EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
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19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

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Two years on: Helen Maguire's record as Epsom and Ewell MP

4 July 2026



Helen Maguire marks two years as Epsom and Ewell's MP today, having won the constituency for the Liberal Democrats at the General Election on 4 July 2024.

Her victory, by 3,686 votes, ended the 23-year Commons tenure of Conservative Chris Grayling and made her the first Liberal Democrat and first woman to represent the seat.

Two years later, her record combines a continuing Westminster front-bench role, a highly visible constituency operation, claims of progress on local health and transport issues, and an unusually public breakdown in relationships with leading local Liberal Democrats.

From Defence lead to specialist health brief

Maguire's first major Commons appointment came quickly after her election. In September 2024 she became the Liberal Democrats' spokesperson for Defence, placing her at the head of the party's Commons work on defence policy, service welfare, veterans and the Armed Forces.

She took part in detailed scrutiny of the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill and has remained active on military accommodation, veterans' compensation and support for bereaved service families.

In October 2025, she moved to the Liberal Democrat front-bench role of spokesperson for Primary Care and Cancer. She remains a front-bench spokesperson, but the change altered her place within the party's portfolio structure.

Her Defence post was an umbrella departmental brief. Her current role is a specialist health position within the wider Liberal Democrat Health and Social Care operation, headed by Helen Morgan MP.

Maguire's focus has since included GP access, pharmacy provision, cancer treatment, NHS dentistry, women's health, hospital services and patient access to care.

Hospitals, health and primary care

Healthcare has become one of Maguire's most prominent local themes.

She has repeatedly raised the condition and future of St Helier Hospital, including in her maiden speech and an abseiling adventure at St Helier Hospital. Her office says that, following a sustained campaign involving meetings with hospital stakeholders and parliamentary pressure, St Helier has secured £57 million for its A&E department.

The office also highlights £12 million in funding for Epsom Hospital. It says Maguire has secured commitments to improve endometriosis services after constituents raised concerns about their treatment, including increased clinical capacity, enhanced surgical provision, improved follow-up and stronger administrative oversight.

Her office further says she has supported the national pharmacy funding package in connection with Horton Pharmacy, visited local dentists while pressing for better NHS dental provision, and promoted neighbourhood health centres intended to bring services closer to residents.

At Westminster, she has used her new health role to raise issues including cancer medicines, primary care, breast cancer, patient access to treatment and the impact of NHS policy on people facing complex health conditions.

Rail services, access and local infrastructure

Rail services have been another major local campaign.

Maguire has pressed South Western Railway over reduced train frequencies since the pandemic and argued that passengers in Epsom and Ewell should have greater influence over future timetables. Her office says SWR is expected to launch a formal public consultation on a new timetable, describing this as a step towards restoring services closer to pre-Covid levels.

Accessibility at Ewell West station has also featured. Her office says that, following discussions with SWR, two additional Blue Badge spaces were created alongside a painted pedestrian route, zebra crossing and dropped kerbs providing a step-

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free route to the station entrance.

She has also raised accessibility issues in Parliament, including concern that some disabled and visually impaired passengers can be disadvantaged by ticket-machine systems and reduced staffed facilities.

Other local campaigns listed by her office include pavement parking, Thames Water sewage discharges, electric-vehicle charging infrastructure and persistent dust and noise complaints connected with the Chalk Pit.

Casework, community activity and local presence

As with any MP, much of Maguire's work is carried out through individual constituency cases rather than Commons speeches.

Her office says more than 17,000 constituents have received casework, campaign or policy responses over the past two years. That figure covers different forms of contact and assistance, rather than necessarily 17,000 separate individual cases.

Examples cited by her office include help with Personal Independence Payment claims, SEND cases, passport and visa delays, taxi licensing, Blue Badges, housing-association repairs and other departmental or local-authority problems.

The office says she has held regular surgeries and meetings across Epsom, Ewell, Ashtead and Leatherhead, alongside visits to schools, clubs, businesses, health providers and community organisations.

Among the examples highlighted are meetings over the Bridge Youth and Community Centre, the cost-of-living crisis and violence against women and girls; police walkabouts in Epsom and Leatherhead; engagement with the local Hong Kong community over BN(O) visa changes; visits to local dentists and independent businesses; support for sports clubs and park improvements; and activity around Chamber Mead wetlands and the release of water voles.

Armed Forces, veterans and international work

Maguire's military background remains visible in her parliamentary and constituency activity.

Her office says she has helped press for improved housing standards for service personnel and their families, campaigned for free rail travel to remembrance events for bereaved military families, and maintained links with the local Armed Forces community through Remembrance and Territorial Army events.

She also retains an international profile. Her parliamentary interests include Ukraine, Russia (which has sanctioned her), conflict prevention, humanitarian demining and the impact of explosive weapons on civilians. She has held roles in cross-party groups addressing explosive weapons and conflict-related humanitarian concerns.

Registered interests and comparisons with predecessors

Maguire's Commons register of interests contains 18 current entries. These include campaign and constituency-event support, hospitality, overseas visits, former rental-property interests, shareholdings held jointly with her husband and an unpaid directorship.

Her register does not show current paid outside employment or a second job. That is a different profile from her two predecessors.

Chris Grayling, now Lord Grayling, has a House of Lords register focused principally on paid advisory roles and rental income. Before him, Sir Archibald Hamilton developed a reputation in the 1990s for holding a large number of outside interests. Contemporary reporting placed him among the Conservative MPs with the highest number of paid external roles.

The comparisons are imperfect because disclosure rules have changed substantially over the decades. But Maguire's register is materially different from the paid consultancy and directorship profile associated with Hamilton. Her entries are mainly donations, hospitality, travel, shareholdings and historic property interests rather than paid outside work.

All such entries are published under parliamentary disclosure rules and do not in themselves imply wrongdoing.

Local Liberal Democrat rupture

The most difficult political aspect of Maguire's first two years has been the breakdown in relationships within the Epsom and Ewell Liberal Democrat organisation.

Cllr **Julie Morris**, the long-serving College Ward councillor and now Deputy Mayor, resigned from the Liberal Democrats Group she led and became an Independent. She was later followed by Cllr **James Lawrence**, her successor as leader of the Liberal Democrat group on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, who also left the party to sit as an Independent.

Their departures reduced the Liberal Democrat group on the Borough Council and strengthened the Independent group.

Lawrence was explicit in linking his resignation partly to Maguire. He said he believed the MP had become too focused on "leafleting and electioneering" rather than meaningful national policy change. He also referred to concerns about the effect of her approach on volunteers who gave time to the Liberal Democrat Party.

Morris likewise referred to difficulties within the local Liberal Democrat organisation and the MP's political operation as part of the background to her own decision.

A later episode during the East Surrey Unitary Council election campaign added to the political controversy.

At the count on 8 May 2026, Epsom and Ewell Times reported that Helen Maguire's communications officer directed

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ISSN 2753-2771

newly elected Liberal Democrat candidates not to speak to the media and said journalists should instead seek interviews with Maguire.

Maguire publicly disputed EET's account at a Westminster reception. However, in subsequent correspondence her communications officer, Esther Holland, accepted that a restriction on media engagement had been in place, while denying that Maguire herself had imposed a "gag".

The explanation given was that, though on a Parliament sanctioned salary, Holland was also acting as East Surrey Liberal Democrat communications officer and that the temporary restriction was for electoral purposes. Maguire's office said she knew of the arrangement but had not personally directed it.

The episode did not establish that Maguire herself ordered the media restriction though she was an integral part of its workings and presumably agreed with it. But it became politically significant because it reinforced criticism from former Liberal Democrat councillors that messaging and decision-making were being tightly controlled from the MP's wider political operation.

Maguire has rejected that overall characterisation. She has defended regular canvassing, community visibility and campaigning as essential ways to identify residents' problems and take them into Parliament.

A busy and politically mixed first two years

Maguire's first two years have been active and politically consequential.

She has maintained a high local profile through surgeries, campaigning, site visits, community meetings and casework. Her office identifies progress or claimed successes on hospital funding, rail accessibility, pharmacy provision, sports facilities, local infrastructure and individual constituent cases.

At Westminster, she has remained on the Liberal Democrat front bench throughout, although her role has changed from leading the party's whole Defence brief to holding a specialist primary care and cancer portfolio.

Her critics within the former local Liberal Democrat leadership argue that her approach has placed too much emphasis on political control, campaigning and messaging. Her supporters will see an energetic MP using visibility and local contact to pursue practical outcomes.

The next stage of her parliamentary term will test whether the activity of the first two years turns into durable local gains: more reliable rail services, improved hospital provision, better primary-care access, effective action on environmental and infrastructure concerns, and stronger support for residents dealing with SEND, housing and public-service delays.

Sam Jones – Reporter



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