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

19th November 2026

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Free community football sessions and more for Epsom and Ewell

22 August 2026



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is pleased to announce that free community football sessions will be available for young people aged 10 to 16 who live in the borough, from 24 August 2026 to 31 March 2027. This programme will be delivered by YOUfF (Young Ones United Football Foundation) with monthly life lesson mentoring sessions also available for participants.

Community football sessions will take place three days a week at Court Recreation Ground, with dedicated sessions for different age groups and genders. Spaces for up to 21 participants are available in each session and participation will need to be confirmed in advance via the YOUfF Instagram Poll. New players must complete a registration form, either online or in person at the session. For more information and details on how to book, visit this page on the YOUfF website – https://www.youff.org.uk/whatwedo

Monthly life lesson mentoring sessions will take place at St Barnabas Church in Epsom.

The Epsom & Ewell Community Football Programme supports the council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which focuses on increasing physical activity, improving wellbeing and reducing health inequalities in the borough.

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (RA Ewell Village)**, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, said:**

"The Epsom & Ewell Community Football Programme provides a fantastic opportunity for young people to take part in regular physical activity. Sessions will also provide a positive and supportive environment in which to improve their wellbeing and build their confidence.

"As well as developing football skills, participants will experience the benefits of being part of a team, building friendships, learning to be part of a team and developing a sense of belonging.

"This programme supports our commitment to improving health and wellbeing across the borough by providing free, accessible activities for young people. Alongside the football sessions, participants will also have access to mentoring and guidance to help them develop valuable life skills and make positive life choices.

"I'd like to thank YOUfF for partnering with the council to deliver this programme, and I encourage young people aged 10 to 16, and their parents and carers, to get involved and take advantage of this fantastic opportunity."

Yasha Tobias-Browne, Founder of YOUfF CIC said: "YOUfF was created around the belief that football can be so much more than just a game. It gives us a way to bring young people together, build relationships and create opportunities both on and off the pitch. Through Epsom & Ewell Community Football, we want young people across the borough to have somewhere they can just turn up for FREE, play football, make friends and feel part of something positive. From there they can join the monthly mentoring sessions, where they'll learn life skills, learn about qualifications and pathways that can genuinely help shape their futures. We're really excited to be working with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council to make that happen."

For any questions, email the council's Community Development team: cdevelopment@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

About the Epsom and Ewell Community Football programme (EECF)

- Community Football sessions at Court Recreation Ground:
  - Mondays between 4-5pm – years 6-8 (10-13 yrs) for girls and boys
  - Tuesdays between 4-5pm – years 9-11 (13-16 yrs) for boys
  - Fridays between 4-5pm – years 7-11 (11-16 yrs) for girls
- Monthly lifestyle mentoring sessions will take place every Friday between 5-7pm for participants of Community Football.
- More information: https://www.youff.org.uk/whatwedo

About Young Ones United Football Foundation (YOUfF)

YOUfF is a football and mentoring CiC helping young people engage in education and employment. They work alongside a number of educational organisations and reach disengaged learners using football and mentoring interventions. Football Educational Mentoring | UK | Y.O.U.F.F

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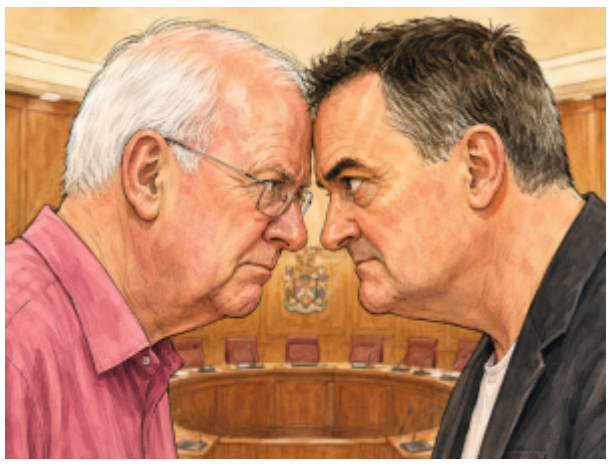
About the EEBC Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2028

The strategy is designed to support all residents, with particular attention given to children and young people, older adults, individuals whose health is affected by broader social and economic factors and those whose personal circumstances may disproportionately increase their vulnerability to poor health and wellbeing. The strategy also includes specific references to those who are disproportionately impacted by isolation, disability, digital exclusion and people with long-term health conditions. (Public Pack) Agenda Document for Community and Wellbeing Committee, 08/07/2025 19:30

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Epsom & Ewell Council refuses to explain complaints disparity

22 August 2026



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has refused to answer detailed questions about the apparent disparity between its vigorous pursuit of a complaint made by Cllr **Neil Dallen** (RA Town) and its handling of complaints made against him.

Epsom and Ewell Times asked a series of specific questions concerning the Council's decision to send a complaint against Labour councillor **Chris Ames** (Labour Court) to a formal hearing, the involvement of Monitoring Officer Piero Ionta, the composition and powers of the proposed Hearing Panel and the progress of complaints against Cllr Dallen.

The Council responded within 45 minutes with a single paragraph.

A Council spokesperson said:

"As a matter of principle, the Council does not comment on allegations or complaints concerning individual elected members. Any such matters are considered in accordance with the Council's standards procedures and applicable confidentiality requirements."

That response did not answer any of EET's questions.

Many did not seek comment on the truth of allegations against individual councillors. They concerned the Council's procedures, constitutional powers, management of possible conflicts and the legal basis for conducting an entire hearing in private.

The refusal leaves unanswered who referred the complaint against Cllr Ames to a hearing, whether that person had authority to do so, whether the Council's Independent Person was consulted and why councillors involved in the original dispute have been selected to judge it.

It also leaves the Council unable or unwilling to demonstrate that complaints against Cllr Dallen are being treated with the same urgency as the complaint he made against an opposition Labour councillor.

The Dallen complaint against Ames

Cllr Dallen complained about Cllr Ames following the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting of 27 January.

Cllr Ames repeatedly questioned the secrecy surrounding an urgent decision making up to £500,000 available for work at the Rainbow Leisure Centre. The decision had been taken by officers in consultation with Cllr Dallen, who supported keeping it confidential and then chaired the meeting at which it was questioned.

Cllr Ames asked who had decided that the public interest in withholding the document outweighed the public interest in its publication.

Cllr Dallen and the Monitoring Officer repeatedly referred instead to the separate procedure for excluding the press and public if confidential information needed to be discussed during the meeting.

Cllr Ames was not asking to discuss the confidential information. His question was why the document had already been withheld and whether the required public-interest assessment had been undertaken.

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The failure to identify and answer that distinction drove the confrontation.

What was really a point of order

The sequence in which the exchange deteriorated is important.

Cllr Ames first questioned Cllr Dallen's understanding of the procedures and attempted to continue asking who had made the confidentiality decision.

Cllr Dallen then brought the discussion to an end, saying:

"It does say in the Constitution that this is the chairman's meeting, and the Chairman has decided there's going to be no further discussion."

Only after that assertion did Cllr Ames call him arrogant:

"I've never known such an arrogant man in all my life, you're completely out of your depth, you are completely out of your depth."

Cllr Dallen then said:

"Councillor Ames, it is my meeting, I am Chairman of this meeting."

Cllr Ames responded by accusing him of "more cover-up and more cover-up".

The sequence does not excuse Cllr Ames's descent into personal criticism. But it contradicts any simplified account in which an unprovoked insult caused the chair to assert his authority. Cllr Dallen had already described the committee as "the chairman's meeting" and announced that questioning would cease.

Underneath the anger was an obvious procedural issue.

Cllr Dallen had participated in approving the urgent decision, supported its confidential treatment and was then chairing the committee while members questioned those actions. The appropriate issue was whether his involvement meant that he should relinquish the chair to the vice-chair for that item, allowing the questions to be considered by someone not personally connected with the decision.

Neither protagonist handled that issue properly.

Cllr Ames should have stopped, expressly raised a point of order and asked the Monitoring Officer for a ruling on whether Cllr Dallen should relinquish the chair. Instead, he personalised the dispute by attacking Cllr Dallen's competence and character.

Cllr Dallen should have recognised that his own involvement was the subject of the questioning. Instead of characterising the committee as his meeting and using his authority to end scrutiny of his own conduct, he should have referred the point to the Monitoring Officer and invited the vice-chair to preside while it was resolved.

The Monitoring Officer should also have recognised the conflict-management question and advised on it. He did not.

The confrontation was therefore not simply a case of one councillor disrespecting a blameless chairman. It resulted from the failure of Cllr Ames, Cllr Dallen and the Council's legal adviser to identify and deal appropriately with the procedural issue sitting in plain sight.

Only one of them is now facing a formal standards hearing.

Ames acknowledges his mistake

Cllr Ames subsequently told EET that he regretted calling Cllr Dallen arrogant. He said he should instead have raised a formal point of order challenging Cllr Dallen's continued chairmanship of the item.

That acknowledgement goes directly to the distinction between the legitimate issue and the inappropriate way in which it was pursued.

Cllr Dallen nevertheless submitted a Code of Conduct complaint on 11 February, alleging disrespect and bullying.

Independent investigators appointed by the Council recommended that Cllr Ames be found to have breached the requirement to treat other councillors with respect.

Their report concluded that his personal criticism, allegations of a cover-up and repeated interruptions went beyond acceptable political debate.

But it also made findings which place his conduct in a more complicated context.

The investigators accepted that Cllr Ames was pursuing "a genuinely held, good faith argument" about transparency and access to information. They found that he was not engaged in a calculated or malicious attack and recognised that political speech attracts enhanced protection.

They expressly declined to decide whether his questions were legally and procedurally correct.

"It is not within the scope of this investigation to comment on any of the concerns highlighted by Councillor Ames during the meeting," the report stated.

The investigation therefore examined how Cllr Ames challenged Cllr Dallen and the Monitoring Officer, but not whether his challenge was substantively justified.

Nor did it investigate whether Cllr Dallen's insistence that it was the chairman's meeting, his termination of questions about a decision in which he had participated or his failure to relinquish the chair contributed to the disorder.

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The report treats respect for “the authority of the Chair” as a consideration against Cllr Ames without examining whether the authority of the chair was itself being exercised properly.

Who referred it to a hearing?

The complaint is now due to be considered by a Standards Hearing Sub-Committee on 22 September.

There is, however, a fundamental uncertainty over how it arrived there.

The Council’s scheme of delegation states:

“Determination of complaints referred by an Investigating Officer regarding alleged breaches of the councillors’ Code of Conduct shall be delegated to Hearing Panels.”

Democratic Services told Cllr Ames:

“The hearing has been convened following receipt of the Investigating Officer’s Report into the Code of Conduct complaint.”

It continued:

“In accordance with the Council’s arrangements, the determination of complaints referred by an Investigating Officer regarding alleged breaches of the Councillors’ Code of Conduct shall be delegated to a Hearing Panel.”

In this case, the Investigating Officer was the external investigator who wrote the report.

The report recommends that Cllr Ames be found in breach. It does not expressly recommend or direct that the complaint be referred to a Hearing Panel.

That distinction may be important.

The Council’s Constitution gives the Monitoring Officer broad authority over Code of Conduct matters except for decisions reserved to a Hearing Panel or another decision-making body. But the specific delegation to Hearing Panels appears to apply to complaints “referred by an Investigating Officer”.

If those words establish a mandatory gateway, the question is whether the external investigator actually made such a referral. The Monitoring Officer cannot necessarily substitute himself for the Investigating Officer or silently supply a procedural step which the Constitution assigns to someone else.

There may be an answer. The Council might argue that a report recommending a finding of breach necessarily constitutes an implied referral. It might identify a separate written decision by the external investigator which has not been included in the report supplied to Cllr Ames.

But the Council has declined to say.

EET asked who made the referral, when it was made, where it was recorded and under which constitutional power. The Council’s blanket response does not identify any decision or decision-maker.

This was not a request to prejudge the allegation. It was a request for proof that the body proposing to judge it had been properly convened.

Report arrived after hearing invitation

The procedural uncertainty is compounded by the Council’s communications with Cllr Ames.

On 7 August, Democratic Services sent an invitation to the proposed Hearing Panel. It did not identify Cllr Ames as the subject member in the body of the invitation.

When he replied that he did not know what the hearing concerned and would not attend, Democratic Services responded:

“For the avoidance of doubt, you are the subject of the Standards Hearing Sub-Committee.”

Cllr Ames says that was the first time he had been told expressly that the complaint was proceeding to a hearing.

He had not received the final investigation report. The investigator subsequently attributed this to a “communication breakdown” between himself and the Council’s legal services team.

Instead of acknowledging that failure and apologising, the Council adopted a tone which implied that Cllr Ames should already have understood the position.

Cllr Ames has asked who decided to refer the case, on whose recommendation and under what policy. No substantive answer is contained in the correspondence supplied to EET.

Monitoring Officer was involved in original dispute

The position of Monitoring Officer Piero Ionta creates a separate concern.

Mr Ionta attended the January meeting and gave advice supporting Cllr Dallen during the disputed exchange. It was the adequacy and correctness of that advice which Cllr Ames was challenging.

The Monitoring Officer also failed to identify and advise upon the underlying question of whether Cllr Dallen should relinquish the chair while his own part in the urgent decision was being questioned.

The independent investigation was subsequently commissioned on the Monitoring Officer’s behalf.

Employing an external investigator does not necessarily remove an apparent conflict if the Monitoring Officer defines the

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remit, supplies the evidence, receives the report, manages the procedure and controls what happens next.

The external report placed the legal and procedural correctness of the Monitoring Officer's advice outside its scope. It then recommended a finding against the councillor who challenged that advice.

EET asked why Mr Ionta did not withdraw from managing the complaint and whether an unconnected monitoring officer from another authority had been considered. These are questions about institutional impartiality, not the merits of the complaint against Cllr Ames.

The Council declined to answer them.

A participant proposed as judge

The proposed panel consists of Cllrs **John Beckett** (RA Auriol), **Alan Williamson** (RA West Ewell) and **Julian Freeman** (LibDem College), with Cllr **Rachel King** (RA Town) named as reserve.

Cllr Beckett is scheduled to chair it.

But Cllr Beckett participated in the January exchange which the panel will be required to assess.

When Cllr Ames questioned why the Rainbow information had been withheld, Cllr Beckett defended confidentiality on the basis that private companies would not want their financial information published. Cllr Dallen immediately told him that he was right.

Cllr Beckett's intervention is quoted in the independent investigation report.

This does not prove that he has predetermined whether Cllr Ames breached the Code. Nevertheless, appointing someone who participated in the underlying dispute to chair the subsequent disciplinary hearing creates an obvious appearance problem.

EET asked whether all panel members had confirmed that they had not predetermined the complaint and why Cllr Beckett had been selected despite his involvement.

The Council declined to answer.

Hearing behind closed doors

The Council has announced in advance that the hearing will not be webcast and that "all evidence shall be received and heard in exempt session".

Some evidence about individual councillors may lawfully require protection. It does not follow that the whole hearing must be secret.

The incident occurred during a public meeting recorded on the Council's webcast. The complaint, the investigation and the proposed hearing concern the conduct of elected representatives performing public duties.

The Council has not identified which statutory exemption justifies excluding the public from the entire proceeding or whether the required public-interest assessment has been undertaken.

It has also declined to identify the sanctions constitutionally available to the panel if it finds a breach.

The Council's response invokes "applicable confidentiality requirements" without identifying what those requirements are or explaining why they prevent answers about jurisdiction, procedure and panel powers.

Complaints against Dallen

The contrast with complaints against Cllr Dallen is increasingly difficult to ignore.

Cllr Ames says that he made a complaint against Cllr Dallen arising from the same January meeting. Among other matters, it challenged Cllr Dallen's use of the chair to prevent continued scrutiny of a decision in which he had participated.

That complaint was rejected without an equivalent external investigation.

A complaint from a member of the public against Cllr Dallen was also reportedly rejected.

Cllr Ames has also made a complaint concerning Cllr Dallen's reported participation in a panel dealing with a complaint against the Chief Executive about the Rainbow Leisure Centre urgent decision.

His case is that Cllr Dallen's direct involvement in approving that decision created a conflict when he subsequently helped consider a complaint about the Chief Executive's account of it.

EET does not suggest that any complaint against Cllr Dallen must be upheld. Different complaints can properly receive different assessments and outcomes.

The issue is whether they have been examined with the same willingness to commit time and external resources as Cllr Dallen's complaint against Cllr Ames.

The Council could have answered that concern by publishing anonymised information about receipt dates, assessment dates, reasons for decisions and outcomes. Instead, it has invoked a blanket principle of silence.

Confidentiality or avoidance?

There are legitimate reasons for protecting information about unresolved complaints. Premature disclosure can damage

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reputations, discourage witnesses and undermine a fair investigation.

But confidentiality should protect the integrity of a process, not conceal whether a proper process exists.

EET did not ask the Council to decide publicly whether either Cllr Ames or Cllr Dallen had breached the Code. It asked:

- who exercised the power to refer the Ames complaint to a hearing;
- where that referral was recorded;
- whether the Independent Person was consulted;
- how the Monitoring Officer's involvement was managed;
- why a participant in the original incident was selected to chair the hearing;
- why the whole hearing was designated private in advance;
- what powers and sanctions the panel possesses; and
- how the Council ensures that complaints are prioritised consistently.

None of those questions required the Council to reveal confidential witness evidence or prejudge an allegation.

A response sent within 45 minutes which simply restates a policy of not commenting creates the impression that the Council did not attempt to distinguish questions about confidential merits from questions about public governance.

Standards or selective discipline?

The case against Cllr Ames is not fabricated. His language became personal and intemperate. An independent investigator has provided reasoned grounds for finding that it breached the Code.

But that is only one side of what happened.

Before Cllr Ames called Cllr Dallen arrogant, the chair had already declared that it was "the chairman's meeting" and terminated further discussion of an issue involving his own earlier decision. After the insult, he intensified the same assertion with the words: "It is my meeting."

Cllr Ames failed to convert his legitimate concern into the formal point of order it should have been. Cllr Dallen failed to recognise that the proper response was to obtain a ruling and consider relinquishing the chair to the vice-chair. The Monitoring Officer failed to guide either of them towards that procedure.

Yet only Cllr Ames's failure has been externally investigated and sent towards a disciplinary hearing.

The legitimacy of any finding against him depends upon the legitimacy of the process used to determine it.

A Council cannot demand meticulous respect for standards from an opposition councillor while treating its own compliance with constitutional gateways, impartial adjudication and transparent decision-making as matters upon which it will say nothing.

Nor can confidentiality be allowed to make unequal treatment impossible to test.

Different complaints can properly have different outcomes. A pattern of different outcomes does not prove political bias. But where a complaint by Cllr Dallen against a Labour opposition councillor receives an external investigation and formal hearing while complaints against Cllr Dallen are rejected or apparently progress no further, the Council must provide enough procedural information to demonstrate that the difference results from evidence and established criteria rather than identity or influence.

The unanswered question is no longer merely whether Cllr Ames spoke disrespectfully to Cllr Dallen. It is whether EEBC has constructed a fair and constitutionally valid process for deciding that question, while applying the same standards to the person whose conduct and chairmanship provoked the dispute.

By refusing to answer, the Council has not protected public confidence in its standards regime. It has deepened the doubts surrounding it.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports

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"It's my meeting": Cllr Dallen stops questions about his role in alleged Rainbow cover-up

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UK’s “first and only” craft museum in Surrey open day

22 August 2026



One of Surrey’s most important buildings, and the UK’s ‘first and only’ craft museum, is to host a special event to show off the vital restoration work going into saving the historic Grade I site.

Wilmer House in Farnham was allowed to fall into disrepair, but in March 2023 benefited from £700,000 in Arts Council funding to carry out essential repairs to its Georgian home in West Street.

It was soon discovered that the problems ran much deeper and a further £700,000 was needed to repair decaying brickwork, collapsing windows, and eroded mortar joints, as well as the visible cracking throughout.

Waverley Borough Council, which has a legal duty to maintain the building, has stepped in to fill the funding gap but, to rally support within the community for the project, is hosting an open day at the Farnham Museum.

Councillor Kika Mirylees, Waverley Borough Council’s community services portfolio holder, said: “Willmer House is a building of enormous historical and cultural significance to Farnham.

“We are delighted to invite residents to join us for what promises to be a fascinating evening of discussion and discovery.

“The event offers a unique opportunity to hear directly from experts involved in heritage conservation and to learn more about the exciting restoration plans for this much-loved landmark.”

The free event is part of the council’s “every brick counts” campaign that offers residents the opportunity to contribute to the preservation.

The council said the building uses gauged brickwork, one of the most expensive building methods often seen on the finest buildings around the world.

The free open event takes place on Monday September 14 2026 and will be hosted jointly by the council and The Farnham Society from 7.30pm to 9pm.

It will feature a panel including representatives from Arts Council England, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, conservation consultant Graham Abrey, historic brick conservator Emma Simpson MBE, and local historian and author Dr Roy Waight.

Simon Bradbury, vice chairman of The Farnham Society, said: “The Farnham Society has been campaigning to preserve Farnham’s heritage since 1911.

“Willmer House, as a Georgian town house, is an important part of that heritage.

“Coming out of the wealth generated from the hop trade, Willmer House is a Grade I listed building, noted in particular for its brickwork, rated as one of the finest examples of Georgian brickwork in the country.”

The event is free to attend, but places should be booked in advance.

Chris Caulfield Local Democracy Reporter

Related reports:

Farnham Museum repairs hitting £2M

Image: Wilmer House, West Street, Farnham (image WBC)

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Options are open at Nescot – GCSE students reassured there's still time to apply

22 August 2026



Students collecting their GCSE results today are being reassured that there is still time to apply for courses at Nescot college in Epsom. Options range from Animal Care and Public Services to Travel & Tourism, Business and IT.

Whether students are keen to help look after the college alpacas as part of the Animal Care course or visit a cruise ship to learn about the industry up close, Nescot has a range of courses which blend practical skills, theory and real-world experiences.

Those who didn't get the results they wanted today are able to get support from Nescot's advice and guidance teams. Most courses start at level 1 and students can re-take their English and Maths GCSEs alongside their new course. Last term, 1,367 students sat Maths and English GCSEs at Nescot, with entries significantly increasing compared to the previous year – a 16% rise in students taking Maths and a 29% rise in those taking English.

Nescot Principal and CEO, Julie Kapsalis MBE said: "Whatever your results today, it's not too late to explore your options and enrol on a course starting in September. Our expert team is on hand to give you personalised support and advice, and we've got a wide range of subjects to get you inspired and excited about your next step."

Katie, Level 3 business student said: "If anyone is thinking of coming to Nescot, I would definitely recommend it. I've really enjoyed my time here and I'm happy with the decision I made."

Nescot is located on a 60-acre campus near Epsom, Surrey. Learning spaces cover a wide range of sectors and include construction workshops, a garage, labs, kitchens, salons, and a farm. There's also a theatre, gym, café, day nursery and a hair and beauty salon.

Students who didn't achieve the grades they were hoping for, or are still not sure what's next can contact Nescot's Admissions and Careers team, who are on hand to help. They can discuss alternative pathways, progression opportunities and the support available to help students reach their goals. Students can call the team on **020 8394 3038** or email **adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk**.

Nescot provides college courses for school leavers and adults, with a wide range of career-focused vocational courses on offer. Located on a 60-acre campus near Epsom, Surrey, Nescot is a modern, exciting, and innovative college, which cares about students and invests in their future. Learning spaces cover a wide range of sectors and include construction workshops, a garage, labs, kitchens, salons, and a farm. There's also a theatre, gym, café, day nursery and a hair and beauty salon. Visit www.nescot.ac.uk to find out more.

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Heathrow expansion consultation deadline

22 August 2026



Night flights in and out of Heathrow could be changed as part of new plans being consulted on – as moves to ramp up to a third runway continue and residents have just two weeks left to have their say.

The government is changing its Heathrow Expansion National Policy, which sets out how a third runway would be built.

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The draft applies only to the northwestern runway project and also takes into consideration road and rail links, economics, as well as the social and environmental impacts related to its proposed expansion.

The deadline to take part is September 1 and questions include whether people support the proposed expansion, their thoughts on the new runway's impact on air quality, noise, climate change mitigation and economic growth.

On night flights, the Government has said that the ban will remain in place – but that it is seeking to change the "definition" through this consultation".

Residents are being asked whether they agree or disagree that the proposed ban should be defined as when a 'plane takes off or lands' instead of 'departure from and arrival to terminal'.

It also asks whether compensation for residents affected by noise breaches is fair. Heathrow is the United Kingdom's only major hub airport and has operated at or near capacity for years.

Those in favour of expanding the airport say it needs the new runway to meet the growth in demand for aviation or risk missing out on opportunities available to businesses, passengers and communities.

Opponents have argued the economic benefits are overstated and the environmental harm too great.

The development consent would cover the Northwest Runway which, if built, would be up to 3,500m and be capable of enabling at least 260,000 additional flights a year. It would also cover any new or reconfigured terminals.

Heidi Alexander, Secretary of State for Transport, at the launch of the consultation: "The government will consider all responses carefully before deciding whether to proceed with designation.

"Any final Heathrow Expansion National Policy Statement will be published, laid before Parliament, and subject to a vote in the House of Commons before having legal effect.

"Heathrow expansion is a decision of national importance. It requires ambition, responsibility and proper scrutiny. This consultation is an important part of that process, and I encourage everyone with an interest to take part."

Chris Caulfield Local Democracy Reporter

S e e :
https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-heathrow-expansion-national-policy-statement-proposed-amendments/draft-heathrow-expansion-national-policy-statement-consultation-on-proposed-amendments

Related reports:

Heathrow 3rd runway green-light by 2029?

Tunnel vision for Heathrow's 3rd runway?

Conditional nod to southern rail link to Heathrow

Heathrow expansion – what it may mean for Epsom

Image: Heathrow shown with a third runway over the M25 (image Heathrow)

Surrey train timetable overhaul pending

22 August 2026



Once in a generation changes aimed at improving rail schedules are being set to be introduced across Surrey but there are concerns about how these may impact level crossing downtime, an MP has said.

South Western Railways (SWR) is set to carry out the first full refresh of train timetables across Surrey for more than 20 years.

The formal public consultation will begin this autumn when the operator publishes its options for the new timetables and will be inviting feedback on the plans.

It said it is doing this because the times and ways people travel has changed,

The new timetable, they say, will better match how passengers travel and come following the widespread introduction of the new, larger and more spacious, Arterio trains across the network.

South Western Railways, which came into public ownership last year, said the new timetable will need to balance journey times, connectivity, train performance and economic value.

Sweeping changes may not be entirely possible however as they need to work within existing infrastructure such as tracks, signals and stations – as well as sharing lines with other passenger and freight services.

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SWR said feedback will play a crucial role in designing the new schedules -whether that is improving reliability or making journeys quicker and more convenient.

Previous efforts to increase rail capacity in Surrey, for example the proposed Airtrack line to Heathrow, would have resulted in level crossing barriers to be down for up to 45 minutes every hour in parts of Runnymede leading to concerns that the need to improve services must be balanced by what is best for the whole community.

Posting to Facebook, the Runnymede and Weybridge MP Ben Spencer said: “Residents need no reminder of the impact railways can have.

“The upcoming timetable review presents both opportunities and risks for rail passengers and the wider community, given the impact rail services have on our level crossings and access across the community. Current rail services are falling well below the standard passengers should expect with thousands of residents frequently delayed by late trains, cancellations, and missed connections.

“But if changes are proposed to deliver improvements in these areas, they could also affect the frequency and duration of level crossing downtimes. It is therefore vital that residents share their views now on what are the most important issues SWR need to address as part of this review ahead of the public consultation being published this year.”

The full refresh of the timetable will be the first major changes across the south and west of England since 2004.

South Western Railway said some technical decisions will need to be balanced, for example between faster journeys from one station and more stops at another.

Consultation here: https://www.southwesterntimetable.com/

Chris Caulfield Local Democracy Reporter

Image: Epsom Railway station. Google

Epsom and Ewell’s rock history goes under the hammer

22 August 2026



Rare posters from Ewell Technical College (today’s NESCOT) concerts featuring Nick Drake, Genesis, Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin are among more than 300 pieces of music memorabilia being auctioned from the collection of industry veteran **Lindsay Brown**.

A remarkable collection chronicling both Ewell’s place in British rock history and one man’s five-decade career in the music industry is to be sold at auction next month.

More than 300 posters, records, autographs, backstage passes and other pieces assembled by Lindsay Brown will go under the hammer at Omega Auctions in Merseyside on Tuesday 15th September.

Mr Brown began his music industry career in 1969 as social secretary at Ewell Technical College – now part of Nescot – where he helped bring emerging and established performers to the college.

The venue hosted concerts by artists including Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, Caravan, Taste, Genesis, Nick Drake and Atomic Rooster. Other celebrated acts associated with the college’s musical heyday included Led Zeppelin, King Crimson and Queen.

“It was a thrilling time to be involved in music,” Mr Brown told the Epsom and Ewell Times. “The great artists of the day were available for all to see. Hendrix, The Doors and Led Zeppelin, to name but a few.

“New artists were emerging all the time, some of which were booked to support at Ewell – Genesis, Black Sabbath, King Crimson, Queen and the now legendary Nick Drake.”

Mr Brown said the college became an important stop on the national concert circuit because successive social secretaries and entertainment committee members were adept both at securing major performers and identifying artists with the potential to become stars.

The college was also well placed near venues including the Toby Jug in Tolworth and the Fox Club in Croydon, with London’s music clubs within easy reach.

“Many managers and agents would offer their talent and new signings for support slots at Ewell,” he recalled.

Among the most valuable lots is an exceptionally rare poster advertising an Ewell Technical College concert by Atomic

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Rooster, Genesis and Nick Drake on 24th January 1970. It is expected to sell for more than £5,000.

Posters featuring Drake are particularly scarce because of his reluctance to perform live. The auction house believes the Ewell poster may be the first example of its kind to reach the open market.

Another lot is a small poster advertising what is described as the final public concert of Drake's career, held at Ewell Technical College on 25th June 1970. It has an estimated value of more than £2,000.

A red-and-gold poster by artist David Arnott, produced for a college performance by Black Sabbath supporting Caravan, is expected to fetch more than £1,000. An Arnott poster for Deep Purple's appearance at Ewell Tech on 18th April 1970 is being offered together with a ticket from the concert.

A framed 1968 Ewell Technical College poster originally advertising The Yardbirds is also expected to attract considerable interest. Following changes to the group, the concert instead featured an early incarnation of Led Zeppelin before a reported audience of just 150 people. The poster is estimated to sell for more than £2,000.

Mr Brown retains especially fond memories of concerts by Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Taste, although he said Caravan – which appeared at Ewell on several occasions – was the venue's most successful act.

"Seeing a very early King Crimson concert was a real privilege," he added.

After leaving Ewell Tech, Mr Brown went on to hold senior positions at Red Bus, MAM, Rock Exchange, Polydor and Eagle Rock Entertainment. As managing director of Eagle Rock, he signed The Rolling Stones for visual rights.

Across his career he worked with artists including Kate Bush, Elvis Costello, Barclay James Harvest, Dr Feelgood, 10cc, The Cure, Van Morrison, Björk, Alice Cooper, Queen, Jeff Beck and Simple Minds.

The wider collection reflects those associations. It includes authenticated Beatles autographs expected to fetch more than £3,000; a Fender Telecaster signed by Keith Richards; Rolling Stones autographs including that of Brian Jones; a 1969 Woodstock ticket; and Kate Bush tour posters, clothing, passes and merchandise.

A Queen collection relating to the band's 1976 Hyde Park concert includes autographs, a framed show flyer and a map of the band's route formerly owned by their driver. It is valued at more than £3,000.

Also for sale is a three-foot-high poster for the New York Dolls' first UK performance at the Rainbow Room at Biba in November 1973 – a concert attended by figures who would later help shape British punk.

A 1969 flyer for the Toby Jug Blues Club in Tolworth features Led Zeppelin's name misspelt and is valued at more than £500.

Although Mr Brown is parting with most of the collection, he has retained six particularly personal pieces. These include a poster from his farewell Caravan show at Ewell in 1970, a set of Rolling Stones autographs, a Kate Bush tour poster, a Barclay James Harvest gold disc and sales plaque, and a poster personally dedicated to him by Jeff Beck.

"It's sad to see the collection go, but I am thrilled by the continued worldwide interest in Ewell Tech's heritage, told through its posters, many of which were designed by the Redhill artist David Arnott," he said.

"Knowing these posters are going to good homes is very gratifying and lets the story continue to survive."

He believes collectors have an important role in protecting evidence of performances and events which could otherwise disappear from public memory.

"Without people keeping what might seem at the time inconsequential – tickets, stubs, flyers and so on – many of these shows would be completely forgotten in future years."

The collection, entitled "Time Has Told Me – 50 Years in Music", will be auctioned by Omega Auctions on Tuesday 15th September, with a public preview on Monday 14th September. The catalogue and bidding details are available from www.omegaauctions.co.uk.

1968 – 1971 Ewell Tech. Gig List – click here

Julie Kapsalis, CEO of NESCOT, responded to this story and told the Epsom and Ewell Times: "Music continues to be an important part of Nescot. The Entitled Sons played a gig at the college last year and Bazil Meade ran a masterclass on gospel music. Our music department also trains young people to enter the sector and this year they showcased their talents on the community stage at The Epsom Derby Festival. We now have a DJ club and college bands who regularly perform at college and external venues."

Lionel Blackman

Epsom and Ewell acknowledges with thanks the main contributions and research undertaken by Faye Blaylock of www.jvpublicity.com for this article

Photo: The band Barclay James Harvest with Lindsay Brown: Left to right: Wooly Wolstenholme, John Lees, Lindsay Brown, Les Holroyd, Mel Pritchard

Related report:

When the Rolling Stones rolled into Epsom — twice

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Patient injuries quadruple in Surrey's largest mental health trust area

22 August 2026



This article has been amended to include statistics relating to the total number of patient restraint incidents across the trust in the relevant timeframes, and to clarify this number is what the trust's quote (par 7) refers to.

The number of patient injuries at Surrey's largest mental health trust have risen since the opening of its new inpatient facility last year.

Data obtained through a freedom of information (FOI) request to Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SABP) found that the number of patient injuries across the county had more than quadrupled in the space of two years.

In the 2023/24 financial year, 92 service user injuries were reported across the trust, which shot up to 365 incidents in 2024/25 and 431 in 2025/26 – meaning more than one incident per day on average was reported in the most recent complete financial year.

A total of 141 incidents had been reported in the ongoing 2026/27 financial year at the time of the FOI response.

In addition, the number of incidents in which patients were restrained also leapt to a five year high in the 2025/26 year. A total 1,287 incidents were recorded, up from 826 the previous year.

An SABP spokesperson stressed that not all patient injuries reported were related to restraint incidents. "The use of restrictive practice is a very complex area and reducing restrictive practices is a trust priority," they said.

The spokesperson told the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) that the sharp rise in reported restraint incidents was "due to the opening of Silverwood's inpatient services last year".

Silverwood, located in Chertsey, began admitting patients in February 2025 and was designed to help Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's work to care for acutely mentally ill people.

The facility boasts 64 ensuite bedrooms across four wards, and was established to replace the old Abraham Cowley Unit (ACU).

However, the trust's FOI response did not declare the number of staff injuries in this same time period, as it would have exceeded the cost limit on requests as each record would have to be reviewed manually.

The FOI response also revealed major changes in the trust's use of restraint against acutely ill patients, with the reported number of "prone" restraints – where a patient is forced face down on the ground – dropping to zero in compliance with recent laws.

The Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 was brought in to improve transparency in the use of such force in restraining patients, and contains guidance against the use of prone restraints.

Better known as Seni's Law, it was implemented following the death of Olaseni "Seni" Lewis, who died in 2010 after being restrained at Bethlem Royal Hospital in Bromley.

While 20 prone restraint incidents were reported at the trust in the 2021/22 financial year, that number dropped into single figures for the following few years before reaching zero in 2025/26.

At the same time, the reported use of chemical restraints has risen substantially, with this jumping from 11 in 2022/23 to 830 in 2025/26 – and a further 333 in 2026/27 so far.

The SABP spokesperson added: "We record all cases when restrictive interventions are used in line with Seni's Law, officially the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act – which was fully introduced in 2022.

"It is also important to note that the number of recorded injuries may be caused by many reasons, the majority of which are not related to restraints."

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

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Sabp Silverwood (Credit: Google Maps)

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Discover the magic of Ukraine in Epsom

22 August 2026



Looking for a summer holiday family day out? Discover the magic of Ukraine in Epsom

Families looking for something different to do this summer holiday are invited to Epsom Picturehouse on Monday 24 August for an afternoon of Ukrainian music, crafts and film, marking Ukrainian Independence Day.

From 4.30pm, visitors can enjoy live Ukrainian music and meet Ukrainian craft makers displaying their work at the cinema, before a short introduction and a 5pm screening of *Mavka: The Forest Song*. Every culture has stories that bring families together. Inspired by Ukrainian mythology and folklore, *Mavka: The Forest Song* brings one of those stories to the big screen through a colourful animated adventure. Rooted in Ukrainian culture, its themes of love, belonging, courage and protecting the natural world have helped the film connect with audiences far beyond Ukraine.

With the event falling during the school summer holidays, it's a great day out for families looking for something a little different. Children's tickets at Epsom Picturehouse are just £3 throughout the summer, with adult tickets from £9.99, while the music and crafts before the screening add even more to the afternoon.

The film will be shown in English, making it as inclusive as possible and giving families from across the community the chance to enjoy the story and discover Ukrainian culture together.

Joe Stroud, Marketing Manager at Epsom Picturehouse, said:

"Every culture has stories that bring families together, and Mavka is a brilliant example of that. It's rooted in Ukrainian folklore, but its themes of love, belonging, courage and protecting the natural world are universal. It's colourful, funny and visually spectacular too, so you don't need to know anything about Ukrainian folklore to fall in love with it. That makes it a perfect film for celebrating Ukrainian culture while bringing the whole community together."

Organised with Surrey Stands with Ukraine, with support from Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network, the event is open to everyone and will bring together Epsom's Ukrainian and wider local community for a colourful, family-friendly celebration.

The celebration takes place at Epsom Picturehouse, Derby Square, Epsom, on Monday 24 August 2026, with Ukrainian music and crafts from 4.30pm and *Mavka: The Forest Song* at 5pm.

Epsom and Ewell FC's blessed hat-trick advances team to next round

22 August 2026



Horsham YM 1–5 Epsom & Ewell FC. 15th August – Herbert Direct Stadium – The Isuzu FA Vase First Round Qualifying

Epsom & Ewell marched into the next round of the FA Vase with an emphatic 5–1 victory away to Horsham YM.

A commanding second-half display, a hat-trick from Blessing Hombessa and standout performances across the pitch sent the Salts through in style.

Epsom & Ewell set the tone early with some sharp attacking play. Courtney Swaby came closest during the opening

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exchanges, striking the upright at the end of a flowing move.

Moments later, skipper Brendan Murphy-McVey appeared to have put the Salts ahead directly from a corner, only for the referee to disallow the goal for a push inside the penalty area.

The pressure finally told in the 34th minute when Swaby finished confidently to give Epsom & Ewell a deserved lead, followed by his trademark celebration.

However, just as the Salts looked set to take their advantage into the interval, a slip from Callum Wilson allowed Jack Knight to equalise for Horsham YM on the stroke of half-time.

The Salts emerged with renewed purpose and regained the lead within two minutes of the restart. Jason Bloor produced a superb solo run, weaving his way through the Horsham defence before firing past the goalkeeper to make it 2–1.

Swaby almost added another in the 65th minute, but for the second time in the match he was denied by the woodwork.

Manager Max Johnson introduced fresh legs as the game entered its closing stages. On 77 minutes, Frankie Lynn came on for his debut alongside Luke Miller and Kionte Waul, replacing Daniel Conteh, Jason Bloor and Luis Oliveira.

The changes helped the Salts maintain their momentum and, in the 81st minute, Blessing Hombessa struck to extend the lead to 3–1.

A minute later, Toby Young and Ore Allen were introduced in place of Murphy-McVey and Swaby as Epsom & Ewell continued to press.

Miller then came close to adding a fourth, beating the goalkeeper only to see his effort crash against the crossbar.

Wilson received a yellow card in the second minute of stoppage time, but the closing stages belonged to Hombessa. He struck twice more in added time, completing his hat-trick with a composed finish in the 95th minute and sealing an emphatic 5–1 victory.

A ruthless second-half performance, clinical finishing and the impact of the substitutes ensured the Salts progressed comfortably to the next round.

Epsom & Ewell will now host Bearsted on Saturday 12th September after the Kent side secured its place in the next round with a 4–1 victory over Redhill.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

Does Epsom and Ewell have the geo-thermal energy to solve our pothole problems?

22 August 2026



Could geothermal roads help prevent potholes before they form? Surrey trial aims to find out.

The UK’s pothole problem could one day be tackled from beneath the road surface, as researchers at the University of Surrey launch a pioneering trial that uses heat stored underground to keep roads cooler in summer, warmer in winter and less prone to damage.

The Thermo-active Roads for Heat Harvesting and Pavement Temperature Regulation project will test whether a ground-source heating and cooling system can regulate road temperatures throughout the year – helping roads better withstand increasingly extreme weather while reducing the carbon footprint of highway maintenance, improving safety and reducing the inconvenience of roadworks.

The system works by embedding a network of heat exchange pipes beneath the road surface, running through both the asphalt and the layers below. During summer, water circulating through the pipes absorbs heat from the asphalt and transfers it to a 100-metre-deep borehole, where it is stored underground. In winter, that heat is circulated back through the pipes to warm the road surface, helping to prevent ice from forming and reducing the freeze-thaw cycles that contribute to potholes.

Installation has already begun in the Senate House car park on the University’s Stag Hill campus, with the first phase of the trial underway and the second phase starting in mid-August 2026. Once operational, researchers will monitor the system over a number of years using underground sensors to assess how effectively it regulates road temperatures.

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Project lead, Dr Benyi Cao, who is a Senior Lecturer in Geotechnical Engineering at the University of Surrey and Royal Academy of Engineering Research Fellow, said:

"Rather than reacting to potholes after they've formed, we're asking how we can prevent them in the first place. Potholes are more than an inconvenience – they are a safety hazard; they disrupt journeys and are costly to repair. Our project will explore whether geothermal technology can help prevent that damage from happening at scale."

Unlike many emerging infrastructure technologies, Surrey's project uses mature, readily available materials, including standard plastic pipework and water circulation pumps, making future deployment both practical and affordable.

Previous studies in Europe and the United States have explored similar concepts, but Surrey's project will provide detailed real-world evidence of how the technology performs in UK conditions.

As well as monitoring the road itself, the team will measure air temperatures above the test section to investigate whether cooler pavements could also reduce surrounding air temperatures during periods of extreme heat.

Dr Nikolas Makasis, Lecturer in Civil Engineering at the University of Surrey and project co-investigator, said:

"This trial will give us real-world evidence of how geothermal road systems perform outside the laboratory. If the results are promising, road authorities will have the evidence they need to deploy this technology to create longer-lasting roads, reduce maintenance costs and make transport infrastructure more resilient to a changing climate."

The project is funded through Dr Benyi Cao's Royal Academy of Engineering Research Fellowship, with additional support from Surrey County Council's Lane Rental Scheme.

Surrey University

Image: Construction underway outside Senate House, University of Surrey. Image credit: University of Surrey.

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Valerie Flanagan

22 August 2026



Valerie Flanagan passed away suddenly at home on Friday 17 July 2026.

She will be dearly missed by her Daughter Louise, Son in Law Paul, Grandchildren Abi & Oli, Grandson in Law Chris, Grandaughter in Law Danielle and Great Grandchildren Asher & Aurelia.

Also, extended family in the UK & New Zealand.

The funeral will take place at Randall's Park Crematorium, Leatherhead on Tuesday 1 September 2026 at 11.45, followed by refreshments at The Cricketers Pub, Epsom.

Family flowers only please. In lieu of flowers Valerie's friends may wish to make a small donation to a charity of their choice.

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Dirty water double: sewage spills and blocked drains put Epsom and Ewell under pressure

22 August 2026



Epsom and Ewell recorded the longest duration of storm-overflow discharges among seven constituencies examined in a new study of sewage spills across parts of South London and Surrey.

Research undertaken by Purley-based Drainage & Plumbing Ltd using official Environment Agency data identified 55 spills lasting a combined 801 hours during 2025 — equivalent to more than 33 days of continuous discharge.

Almost all the constituency's total came from the storm overflow at Leatherhead Wastewater Treatment Works, which discharged into the River Mole 49 times for a combined 787 hours. A further four spills, lasting 12 hours, were recorded at the Manor Drive storm tanks discharging into the Hogsmill.

The geographical label refers to the parliamentary constituency in which an overflow is located and should not be confused with the boundaries of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

Epsom and Ewell did not have the greatest number of spills in the study. Mitcham and Morden recorded 125 and Reigate and Redhill 61. However, their combined discharge durations were considerably shorter, at 204 and 556 hours respectively.

Across all seven constituencies covered by the research, 250 spills lasting 1,578 hours were recorded during 2025. Epsom and Ewell therefore accounted for just over half of the total discharge time in the study.

The figures came from the Environment Agency's Event Duration Monitoring returns. These record how often a monitored storm overflow operates and for how long, but not the volume of sewage released.

Storm overflows are intended to act as safety valves when rainwater and wastewater threaten to overwhelm combined sewer systems. They discharge diluted untreated sewage into rivers and other waterways to reduce the risk of sewage backing up into homes. Their frequency and duration have, however, become the subject of growing public and regulatory concern.

Flooding reaches Epsom homes and gardens

The same Drainage & Plumbing Ltd investigation examined Thames Water's sewer-flooding register for the three financial years from 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Across the Epsom postcode districts, it identified 24 recorded incidents: 12 in KT19, seven in KT18 and five in KT17. Of the 420 incidents identified across all the areas examined, about two-thirds involved external flooding in gardens or yards, while just under one in five reached inside a home or business.

The information was obtained by the company under the Environmental Information Regulations. Thames Water said it did not yet hold a completed register identifying properties formally considered to be at risk of sewer flooding.

The flooding register only covers incidents attributed to Thames Water's sewer network. It does not include flooding from

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private drains, burst water mains or surface water which never entered a sewer.

553 highway drainage reports

A separate investigation by the company found that Surrey County Council received 553 reports concerning blocked gullies, blocked highway drains or drainage flooding in Epsom and Ewell during the same three-year period.

Reports increased from 156 in 2022/23 to 229 in 2023/24 before falling to 168 in 2024/25. The latest figure was therefore 7.7 per cent higher than in the first year, although substantially below the intervening peak.

The borough accounted for three per cent of the 18,463 reports recorded across Surrey. Epsom itself generated 288 reports: 70 in 2022/23, 116 the following year and 102 in 2024/25.

The countywide information was obtained from Surrey County Council through a Freedom of Information request submitted by Nima Fazlipour, director of Drainage & Plumbing Ltd. The company said it checked the 18,463 individual records against the Council's annual and electoral-division summaries.

The figures count reports made by members of the public rather than confirmed blockages. They do not show how many reports concerned the same problem, how many resulted in repair work or how quickly the Council responded. Surrey's released spreadsheets did not include gully-cleaning totals or dates on which cases were resolved.

A road gully is the grated opening beside a kerb which carries rainwater away from the highway. Its underground pot can become filled with silt, fallen leaves and road debris, leaving water standing on the carriageway after rain.

Highway gullies are generally maintained by the county council, while public sewers are the responsibility of Thames Water. Drains within private property boundaries ordinarily fall to the property owner.

MP says infrastructure is failing

Helen Maguire, Liberal Democrat MP for Epsom and Ewell, has accused Thames Water of failing to invest sufficiently in its ageing infrastructure.

Her intervention came as Thames Water customers remained subject to a hosepipe ban introduced following prolonged dry weather, heatwaves, low rainfall and unusually high demand.

Figures analysed by the House of Commons Library and the Liberal Democrats indicate that Thames Water lost an average of 569.1 million litres of treated water a day through leaks during 2024/25. That is equivalent to approximately 228 Olympic-sized swimming pools every day.

Those leakage figures apply across Thames Water's network and should not be read as losses occurring within Epsom and Ewell alone. They nevertheless add to concerns about the resilience of the company's infrastructure as it attempts to manage both periods of drought and the overloading of sewers during heavy rainfall.

Ms Maguire said she had written to Thames Water seeking a meeting about its preparations for increasingly extreme weather and how it intends to make the water network more resilient.

She said: "Thames Water needs to urgently get its house in order. They have got away with their negligent handling of our water infrastructure for far too long. It's simply not good enough.

"Whilst residents in Epsom and Ewell have to face a hosepipe ban as well as continuing increasing bills, Thames Water continues to fail. Thames Water must stop rewarding their unaccountable bosses with bonuses and start investing in fixing their infrastructure so we can avoid this happening time after time."

Ms Maguire also called for customer payments to be reinvested in stopping leaks and preventing sewage discharges, supporting her party's proposal for water companies to be placed under a mutual ownership model.

The Government has already announced that Ofwat will be abolished and its functions combined with water-related responsibilities currently divided between the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Drinking Water Inspectorate. The existing regulators retain their legal powers until the new regulator is established.

Different drains, common concern

The highway gully, sewage overflow, sewer-flooding and clean-water leakage figures describe different parts of the water and drainage system and should not be treated as one dataset.

Taken together, however, they illustrate the competing pressures placed on local infrastructure: too little available water during prolonged dry weather, leakage from the supply network, road flooding when surface drainage becomes blocked and sewage discharges when combined sewers are overwhelmed.

Drainage & Plumbing Ltd brought its two investigations to the attention of the Epsom and Ewell Times. The company, based in Brighton Road, Purley, provides commercial drainage services across Surrey and South London.

EET acknowledges the public-interest work of Mr Fazlipour and the company in obtaining, checking and publishing the official information.

The full datasets and methodology can be examined in the company's reports on sewage spills and sewer flooding and blocked highway gullies.

Sam Jones – Reporter



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Image: River Mole in Leatherhead – geograph.org.uk Nigel Cox

Surrey help with school uniform costs

22 August 2026



Families experiencing financial hardship across Surrey will receive additional support with the cost of sending their children back to school this year, thanks to funding from Surrey County Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund.

Surrey County Council has awarded over £100k to local children's charity Stripey Stork to expand its already successful School Days scheme, helping more families access essential school items including non-branded uniform items, shoes, trainers, PE kits and school bags. This is additional funding to complement the many donations already made by local families, schools/PTAs and communities, that enable continued support throughout the school year by Stripey Stork.

The funding comes from the £7.1 million UK Government-funded Crisis and Resilience Fund, which is designed to help residents facing immediate financial difficulties and build longer-term resilience programmes. Families will be able to access this support via the Crisis Payments scheme and through existing trusted referral networks including schools, social workers, health visitors, Citizens Advice, domestic abuse services and local charities.

Back-to-school costs can place significant pressure on household budgets, particularly for families already struggling with the rising cost of living. The expanded scheme will ensure that more children can start the new school year with the clothing and equipment they need to learn and thrive.

In 2025, Stripey Stork supported 7,503 children from 4,116 Surrey families via it's Schools Days programme.

This funding will help Stripey Stork fill the gaps in the good quality pre-loved school items donated by the community, ensuring every child receives a complete bundle of everything they need to start the school year. It also provides the infrastructure needed to collect, store, sort, pack and distribute these items efficiently, enabling the charity to support around 8,500 children across Surrey over the next 12 months.

Nicola Dawes Deputy Lieutenant, Chief Executive at Stripey Stork said: "Every child deserves to arrive at school feeling confident, included and ready to learn. Our School Days programme is one of the most valued services we provide because we see the difference it makes, not just to children but to whole families.

"We know from our partners that without this support many families would simply go without essential school items or be forced into debt to buy them. Three quarters told us the support has a significant impact on children's wellbeing and sense of inclusion, while more than 80% said it improves school engagement and attendance. Perhaps most importantly, over 90% said it reduces the stress and worry parents are carrying.

"We're grateful to Surrey County Council for this investment. Combined with the generosity of our local community, who donate good quality pre-loved items each year, this funding means we can make sure thousands more children across Surrey have the practical items they need to attend school with confidence."

Councillor Mark Nuti, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Health and Communities said: "By investing over £100k through the Crisis and Resilience Fund, we're helping Stripey Stork reach even more families across Surrey with practical support at a time when it is needed most. This partnership is making a tangible difference to children and young people, helping ensure they have the essentials they need to succeed at school while easing the burden on household budgets.

"The Crisis and Resilience Fund is about much more than responding to immediate need. This three-year funding allows us to work with our voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise partners to develop long-term support programmes that help residents become more financially resilient, reduce reliance on crisis services and achieve their full potential. Together, we are creating opportunities for people to regain stability, independence and to thrive in the future."

About the Crisis and Resilience Fund

The Crisis and Resilience Fund is a 3 year funded programme funded by the UK Government and currently administered by Surrey County Council. It supports residents facing financial hardship by providing immediate crisis assistance while also helping individuals and families build longer-term resilience and independence. The fund works through partnerships with local voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to deliver targeted support, including food, household essentials, energy assistance, financial advice. Crisis and Resilience Fund – Surrey County Council

Surrey County Council

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SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Free bus travel is a good idea; so why does it stop at 15?

22 August 2026



Dear Editor,

This August, children aged five to 15 can travel free on local buses across England. I think that's genuinely good. It makes days out cheaper, helps children get to summer activities, and might persuade a few families to leave the car at home.

But I can't quite work out why it stops at 15. And where I live, age isn't really what decides the price of a bus seat anyway.

I'm 16. I live in Epsom and travel to school in Wallington, which is in the London Borough of Sutton. I have a 16+ Zip Oyster photocard. Going to school in London, it turns out, makes no difference at all; the rule follows where you sleep, not where you study.

So here is what the same card is worth to different people. If you're 16 and live in a London borough, it gives you free bus travel. If you're 16 and live outside London, as I do, it gives you half the adult fare – about 88p a journey. And if you're 16 and have never applied for one, you tap a contactless card and pay the full £1.75.

Three 16-year-olds. Same bus, same stop. One pays nothing, one pays 88p, one pays £1.75.

Nothing in that reflects need, or distance, or what anyone's family earns. It reflects which side of the Greater London boundary you sleep on, and whether somebody remembered to tell you the card exists.

That second part bothers me most, because it's the easiest thing to fix. Some students will inevitably miss out simply because nobody has explained the system clearly enough. A benefit that depends on knowing it exists ends up helping the organised rather than the people who need it.

And the cost starts to matter more at 16 than it did at 15. At 15, most journeys are still with your family. At 16 you're travelling on your own to sixth form, a Saturday job, or a work experience placement you were told to arrange yourself. Nobody tells you that you can't apply for those things. On paper they're open to everyone. But one student can afford the journey every week and another quietly decides they can't, and from the outside that never looks like unfairness at all.

I should admit I'm arguing against my own convenience here. I have the card, and half fare is not a hardship. I'd still rather Epsom's 16-year-olds got what Sutton's get. The Greater London boundary was drawn to decide who administers what; it was never meant to decide which teenager can afford to get to an interview in Croydon. TfL buses cross it every twenty minutes.

Surrey does have its own scheme, the LINK card, which halves fares for under-20s. It's useful, it's badly advertised, and it doesn't work on TfL services – which are the buses that actually serve this town.

Of course the government has to draw a line somewhere, and August's offer was aimed at families with younger children. That's fair. Public money isn't unlimited. But 15 isn't an obvious place to stop, and a postcode isn't a principle at all.

Two things would help. Extend the August offer to everyone under 18; we're legally required to be in education or training, and most of us earn very little. And make sure every pupil in Epsom and Ewell hears about both the 16+ Zip and the LINK card before their sixteenth birthday, with a plain list of what each one covers.

Free buses this August are a good idea. I just don't think a birthday, a boundary and a form should decide who keeps them.

Yours faithfully,

Emad Rehman
Aged 16, Epsom, student at Wilson's School, Wallington

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Reigate and Banstead goes a bit greener

22 August 2026



The Green Party has won a crucial by-election in Reigate and Banstead that could impact the balance of power on the council.

Nick Abear, who also serves on East Surrey Shadow Council, won the ward of Hooley, Merstham and Netherne following yesterday's election.

This by-election was called following the death of Councillor Mus Tary, who sadly passed away in June.

Councillor Abear told the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS): "I'm absolutely thrilled and delighted to have been elected in the Merstham, Hooley and Netherne by-election.

"Thank you to everyone who put their trust in me, and to the many volunteers who gave up their time to help us.

"I look forward to building on the excellent work that Shasha Khan and Joel Gabriel have been doing in the ward, and to working hard for all our residents over the coming months."

The result represents a Green gain from the Conservative Party at a time when the Tories have held a slender balance of power in Reigate and Banstead.

The Greens will now have a total of 15 seats on the council against the Conservatives 16, while the Green and Redhill Independent group combined matches the Tories' total.

In 2022, the full council election saw the Conservatives lose five seats, with the council remaining under no overall control.

However, this council will cease to exist in April, when the current district councils are abolished along with Surrey County Council to make way for the new West and East Surrey Councils.

Fellow Green ward councillor Shasha Khan told the LDRS: "I'm thrilled for Nick to be joining Joel and me to serve everyone in our ward.

"In 2023, I got 37.4 per cent. In 2024 Joel got 38.4 per cent, and in 2026 Nick has won with 41.8 per cent.

"This shows that where Greens get elected, they work hard for the community, resulting in voters wanting more."

The full results are as follows:

- Nick Abear (Green Party) 42%
- Johnny Wolf (Reform UK) 24%
- Jon Mears (Conservative) 20%
- Tina Siobhan Cohen (Liberal Democrats) 7%
- Catherine Mary Drapans (Labour) 6%

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

Nick With Partner And Green Councillors (Credit: Joel Gabriel)

Epsom Racecourse: Preview and Tips for Friday's Six-Race Meeting

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Racing returns to Epsom Racecourse this Friday with a six-race meeting, consisting of five handicaps and a fillies' novice race.

Read on for a preview of and tips for the Epsom card, brought to you by BOYLE Sports, who have all the ***horse racing odds****.*

We begin with a seven-furlong nursery handicap (14.48). Oliver Cole's Greek Symphony and Andrew Balding's Wise And Wonderful are the only runners to have previously won a race, but the former looks more competitive on this occasion having shown he can still step up at this mark. Sequel Star could be promising on her handicap debut, and might appreciate the step up in trip as well, but she is totally unproven on a testing track like Epsom.

Next is a seven-furlong two-year-old fillies' novice (15.23). Tiora Time is the only previous winner in the field, having won nicely last time out at Doncaster, and she carries a four-pound penalty here. Tansy Lane has been going quite well in maidens so far and may stand a decent chance here, and she looks to be the only to throw Tiora Time a question.

Race three is a six-furlong handicap (16.00). Modern Times won last time out and has had a modest rise in the weights as a result. He could factor again, but others make appeal too. Ruby's Profit is down to an attractive mark now and is well drawn, while Sir Garfield is a consistent sort who went well at Goodwood latterly and should run a big race here under Jason Hart.

A 10-furlong handicap follows (16.38). All About George went well last time at Bath on this mark, while Celtic Spirit has been consistently good this term and enjoyed the step back up in trip last time at Lingfield. Haveagobeau beat him that day but looks to be on too tough a mark to win this time.

Second to last is an extended mile handicap (17.13). Sir Mark Prescott's Chantelle is shaping up as a consistently good filly who gets a result more often than not. She has won two of her four career starts and has shown to handle this track. She is lightly raced this season and ought to be able to win this now, if progressing from a second over course and distance last time. Trio was the one to beat her last time, though, and may throw another question.

Last of all is a seven-furlong handicap (17.48). Ice Cube and Eyes Front both won their latest starts, with both looking competitive once again. A La Noche makes his handicap debut and returns to the track for the first time in nearly three years, so he is worth watching but unlikely to win here. Freddie's Star might go well in first-time blinkers. Red Mirage is more consistent, though, and coil prevail here.

Epsom selections – Friday:

14.48 – Greek Symphony

15.23 – Tansy Lane

16.00 – Sir Garfield

16.38 – Celtic Spirit

17.13 – Chantelle

17.48 – Red Mirage

Image: Horses racing Image: Credit Paul. CC BY 2.0

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