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

12th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

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Sustaining Epsom and Ewell's trees

19 June 2023



The **Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board** (EETAB) founded in 1994 is a partnership of environmentally minded volunteers from the local community who work together to safeguard and promote the value of trees in the borough.

EETAB operates via volunteer **TREE CHAMPIONS** who feel that trees matter and who help to care for trees in their road or local park. Their aim is to ensure that they pass on to future generations a borough that is at least as leafy as the one we have inherited. EETAB is part of the wider Surrey Tree Warden Network.

One of the key roles EETAB has is to monitor Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and Conservation Area planning applications. EETAB seeks to ensure that major planning applications include appropriate soft landscaping requirements and tree planting to enhance the townscape. They provide scrutiny to these applications and this role is vital to maintain mature trees and ensure leafiness is maintained within the Borough. Both these activities often require site visits or follow up reviews to ensure any tree work or developments are aligned with the planning application.



Planting of hedge at the Epsom Riding for the Disabled site.

Sustainable Epsom and Ewell in partnership with St Martin's Church are looking forward to hosting their 3rd Eco Fair on Saturday July 1st between 10:00 and 14:00. The event is free for all to attend and will include activities for children. Hot food and cakes will be available on the day.

One of the aims of the Eco fair is to highlight the work of the many fantastic local green groups and businesses active in the Borough and provide an opportunity for our residents to find out about the work they do and how they can support these groups and businesses. Sustainable Epsom and Ewell are therefore delighted to welcome again to our 3rd event the **Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board**

Further details about the work they do can be found on the website https://www.sustainableepsomewell.co.uk.

In addition to this work, EETAB also undertakes many practical tree planting work within the borough working both in establishing tree planting projects in local communities and supporting **Surrey County Council** to get more street trees planted. Some of the ongoing projects include:

Allotment Tree Nursery

EETAB operates a small tree nursery at the Alexandra Road allotment site. They use this site to care for young trees so that there is ready stock for tree planting projects. They have several hundred trees in pots at the nursery. A team of volunteers look after the saplings there and help maintain the plot and we are always in need of extra help with this work.

Planting Projects

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ISSN 2753-2771

Over the past year EETAB has been involved in planting projects at various sites in the borough, the largest of which has been helping to plant a 120m long section of hedge at the **Epsom Riding for the Disabled** site in January, followed by a further 25m section of hedge in March this year. Species planted included hazel, field maple, hawthorn, hornbeam, willow, rowan, ash, dogwood, and dog rose.

Street Trees Planting

When familiar trees are lost (due to age/disease/extreme weather) and not replaced, the appearance of a neighbourhood is altered, so the topic of street trees stirs some strong emotions amongst residents. In the planting season 2021/2022 just 10 new street trees were planted in our borough, a figure far lower than the number of street trees lost. EETAB ran a campaign highlighting the loss of street trees and the increasing numbers of stumps left in our verges to put pressure on Surrey County Council to plant more trees.

As a result of this campaign progress has been made and almost 30 street trees were planted in the borough in the 2022/2023. They worked with Surrey County Council to get 44 planted in the 2023/2024 season. There is still concern in some areas about a continuing decline in numbers of street trees, particularly in the tree lined 1930s estates of the north eastern side of the borough. EETAB appreciate residents' frustration about the reduction in the number of trees. Replacement trees are not being planted in some of these verges as they do not pass the criteria set by Surrey County Council for street tree planting, often due to the narrow width of the verge, or due to the presence of utilities underground.

Tree care and watering

Although there is often much focus on tree planting in the media, the ongoing care and watering of these newly planted trees is equally important. EETAB volunteers regularly check on the newly planted trees in the borough, clearing vegetation around the base of the tree (to reduce competition for water and to prevent strimmer and mower damage), putting down mulch and checking the tree ties and supports. Young trees need watering regularly for the first few years after they are planted with increased frequency during spells of hot dry weather. In the summer months there is a huge need for Tree Champion volunteers to help with watering young street trees. They have a list of trees in need of a champion and would welcome additional help with this.

If you would like to find out more about the **Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board**, please check their website: www.eetab.org.uk, follow on Facebook @EpsomEwellTreeAdvisoryBoard or email them at epsomandewelltab@gmail.com

Vicki Rees

Top image: EETAB Allotment Tree Nursery at Alexandra Road allotments.

Related reports:

Council Meeting: Does Epsom need more trees?

More trees please for Surrey

Any more trees please?

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