on year increase in demand for Home to School Travel Assistance (HTSTA) as many children and young people with an education, health and care plan require HTSTA. This has resulted in a predicted overspend for this service.”

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Image: Credit: Arriva436 **CC BY-SA 2.0**

Scoutabout success for Surrey

4 July 2024



More than 6,000 Scouts and Guides and adults from **Surrey** enjoyed an action-packed weekend of activities over the weekend of 28th to 30th June 2024.

Scouts, Guides, and adults from **Epsom & Ewell** joined other Scouts and Guides from Surrey.

The first Scoutabout was at Ardingly back in 1984 and and thus event 40 years was celebrated. The boys and girls aged 10 to 14 had the opportunity to take part in more than 100 activities at the three-day Scoutabout event at the South of England Showground in Ardingly, West Sussex, the only site big enough and close enough to house the Scouts and Guides of Surrey for the weekend.

There were over 150 activities including Bus Driving, car driving, bungee running, kayaking, archery, air rifle shooting and caving, to name just a few. The young people were able to try something new, in a safe environment, gain skills-for-life and make new friends at the same time.

The weekend will not have been possible without the hard work of a determined team of 1,500 adult volunteers from across Surrey who have carried out a range of roles to make Scoutabout a reality.

From camp cooks to a doctor and from fire teams to IT engineers, adult volunteers would have shared their skills to benefit these young people.

One of the biggest tasks has been to source the huge number of activities that make Scoutabout such a success.

On the Friday night Sour Kix played for the camp at the opening ceremony and on the Saturday night Doubting Thomas and The Ariston played on stage.

Over the weekend Scoutabout FM was broadcasting and along with competitions (Thanks to Guildford Flames, Bentley Copse Activity Centre, Airfix and Surrey Sports Park for the donation of prizes) Explorer Scouts were able to present shows.

Bear Grylls, Chief Scout said “A special message for all of you at Scoutabout 2024 at Ardingly showground. I really hope all of you have a brilliant weekend together, look after each other and most of all have fun. So proud of what you all do, helping other people always, showing the true Scouting spirit, you are all amazing”.

Marcus Martin-Burns, County Youth Commissioner for Surrey Scouts said “Seeing 5,000 Scouts & Guides all together for one weekend at Scoutabout has been truly awesome, giving them the opportunities to learn skills for life, make new friends and discover new activities. From Archery to Zorbing, Scoutabout had it all and a big thank you goes to all the leaders and service crew who made this weekend possible.”

Eashan, aged 10 from Epsom & Ewell district (**1st Ewell Court**) said “The best bit of Scoutabout was the fun activities, I enjoyed the bungee slip slide because its fast and fun and gets you active.”

Lucy, aged 11 from Leatherhead district (3rd Bookham) said “I liked the quad biking as I have not done it before, and it was really fun.”

- The first Scoutabout was at Ardingly in 1984.
- Scoutabout happens every three years (apart from this one, due to the pandemic the 2024 one puts it back into a tri-annual event.
- Scouts are for Boys and Girls aged 10.5 to 14.
- Guides are for girls aged 10-14
- Individuals are 15% less likely to suffer from mood swings and anxiety if you’ve been a Scout or Guide. Source: Cohort study by the University of Edinburgh and Glasgow, 2016

Neil Wibberley

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Epsom library to lend an ear on changes

4 July 2024

Epsom Library is being transformed as part of Surrey Libraries modernisation programme and residents are invited to drop in to give their views at the library on Tuesday 9th July from 10am to 4pm.

This is an opportunity to meet library staff, hear more about the improvements and give feedback on the designs for the library.

A separate session especially for children, parents and carers will be held during Story-time from 10:15am to 10.45am. The designs will remain on display in the library for at least 2 weeks following the 9th July, to provide an opportunity for further feedback.

The library changes will include a fully flexible layout with space for events and performances; improved furniture and increased study space; new **Super Access technology** enabling out of hours use and multi-use meeting rooms.

To enable initial set up works to be completed, the library will be closed from 5th August for one week only. It will then re-open from the 12th August within Epsom library's learning centre, still within the Ebbisham Centre, which will be accessed via the cafe.

Customers will be able to access a range of library items, along with computer workstations, printing and the popular Rhymetime and Story-time events, which will still run at a reduced capacity to suit the space.

Work at the library will continue throughout 2024, until the expected final completion date of February 2025. Any further short closures required will be well publicised before they take place.

More information on Epsom Library changes will be found at the **Epsom Library page.**

Northern Lights up Epsom

4 July 2024



At their "**Mass in Blue**" concert Saturday 29th June, St Martins Church, Epsom, the **Epsom Chamber Choir** succeeded once again in enhancing their reputation for exciting performances of adventurous programmes.

The evening kicked off with "**Northern Light**s" by the contemporary Latvian composer, **Ēriks Ešenvalds**, and saw the choir placed unusually in the chancel, rather than in their customary position nearer the audience in the transept. This meant that their entrance was not greeted by the usual applause, as the audience hadn't realised that they had arrived! After a vigorous opening, the reason for this placing became apparent as the piece employs tuned wine glasses and chimes which need to be supported – the choir stalls being ideal.

Ešenvalds uses this unusual instrumentation to produce a sustained shimmering sound which underscores the choir particularly effectively in the quieter passages. A timely work for us in the UK, having recently been treated to magical displays of the Northern Lights!

The choir returned to their normal positions for "Stargazer" by the contemporary British composer, **Alec Roth**. His style recalls Holst's and Britten's – especially the Flower Songs – and the choir showed some wonderful legato singing in the shifting harmonic colours.

Vocalist **Maddie Martin** and the **LJ Jazz Trio** then provided us with a jazzy interlude, and the first half of the concert concluded with another contemporary British composer, **Jonathan Dove** and his "The Passing of the Year". These seven, contrasting part-songs – stunningly accompanied by choir member, virtuoso pianist **Stephen Ridge** – gave the choir the chance to display their convincing mastery of complex and quirky rhythms, and cool and hot tone clusters.

The second half of the concert was given over to "Mass in Blue" by a third contemporary British composer, Will Todd. While not a personal favourite, this exciting setting of the mass has gained huge popularity across the choral world. The blues scale permeates the whole work but the choir immediately seemed fully "in the groove", secure and quite at ease with the challenging blues harmonies and rhythms.

At times, some were unable to resist the urge for spontaneous swaying! Singing almost as a complex backing group to the jazz trio and vocalist, the choir was able to show off its skill with sensitive phrasing and highly effective dynamic contrasts. A convincing performance of a welcome addition to the repertoire.

Nick Landauer

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Photo: ©Edward Webb

Epsom Downs Summer season race tips

4 July 2024



The Summer Season kicks off at **Epsom Downs** on Wednesday evening with a competitive six-race card for punters heading to the track.

Racing gets underway at 6.20pm with a seven-runner apprentice handicap before rounding off at 9.00pm as ten runners take on the class four handicap.

*Read below to see the latest **Horse racing betting** and tips for Epsom's Wednesday card*

The opener (6.20) is an apprentice handicap over the one mile and two furlong trip with Giselles Defence arriving in the best form of the field, winning at Pontefract in May and getting back on track at Leicester 18 days ago after a poor ninth prior so should take the beating here. Of his rivals, Oj Lifestyle was a Newbury maiden winner in 2022 who hasn't fired since but is dropping down into much calmer waters here.

Race two on the card (6.50) sees seven runners head to the stalls for the maiden stakes in class four for two-year-old's and Sir Peter Fossick for trainer Charlie Johnston is taken to get off the mark on debut, a half-brother to several winners over the this seven-furlong trip so he makes plenty of appeal on paper.

Mr Wagyu is on a losing run but has a fine record at Epsom and is back for more in race three on Wednesday's card (7.25), only slightly edged out on Derby Day so has to be considered back at his favoured track. Indian Creek won this race last year off a 2lb higher mark so is set to be amongst the top end as well in this six furlong class three handicap.

Trainer Ralph Beckett's son of Galileo, Atlantic Convoy, looks ripe for improvement in handicap company and he is the selection in race four on the card (8.00) having taken a step in the right direction when seventh in a Sandown maiden last month and is up in trip here.

The penultimate race on Epsom's card arrives at 8.30 with a one mile and four furlong handicap in class six. A competitive heat, Our Papa Smurf should be bang up there for trainer Gary Moore off the back of a win at Goodwood on June 14, going up in trip here by three furlongs. Of his rivals, Angel On High can give the Moore runner plenty to think about with two thirds and a second in his last three outings.

Finally, the card comes to a close with the ten-runner handicap in class four for three-year-old's and upwards (9.00), with preference in the finale heading to Justcallmepete, who can cash in on his low turf mark – 10lb lower than when he races on the all-weather surface – to take the spoils in the card closer ahead of course and distance winner Marlay Park, who has won four times at Epsom in his career.

Epsom selections – Wednesday

6.20 – Giselles Defence

6.50 – Sir Peter Fossick

7.25 – Mr Wagyu

8.00 – Atlantic Convoy

8.30 – Our Papa Smurf

9.00 – Justcallmepete

Image: Credit Paul. **CC BY 2.0**

10,000 mile pilgrimage to Epsom

4 July 2024

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John Bates, grandson of Beatrice Bates, travelled over 10,000 miles from Australia to Horton Cemetery in Epsom to pay his respects to Beatrice. His grandmother is one of 9000 buried in Europe's largest and now abandoned asylum cemetery. The **Friends of Horton Cemetery** continue to battle to retrieve this important graveyard from a property speculator. **A petition**, already signed by over 1200 supporters, calls on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to change its damaging opinion that the Cemetery is "amenity woodland".

Here is John Bates' personal account of his May 2024 pilgrimage from Adelaide to Epsom.

In loving memory of Beatrice Miriam Bates, a woman of enduring strength and grace, whose life and legacy continue to resonate deeply within our family. Beatrice's journey came to an end in 1933 at West Park Hospital in Epsom, Surrey, leaving behind a mystery that lingered for decades. It was a personal mission of mine to uncover the truth of her final resting place, a mission that revealed not only her burial site but also a profound connection to our family's history.

Beatrice Miriam Bates was laid to rest in Horton Cemetery, a place that, despite the passage of time, faced the threat of being erased by development. Discovering her burial site through ancestry records was a pivotal moment, one that brought closure to our family and deepened our understanding of Beatrice's life. Horton Cemetery, overgrown and largely forgotten by many, stands as a testament to the lives of those who came before us, including Beatrice.

In 2024, ninety-one years after Beatrice's passing, I made a personal pilgrimage from Australia to Horton Cemetery. Walking around the overgrown grounds, I felt the weight of history and the importance of preserving this sacred space. The memorial at the entrance stands as a solitary guardian of the memories held within, a symbol of resistance against the encroaching tide of development.

The 'Friends of Horton Cemetery' have been instrumental in championing the cause to protect this site. Their dedication ensures that the stories of those buried there, including Beatrice's, are remembered and honoured. It is a cause that resonates deeply with me, as I believe in the importance of preserving Horton Cemetery for all the souls who rest there and for the relatives who seek a connection to their past.

Beatrice's story, accessible to all through the efforts of the 'Friends of Horton Cemetery,' shines a light on her resilience and spirit. Her life, though marked by challenges, is a testament to the courage and strength that define our family. Her memory serves as a beacon, guiding us to cherish our heritage and to honour the lives of those who came before us.

As we reflect on Beatrice's life, we are reminded of the importance of family, history, and the relentless pursuit of truth. Her legacy is a testament to the enduring power of love and remembrance. Through the efforts to preserve Horton Cemetery, Beatrice and all those resting there are given the respect and recognition they deserve.

In honour of Beatrice Miriam Bates, let us continue to share her story and all the stories of those buried in Horton Cemetery and protect the places that hold our collective memories. Her spirit lives on in each of us, a symbol of resilience and hope for generations to come.

Rest in peace, dear Beatrice. Your story will never be forgotten.

With all our love,

Your Grandson…. John E. M. Bates.

Beatrice Bates full story can be read on The Friends of Horton Cemetery **website HERE**

Sick "jokes" end trainee PC's career

4 July 2024

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A **Surrey** trainee police officer, who ‘joked’ he would rape a domestic abuse victim, has been sacked from Surrey Police.

PC **Samuel Wilton**, a trainee officer since 2023, admitted gross to misconduct at an accelerated hearing on June 26.

Fellow officers reported PC Wilton ‘joking’ that “if she [a woman] was a domestic violence victim I would still rape her” on a night out in Five and Lime Bar in Guildford on January 5.

Comments made by the trainee officer included: “If they were single, I would break her in half”. He also said: “If there was a Domestic Violence (DV) victim who was fit, I would rape her” then adding: “If the DV victim was fit and dead, I would still rape her”.

The training group, for which PC Wilton was part, had received training about professional behaviour and standards expected in the police force on the very same day that he made the comments.

PC Wilton was then placed on restricted duties. Still in police training, PC Wilton was never on front line duties.

Allegations against PC Wilton were proven in the hearing, and he was found to have breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour amounting to gross misconduct. “I am absolutely disgusted with myself,” PC Wilton said during the hearing, as he told inspectors about his life-long ambition to be in the force. He added: “I will never forgive myself of a lifetime of focus for a moment of madness.”

PC Wilton assured the hearing that he has “grown as a person”, reflecting ‘daily’ on his comments. PC Wilton also said he has taken reading courses he has taken on sex and gender equality to educate himself.

“I am more than this incident and this mistake,” PC Wilton told the hearing as he asked for a second chance. He added: “In my naivety and thoughtlessness, I have contributed to the [misogynistic and abusive culture] that the police try to eradicate.”

However Peter Gardner, Assistant Chief Constable for Surrey, concluded: “For the public interest you should cease public duty immediately.” He stressed that, although the incident amounted to gross misconduct, there is no evidence or allegation that PC Milton is a threat to the public.

The hearing heard that, drunkenness was “no defence” for his behaviour, as agreed by both investigation officers and PC Wilton, who said he never intended to offend anyone.

The misconduct hearing noted the trainee officer does not regularly drink to excess and so ‘could not have foreseen’ his conduct.

The panel concluded that the incident could damage the police’s reputation and make the public think less of the police.

Recent high-profile incidents such as Hampshire police officers sending discriminatory whatsapp messages were highlighted as part of a perceived ‘culture of misogyny’ within the police. Investigating officers said they wanted to send a very clear message of “there is no place for you in the police service” if misconduct is found.

The misconduct hearing concluded that “anything less than a dismissal would not achieve the purpose of misconduct proceedings” and “fail to maintain public confidence and the police’s reputation”.

Acknowledging PC Wilton’s regret, lifetime ambition to be in the force and commitment to the civic duty, Assistant Chief Cons said in his closing remarks: “Please don’t let this determine the rest of your life”.

Numerous character references were given to the hearing from PC Wilton’s former colleagues, mostly female, including those from his time in the RAF. One female colleague said the comments were “completely out of character” for PC Wilton, with others praising his ‘teamwork’, ‘professionalism’ and ’emotional intelligence.

Deputy Chief Constable Nev Kemp said in a statement to the press after the meeting: “The comments made by PC Wilton are deeply offensive and disgraceful for any police officer to make, whether on or off duty and simply cannot be condoned.

“I am pleased that his colleagues reported his behaviour without delay. This demonstrates that this standard of behaviour is not tolerated in Surrey Police, and I commend them for taking the immediate action that they did.

“Fortunately, PC Wilton has never carried out any frontline duties or come into contact with members of the public as a police officer. His conduct on that night falls far short of the high standards and example expected of our officers and staff in order to maintain the trust and confidence of our local communities.”

PC Wilton will have five working days to lodge an appeal against his dismissal.

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

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Eric Tenney

4 July 2024



Eric Tenney, passed away on 9th June 2024 in Henford Nursing Home	Cremation service takes place on 5th July 2024 11.45 at Randalls Park Road Crematorium, Leatherhead, Surrey

Epsom and Ewell Parliament candidates interviewed

4 July 2024



On Monday 17th June **James Hains** of the Epsom and Ewell Times conducted interviews with Gina Miller (True and Fair Party), Mhairi Fraser (Conservative), Helen Maguire (Liberal Democrat), Stephen McKenna (Green Party) and Mark Todd (Labour). The interviews were filmed by the Creative and Media Team at **NESCOT** in Ewell. Epsom and Ewell Times extends our immense gratitude to NESCOT for their professionalism and service especially **Charlie McCarthy**.

Mayuran Senthilnathan of the Reform Party was called away at short notice and could not make the schedule.

Here are the interviews:

Epsom and Ewell Times thanks all the candidates who took part.

They are all a credit to our democracy whether you agree with them or not.

Make sure you vote on 4th July and don’t forget your photo ID.

More opinions of opinion polls

4 July 2024

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In the run-up to the 2024 general election, polling data for party support in **Epsom and Ewell** shows a fluctuating political landscape. Epsom and Ewell has returned a Conservative Party since the constituency was first created.

However, recent polling data indicates a potential upheaval.

In the 2019 general election, the Conservatives maintained a significant lead with 53% of the vote. The Liberal Democrats followed with 23%, while the Labour Party took a 17% share. However, recent polls now place the Liberal Democrats at the forefront as potential victors in the upcoming election 4th July.

This data comes emerges from the model of Electoral Calculus, which predicts that the Liberal Democrats have a 72% chance of winning the elections this term, with the Conservatives at 20%. The model suggests a dramatic turnaround favouring the Liberal Democrats, with a swing of 26.09% of support from the Conservatives. In addition, the Electoral Calculus predicts that the Labour party will have a 5% chance of winning.

Even so, alternative polling sources, such as the UK Polling Report, suggest a more closely contesting race. The current support levels are predicted to be 29.76% for the Conservatives, 24.21% for the Liberal Democrats, and 24.03% for Labour. It indicates that there is a significant residual support for the Conservative Party, which challenges the prediction of a Liberal Democrat win, making the race far from
a foregone conclusion.

YouGov polls illustrate a more volatile landscape in comparison, with the winners emerging differently on a weekly basis, underscoring the volatility in voters' intentions. According to the latest YouGov prediction, the support in Epsom and Ewell is 35.1% for the Conservatives, 25.9% for the Liberal Democrats, and 19.7% for Labour.

This general election highlights Epsom and Ewell as a key constituency, reflecting upon broader electoral trends across the United Kingdom.

Image: Creator: https://pixy.org/ | Credit: https://pixy.org/4155081/ Copyright: CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Epsom kickboxers seek funds for world championships

4 July 2024



Epsom based **Absolute Martial Arts**, a well-regarded martial arts school, is celebrating a significant achievement this year. Thirteen of their talented students have qualified and earned the honour to represent England at the WKC World Championships in Portugal.

However, the path to this prestigious event comes with considerable financial challenges.

In the world of kickboxing, athletes receive no financial backing. Craig and Rachel Harrington, passionate owners of Absolute Martial Arts, commented, "Unfortunately, kickboxing is a sport that requires complete self-funding." This means every expense – from flights and accommodation to entry fees and team uniforms – must be covered by the athletes themselves.

To raise some of these costs, Absolute Martial Arts is hosting a free fundraising event at **Wallace Fields Infants School** in Epsom on July 21st. The event promises to be a fun-filled day, featuring a "sparathon", various activities for children and adults alike, a BBQ with raffles, and so much more. The Harringtons further mentioned that they would love for this event to raise awareness, not just for kickboxing as a sport, but also for the athletes who go to great lengths to achieve their dreams.

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Notably, the club holds a strong track record, having achieved success in previous years. During the last championship, they sent seven fighters who brought home an impressive tally of four gold and three silver medals— a true testament to their skill and dedication. This year, with thirteen qualifiers, the expectations are even higher, though so are the financial demands. As a result, Absolute Martial Arts is reaching out to the local community within Epsom and Ewell, counting on a strong turnout at their upcoming fundraising event.

Mark your calendars for July 21st at Wallace Fields Infants School and join them for the fundraiser. The support of local residents can make a significant difference in helping these young athletes realize their dreams on the world stage.

For more information, visit Absolute Martial Arts' website or contact Michelle Downes at doodab@blueyonder.co.uk or 07540 460680.

Conservative who promises to serve "with integrity"

4 July 2024



Epsom and Ewell Times is publishing the appeals of the Parliamentary Candidates standing in the General Election for the constituency of Epsom and Ewell. This is the appeal of **Mhairi Fraser** the **Conservative Party** candidate.

Epsom has been my family home for almost 20 years. All three of my younger siblings went to school here, at Glyn and Epsom College; my mum worked at Leatherhead Food Research; in university holidays I could be found working behind the bar at the Marquis of Granby, or volunteering at Epsom Hospital Radio; and as a young graduate, I commuted from Epsom into the City. I have a genuine drive to protect everything that makes Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead special, and I also know where they need investment and attention.

I love this country and everything it stands for, and I believe traditional Conservative values – strong education, low taxes for workers and businesses, efficient use of public money, respect for law and order, and the personal freedom to allow you to aspire to great things – is the best way to build a Britain where that is possible for everyone.

I am running to be your MP because I believe it is time to bring integrity back to our politics. Having built a career as an anti-corruption lawyer at one of the top law firms in the world – whether advising the world's most influential companies and governments on how to fight money laundering, or defending Nobel Peace Prize winners against persecution by foreign governments – integrity is, quite literally, my speciality.

That is why you will have seen me challenge other parties' policies, which I believe would restrain the potential of us all, and of this country. But you have never heard me on the doorstep, or online, or in a leaflet, attack any of my opponents as individuals. Everyone is fed up with the division that is rife in our politics at the moment; it's time that the British public was put before self-interest.

Having been lucky enough to call it my home, I know that's how we do things in Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead too. This is a really special place, with a rare community feel for somewhere so close to London. We put politics aside and work together – whether as neighbours or colleagues, in community groups or for charities – to make things better. I promise to do the same for you, here and in Westminster, starting with my key local priorities.

Protecting the Green Belt:

We are at a critical point, with only a few months left to have the Draft Local Plan amended to remove Green Belt sites. I have been visible at both of this year's Green Belt protests, but I have also been quietly working behind the scenes, using my legal expertise to assist the Keep Epsom & Ewell Green Belt Group with legal strategy. I am in excellent company with my Conservative councillors Kieran Persand and Bernie Muir, who have consistently fought to remove the Green Belt from the Draft Local Plan.

Home ownership is one of the great aspirations of the younger generations in Surrey, and we all know that there is a need for new homes to be built for those who are currently finding it impossible to get on the housing ladder. But our housing needs can be met by building on brownfield sites, which have previously been developed, rather than forever destroying the Green Belt. If elected, I will continue to fight for a "brownfield first" strategy – including pushing the Council to consider the alternative plan for development at Kiln Lane and Longmead – which will be able to meet our actual housing needs as a borough.

The Green Belt is an essential home to hundreds of native species of flora and fauna. The minute the concrete is poured, the land is forever lost to nature. But there are also human consequences to building hundreds of new homes on inappropriate sites that do not have the infrastructure to support them. Schools and GP services running out of places. Traffic jams polluting our air. An increased risk of homes being flooded.

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I am adamant: I will not let Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead turn into carbon copies of Croydon and Woking. Our Green Belt and green spaces must be protected.

Tackling crime with a more visible police presence:

We deserve to feel safe at home, and when we head out. Under the Conservatives there are more police in Surrey than ever before, but I know that levels of vehicle theft, burglary, violent crime, drug dealing and shoplifting remain too high.

I have been relaying residents' and business owners' concerns straight to the top, to the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner – and I will be a consistent voice for a more visible police presence on the streets of Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead, because I firmly believe that more bobbies on the beat is the best deterrent to crime.

Improving commuter services:

Local residents using Ewell West, Stoneleigh and Worcester Park stations have been suffering unacceptable levels of overcrowding, delays and cancellations on South Western Railway trains at peak hours.

The supposed ease of the commute to and from London is one of the major reasons people have chosen to live in this area, and these issues are causing serious levels of disruption and stress. I know what it's like – I've commuted to and from London on the same line on and off over a period of almost twenty years.

I have already spoken with representatives of South Western Railway to discuss train services in the constituency, and am pushing them to provide two extra trains during the morning peak and, in the interim, to reorganise their existing fleet to introduce additional ten-coach services for morning commuters.

Regenerating our high streets:

The high streets of Epsom and Leatherhead have long been in need of regeneration, and the best way to achieve that is to allow local businesses to thrive – by reducing taxes and abolishing unnecessary red tape.

I have kept my promise to you to run a clean campaign; it is the first of many promises to you that I will keep, continuing with my pledges above.

The other candidates:

Mark my words for Labour candidate

Lib Dems' Helen Maguire – "Getting Things Done"

The Green promises

Reform candidate for Epsom and Ewell

A True and Fair view of the world

Surrey to have a new political colour 4th July?

4 July 2024



Jeremy Hunt "faces a tight race" to be re-elected according to new polls that show Surrey could have as many as 12 new MPs after the July 4 general election.

Only East Surrey's Conservative MP and Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Claire Coutinho, are predicted to be safe.

Data published by Ipsos suggests the combination of big beast Conservative resignations and huge swings in voting intentions could drastically alter the political map.

The projections are based on Ipsos' first MRP poll that uses a large-scale online survey of nearly 20,000 participants together with population data at a constituency level, to project which party will win individual seats at the upcoming General Election.

Currently every single seat in the county is held by a Conservative but Ipsos polling has the Liberal Democrats poised to win in Esher and Walton, Dorking and Horley, Guildford, and Epsom and Ewell leaning that way too.

The scale of the swings needed are huge with the Conservatives holding majorities as high as 29 per cent in constituencies predicted to go to the Lib Dems.

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Three seats, with what would normally be considered safe Tory strongholds with majorities greater than 30 per cent, are also said to be in play.

Runnymede and Weybridge, Woking, Spelthorne, Windsor, and Godalming and Ash are all toss ups, according to Ipsos.

Even among the seats Ipsos has staying blue, Ipsos says that Surrey Heath, Farnham and Bordon, and Reigate are only "leaning" Conservative with just East Surrey – which was last won by Claire Coutinho in 2019 with a 40 per cent majority "likely" to stay Tory.

Nationally the polls show:

Labour winning 453 – with 'certainty' range of 439 to 462 seats

Conservatives 115 – with a range of 99 to 123 seats

Liberal Democrats 38 – with a range of 35 to 48 seats

SNP 15 – with a range of 13 to 23 seats

Plaid Cymru four – with a range of two to five seats

Reform UK three – with range of three to 10 seats

Green Party three with a range of zero to four seats

According to Ipsos data the voting intentions in Surrey are:

Liberal Democrat gains

Esher and Walton (Strong Liberal Democrat) overturning conservative majority of 5 per cent

Con 28%, Lib Dem 50%, Lab 11%, Ref 8%, Green 3%

Dorking (Likely Liberal Democrat) overturning Conservative majority of 19 per cent

Con 30%, Lab 17%, Lib Dem 41%, Ref 8%, Green 4%

Guildford (Likely Liberal Democrat – overturning Conservative majority of 6 per cent

Con 25%, Lab 16%, Lib Dem 39%, Ref 15%, Green 4%

Epsom and Ewell (Lean Liberal Democrat – overturning Conservative majority of 29 per cent

Con 30%, Lab 23%, Lib Dem 35%, Ref 7%, Green 4%

Conservative holds:

Surrey Heath (Lean Conservative) majority 30 per cent

Con 36%, Lab 18%, Lib Dem 30%, Ref 12%, Green 4%

Farnham and Bordon (Lean Conservative) majority 27%

Con 37%, Lab 17%, Lib Dem 31%, Ref 11%, Green 4%

Reigate (Lean Conservative) majority 36%

Con 34%, Lab 29%, Lib Dem 18%, Ref 9%, Green 10%

East Surrey (Likely Conservative) majority 40%

Con 38%, Lab 26%, Lib Dem 16%, Ref 15%, Green 5%

Toss ups

Runnymede and Weybridge (Toss up) Conservative majority 31 per cent

Con 35%, Lab 31%, Lib Dem 18%, Ref 10%, Green 5%

Woking (Toss up) Conservative majority 17 per cent

Con 35%, Lab 30%, Lib Dem 25%, Ref 9%, Green 5%

Godalming and Ash (Toss up) Conservative majority 19 per cent

Con 34%, Lab 17%, Lib Dem 33%, Ref 11%, Green 5%

Spelthorne (Toss up) Conservative majority 37 per cent

Con 31%, Lab 31%, Lib Dem 17%, Ref 16%, Green 5%

Jeremy Hunt and Paul Follows were contacted for this story.

Related reports:

6 out of 11 Conservative MPs leaving Surrey

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