

Shock as Surrey Council Puts Protected Woodland Up for Auction

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A surprise decision by Surrey County Council (SCC) to auction off a cherished woodland in the heart of Cuddington has sparked uproar among residents and elected councillors, who are now rallying to save the green space from the threat of large-scale development.

The 13-acre site, situated between Grafton Road and Old Malden Lane and bordering Linden Bridge Special Needs School, was discreetly marketed for potential development of up to 40 homes by commercial estate auctioneers. The move came without prior consultation with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council or even the local Surrey County councillors representing the area.

Local County Councillor **Eber Kington** (RA) , alongside RA Cuddington ward councillors **Kim Spickett**, **Graham Jones** and **Phil Neale**, and the Cuddington Residents' Association, have launched a campaign urging SCC to reconsider its course of action.

"This woodland isn't just a patch of land – it's a vital green refuge in our urban landscape, a space of peace, biodiversity, and community value," said Cllr Neale. "We're asking residents to stand with us and help protect it for future generations."

The woodland, known locally for its mature trees and diverse wildlife, lies adjacent to the Grafton Park Road estate and has long been considered a buffer zone preserving local environmental quality and character.

The auction concluded in late January, but SCC is yet to announce a winning bidder. The auctioneers stated that the highest bid would not necessarily be accepted, leaving room for alternative proposals to be considered.

One such alternative comes from a joint venture involving the Cuddington Residents' Association, the Wandgas Sports & Social Club, and a local developer. Their bid proposes a modest housing scheme to fund the creation of a community-led sports and recreational space, including public woodland access for walkers and cyclists. The vision includes safeguarding the majority of the natural landscape and establishing long-term protections for its use.

Campaigners argue that SCC's recent adoption of a **Community Asset Transfer** (CAT) scheme—championed by Epsom & Ewell's own county councillor Eber Kington—should provide the framework to enable this type of locally-driven project.

"Transparency and local accountability are vital when it comes to decisions that affect our shared spaces," Cllr Webb added. "We're calling on the County Council to respect the CAT process, consider our community proposal seriously, and honour the values of environmental stewardship and public trust."

Residents are now being asked to sign a petition backing the community bid and urging SCC to reject blanket housing development in favour of a sustainable, locally-beneficial plan.

The petition can be signed online and will be submitted to Surrey County Council ahead of a final decision.

For more information or to add your name to the petition, visit: [Change.org](https://change.org)