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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Get That Drain Unblocked in Epsom & Ewell – Trusted Local Drainage Specialists

8 January 2026



Blocked drains are one of the most common and disruptive problems faced by homeowners and businesses in Epsom and Ewell. What often starts as a slow-draining sink or unpleasant smell can quickly turn into an overflowing drain if left untreated. Acting early is usually the best way to prevent further damage and unnecessary costs.

Drainage & Plumbing Ltd is a local drainage company providing professional drain unblocking services across Epsom, Ewell and nearby areas. Working regularly within the community, the team understands the drainage challenges common in the area, particularly in older properties where pipework has been in place for many years.

The company focuses on thorough, long-lasting solutions rather than temporary fixes. Blockages caused by grease, debris or everyday waste are cleared properly using professional equipment, helping restore normal flow and reduce the likelihood of repeat issues. Whether the problem affects a kitchen sink, toilet or external drainage system, work is carried out efficiently and with minimal disruption.

Reliability and transparency are key priorities. The business places strong emphasis on clear communication, punctual attendance and fair pricing. Customers are given honest advice based on the condition of their drains, allowing them to make informed decisions without pressure or unnecessary upselling.

Drainage issues can affect residential homes, rental properties and local businesses throughout Epsom and Ewell. Having access to a dependable local drainage specialist can make a significant difference when problems arise, especially when quick action helps prevent further disruption.

By choosing a local service, residents are also supporting a business that contributes to the local economy and community. The company continues to build its reputation in Epsom & Ewell through repeat customers and word-of-mouth recommendations.

If you are experiencing a drainage problem or would like professional advice, local help is available from a team that understands the area and its infrastructure.

Drainage & Plumbing Ltd
Local drainage specialists serving Epsom & Ewell
Call: 07771 200075
Website: drainage-plumbing.co.uk

Sponsored article

Warm places to go to in Epsom and Ewell

8 January 2026



Christ Church Ewell

Address: Cheam Road, Ewell, KT17 1AD

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Opening Times: Wednesday from 10am to 1pm

Services offered: Hot drinks; meals; social activities

Accessibility: Ramps available for disabled access and disabled toilet

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Epsom Methodist Church

Address: Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5AQ

Opening Hours: Wednesday from 10am to 6pm

Services offered: Hot drinks; meals; craft activities and social activities;

Accessibility: Fully accessible

King's Church, Epsom

Address: Off Gibraltar Crescent, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 9BU

Opening Hours: Friday from 6pm to 8pm

Services Offered: Hot drinks; Meals; Craft activities; Social activities;

Accessibility: Fully accessible.

Love Me Love My Mind

Address: St Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom, KT19 8HA

Opening Times: Monday from 1pm to 7pm

Services Offered: Meals; Hot drinks; Craft activities; Physical activities; Social activities; Meals.

Accessibility: Wheelchair accessible; Disabled Toilet

St Mary the Virgin, Ewell

Address: Ewell Village Hall, London Road, Ewell, KT17 2AY

Opening Times: Thursday from 12pm to 2pm

Services Offered: Hot drinks; Meals; Social activities; Food bank/ Food Club / Community Fridge.

Accessibility: Accessible toilet available.

Epsom Library

Address: 6 Epsom Square, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8AG

Opening Times:

- Monday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Tuesday : 9.30am to 7pm
- Wednesday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Thursday: 9.30am to 7pm
- Friday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Saturday: 9.30am to 5pm
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Epsom Library Webpage

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Ewell Court Library

Address: Ewell Court Community Library, Ewell Court House, Lakehurst Road, Ewell, Surrey KT19 0EB

Opening Times:

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 10am to 5pm
- Wednesday: 10am to 5pm
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Ewell Court Community Library Webpage

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Ewell Library

Address: Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT17 1UF

Opening Times: Tuesday to Saturday from 9:30am to 5pm

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks via a voucher scheme with the onsite cafe, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Ewell Library Webpage

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Stoneleigh Library

Address: 1 Stoneleigh Broadway, Stoneleigh, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 2JA

Opening Times:

- Monday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Tuesday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 10am to 1pm
- Friday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm;
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Stoneleigh Library Webpage

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Tattenhams Library

Address: Tattenhams Community Library, Tattenham Crescent, Epsom Downs, Epsom, Surrey KT18 5NU

Opening Times:

- Monday: 10am to 1pm
- Tuesday: 10am to 1pm
- Wednesday: 10am to 1pm
- Thursday: 10am to 4pm
- Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm
- Sunday: Closed

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Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Tattenhams Library Webpage

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Epsom Vineyard Church (Community Venue)

Address: 23 Lansdowne Road, West Ewell, Surrey, KT19 9QJ

Opening Times: Wednesday: 2pm to 5pm and Friday 10am to 12pm

Services Offered: Hot drinks ;Social activities; Light Meals;

Accessibility: Disabled access; accessible toilets; parking for 5 cars, plus on street parking.

Image: Epsom Methodist Church

Festival of Friendship –Epsom and Ewell – Ukraine

8 January 2026



From 27 January to 1 February, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is proud to partner with Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network, Epsom Library, and Epsom Picturehouse to host a borough Festival of Friendship – Ukraine.

This week-long celebration will showcase traditional Ukrainian crafts, music, and cultural heritage, while highlighting the friendships formed between Ukrainian nationals who have settled in the borough and the local community that has welcomed them.

The festival offers a vibrant programme of exhibitions, workshops, films, and live performances, all designed to share Ukrainian culture and foster community connections.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has worked with partners to curate and run a week of workshops as part of the Festival of Friendship – Ukraine.

Key Highlights:

- Free Workshops and Exhibitions at Epsom Library, including Ukrainian block printing, paper cutting art, wool crafts, and beading. *Spaces are limited; please arrive early to secure your spot. All materials provided.*
- Film Screenings at Epsom Picturehouse, accompanied by live Ukrainian music performances. *Tickets available via the Epsom Picturehouse website.*
- Children's Activities, including a treasure hunt, face painting, and a special Paddington Bear appearance, at Epsom Library.

Speaking of the upcoming festival, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Community said, "The Festival of Friendship – Ukraine is a heartwarming celebration of culture and community spirit, it brings together Ukrainian nationals and local residents through shared traditions, crafts, music and friendship. Events like this remind us that kindness and mutual understanding are at the heart of a thriving borough—thank you to everyone helping to make this festival possible."

Jo Sherring, Lead from Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network added, "Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network are delighted to partner with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Epsom Library and Epsom Picturehouse to create this celebration of our friendship with Ukrainian nationals who live in our community. Since the start of the war in Ukraine in 2022, we have been working with Ukrainian nationals who fled to the UK, helping them access work, housing, schools and community. Their courage, resilience and determination have been an example to us. As we have helped them to navigate life in the UK, we have enjoyed building friendships and learning about their culture and traditions.

The Festival of Friendship is a chance for our Ukrainian friends to share their traditions and culture with the local community with activities happening during the week. We hope you will find time to join us during the week to be part of this celebration."

Festival Timetable Highlights:

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- **Tuesday 27 January:** Opening Celebration at Epsom Library; Ukrainian craft workshops and exhibitions.
- **Thursday 29 January:** Performance by Renaissance Choir and screening of *Rocky Road to Berlin* at Epsom Picturehouse.
- **Sunday 1 February:** Music from Yuliia Komyshan (Ukrainian Bandura) followed by screenings of Sanatorium and Home for Ukraine at Epsom Picturehouse

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Related reports:

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Music and dance for Ukraine at Epsom Methodist Church

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Epsom Stands in Solidarity with Ukraine on War's Third Anniversary

"Imagine this house is in Epsom" says our man in Ukraine.

and many more. Search "Ukraine".

Parish power, democratic ideals — and the Residents' Association dilemma

8 January 2026

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

EDITORIAL

For nearly ninety years, since the creation by Charter of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council in 1937, the Residents' Associations have held political control of the council. Their defining claim — and the claim on which generations of RA councillors have been elected — is that they are not a political party. They describe themselves as pragmatic, non-ideological representatives, motivated only by the practical interests of residents and by efficient, modest and locally accountable government.

That historic self-identity now faces its most searching test in decades.

The decision to promote the creation of two new parish or "community" councils — one for Epsom and one for Ewell — at the very moment when Local Government Reorganisation is removing a tier of local government, raises a question that goes to the heart of the RA project. Is the Residents' Association movement acting in accordance with its founding principles — or is it, for the first time, beginning to behave like the very kind of political body it has always claimed not to be?

The new community councils, if ultimately approved, would initially be responsible only for allotments and for acting as statutory consultees on planning matters. The projected precept would be around £43–£46 per Band D property — yet council reports make clear that the overwhelming share of the budget relates not to allotments but to administrative costs. The ratio highlighted during the council debate — approximately £1.5 million in administration and around £20,000 in allotment management — leaves opponents arguing that residents would be paying for a structure, not a service.

Supporters reply that this is about local voice, continuity and identity under the new East Surrey unitary authority. They argue that unparished areas risk being left behind elsewhere in the country, and that residents deserve the ability to remain represented at a truly local level.

That argument is a respectable one. But it is also a philosophical one.

It places a principle — more tiers of directly elected democratic representation — above the question of whether those tiers provide proportionate value for money or a clear functional purpose. In short, it places democratic ideology ahead of administrative efficiency.

That is — ironically — the kind of approach the Residents' Associations have historically said they exist to avoid.

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A further tension arises when one compares the parish model with the alternative now being piloted elsewhere in Surrey: Neighbourhood Area Committees. These advisory bodies bring together local councillors, police, NHS, voluntary sector leaders and community stakeholders — arguably, the very people most qualified to inform decisions on community priorities. They operate without a precept, at minimal administrative cost, and are designed expressly to improve coordination and engagement under the new unitary structure.

Yet this model does not feature in EEBC's consultation options.

The consultation preamble instead foregrounds the "potential impact" of losing a local tier of governance, and asks residents to respond within a framework in which the only practical question is whether to establish parish councils — not whether alternative governance models may offer equal or greater benefit at far lower cost.

If the Residents' Association ethos is one of pragmatism, value for money and minimal bureaucracy, then excluding the lowest-cost participatory model from public consideration is difficult to reconcile with that philosophy.

Some councillors have gone further, suggesting that the drive toward community councils is shaped less by principle than by personal and institutional incentives — that is, by the desire of some existing borough councillors to continue to occupy civic roles in a post-unitary landscape. Whether or not that suspicion is fair, the perception exists, and it has been voiced across party lines during the council debate.

The Residents' Associations have for generations prided themselves on being the guardians of restrained, businesslike and non-political local government. If they now choose to champion new and potentially expanding administrative bodies — with uncapped taxation powers and initially limited service responsibility — they will need to persuade residents that this is not a departure from that tradition, but a logical extension of it.

That case will need to rest on facts, not sentiment; on function, not symbolism; and on the long-term interests of residents, not on the preservation of municipal office.

As the parish consultation enters its second phase, that is the question at stake: whether the proposals reflect the values the Residents' Associations have always proclaimed — or whether, in the face of structural change, they risk becoming the very political establishment they were founded to resist.

Epsom snooker star on cue to help patients

8 January 2026



Epsom General Hospital is grateful for the laser-like focus of snooker legend Jimmy White. The 63-year-old star of the green baize took time out from his busy schedule recently to present a £62,000 camera to consultant ophthalmologist Akanksha Bagch at the Eye Unit, on behalf of Epsom Medical Equipment Fund (EMEF).

The Zeiss Clarus 50 is a valuable asset in diagnosis. "It's a high-resolution, ultra-widefield fundus camera offering true colour images of the retina and optic discs among other excellent features," says Mr Bagch, "giving a detailed view from the macula to the periphery of the retina allowing clinicians to diagnose and manage multiple eye diseases including glaucoma and retina conditions such as diabetic retinopathy.

"With the increasing prevalence of glaucoma, this camera will play an integral role in running a diagnostic hub allowing a greater throughput of patients per clinic and reducing the already prolonged waiting times in the NHS, thus allowing for safer delivery of eye services."

EMEF founder and organiser Bess Harding says: "I am so grateful to Jimmy — who lives locally — for coming to make the presentation. We were delighted to be able to purchase the camera which will play an important role in preventing blindness. This would not have been possible without the support of the community for our fund-raising."

Forty-six years on from its formation and with more than £4 million already handed over, the fund's work carries on. Other equipment is always required. If you would like to help, donations can be made to EMEF at 32 Tealing Drive, Ewell, Surrey, KT19 0JS or to NatWest Account No. 66236924 Sort Code 60-08-01.

Andrew Wills

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Raymond HILLS

8 January 2026

Raymond HILLS passed away on 12th December 2025 aged 63 years.

The funeral service will take place on Friday 6th Febuary at 15:20 at North East Surrey Crematorium

Any enquiries to Raymond.Hills.Estate@gmail.com

Frank Edward Harold HARRIS

8 January 2026

HARRIS, Frank Edward Harold passed away on 16th December 2025 after a brave and courageous battle, aged 81 years. Husband to late Eileen and Dad to Gary. Grandad to Charlotte. Uncle and a Friend to many.

The funeral service will take place on Monday 12th January at 11am at Peterborough Crematorium.

Donations, if desired, to Cancer Research UK.

Any enquiries to W Bailey & Son on 01945 584762.

Epsom and Ewell’s Local Democracy Debate: What’s at Stake as Consultation Enters Phase Two

8 January 2026



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has launched the second stage of its Community Governance Review (CGR), inviting residents to give their views on whether two new parish-style bodies — Epsom Community Council and Ewell Community Council — should be created when the borough is abolished in 2027 under Surrey’s Local Government Reorganisation.

The consultation runs from 16 December 2025 to 1 February 2026. It proposes that the two new bodies would:

• cover the same geographic area as the present borough
• retain the existing 14 ward structure
• have two elected community councillors per ward
• levy a parish precept of around £43–£46 for a Band D household

If established, the new councils would initially be responsible for allotments and would act as statutory consultees on planning applications. Elections would be expected in May 2027.

The consultation takes place against the backdrop of the transition to the new East Surrey unitary authority, which from April 2027 will replace both borough and county councils across Epsom and Ewell, Tandridge, Reigate and Banstead, Mole Valley and Elmbridge.

The council states that while reorganisation “may open a number of opportunities”, it is also “mindful of the potential impact that losing a more local tier of governance may have for local residents in relation to local representation, resource allocation and priority of services.”

The consultation documents do not present alternative engagement models — such as Surrey County Council’s pilot Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs) — as response options, a point that several opposition councillors have since raised in correspondence with the Epsom and Ewell Times.

Support for Community Councils: Dalton argues democratic voice must be protected

In a detailed response to the Epsom and Ewell Times, Cllr **Hannah Dalton** (RA leader – Stoneleigh Ward) set out the Residents’ Association case for progressing the consultation and exploring the creation of community councils.

She notes that Epsom and Ewell “is not alone” in carrying out such reviews, with similar work also under way in a number of other Surrey boroughs and districts. She states that 67% of respondents to the first consultation supported the proposal to investigate community councils further, and argues that residents should not be denied the opportunity to take part in this second and final consultation.

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Cllr Dalton links the case for community councils to the scale of democratic change under the new East Surrey authority, writing that the reduction from 35 borough councillors and 5 county councillors to 10 unitary councillors represents “a 75% decrease in democratic representation,” which she describes as “a compelling reason to explore introducing a local Community Council.”

She describes the current proposal as a pragmatic starting point, with a modest precept that would fund administrative capacity and statutory planning consultation functions, while future roles could be agreed with the new unitary authority if appropriate.

Cllr Dalton also expresses scepticism about Surrey’s pilot Neighbourhood Area Committees, stating that evidence from other reorganised areas suggests that such bodies “do not have the requisite powers or representation to deliver for the residents they represent.”

Opposition concerns: cost, mandate and scope of responsibilities

Opposition councillors from the Independent, Liberal Democrat and Conservative groups have written separately to the Epsom and Ewell Times to set out their concerns.

Cllr **Alex Coley** (Independent Ruxley) warns that while the consultation presents an initial Band D precept of around £45, costs could rise significantly if community buildings and major assets were later transferred to the new bodies. He argues that residents risk facing an “uncapped” additional tax burden if responsibility for high-maintenance assets is devolved in future years.

Cllr **James Lawrence** (LibDem College) questions the proportionality of the financial model at this stage, highlighting that the only defined operational responsibility is allotment management, while the bulk of projected expenditure relates to administration rather than service delivery. He argues that residents are being asked to approve a structure whose long-term role and cost profile are not yet clear.

Cllr **Bernie Muir** (Conservative Horton) argues that the proposals recreate an additional layer of local government at a time when reorganisation is intended to simplify structures. She questions the value for money of establishing elected community councils when Surrey’s Neighbourhood Area Committees are being piloted as a lower-cost forum for local voice and partnership working.

A number of opposition members also point to the relatively small number of responses to the first-stage consultation and argue that this does not amount to a clear mandate for creating new precept-raising bodies.

The letters from Councillors — published in full HERE on the Epsom and Ewell Times website — set out contrasting views on democratic representation, accountability, taxation and local identity in the new unitary era.

Neighbourhood Area Committees: an alternative model not included in the consultation

Surrey County Council’s pilot Neighbourhood Area Committees are currently being evaluated after operating across four areas during 2025.

Surrey describes NACs as advisory partnership forums bringing together councillors, public services, voluntary and community organisations and residents to discuss local priorities. They do not have statutory powers or the ability to levy a precept, and have so far been delivered largely using existing staff resources and modest meeting costs.

Supporters of NACs argue that they provide a mechanism for local influence without creating a new tax-raising organisation. Supporters of community councils counter that advisory bodies cannot substitute for an elected local tier with formal status and statutory consultation rights.

The current CGR consultation does not invite residents to express a preference between these models.

See the Epsom and Ewell Times short guide to Neighbour Area Committees (NAC) HERE.

Participation, turnout and cost-benefit questions

The most recent full borough elections in May 2023 recorded an overall turnout of around 34% across Epsom and Ewell. Some opponents of the community council proposals question whether introducing an additional elected body represents good value where participation in local elections is already comparatively low.

Supporters respond that the reduction in democratic representation under the new unitary structure makes it more important, not less, to retain an additional tier through which residents can engage directly with locally-focused representatives.

The debate therefore continues to centre on differing conceptions of democratic voice, accountability and financial prudence during a period of structural change.

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What happens next

The CGR consultation materials and questionnaire are available online and in hard copy at Epsom Town Hall, Bourne Hall, local libraries and the Community & Wellbeing Centre.

Public engagement events are scheduled for January, after which councillors will consider the consultation responses at a special meeting on or before 20 March 2026. At that meeting, the council will decide whether to make a Reorganisation Order to create the two new community councils.

Whatever the outcome, the decision will help shape how local representation, identity and civic life in Epsom and Ewell evolve as the borough approaches its transition into the new East Surrey authority in 2027.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Councillor letters to the Editor

Local government reform or just more layers?

Where do we stand on local government reorganisation in Epsom and Ewell and the County?

Parishing Epsom and Ewell is unholy?

Debate Opens on the Future Shape of Surrey’s Local Government

and many more…..

Letters from local Councillors on Epsom and Ewell parishes

8 January 2026



Posted in the order of receipt.

From Cllr Alex Coley (Independent Ruxley)

Dear Editor,

It is disingenuous to go to residents with a consultation that shows a band D precept of £43.52 (rounded up to £44), when this could be more than six times higher. The Council’s own figures add up to a Band D precept of £296.62 for Epsom Parish Council, when certain key community assets are transferred. This is due to the enormous burden of running costs (£73.10) and building repairs (£180).

You will hear that this consultation is simply for the creation of new parish councils dedicated to representing residents’ voices and the statutory provision of allotments. That is a Trojan Horse. Seeking a view from residents on a lower figure and then multiplying it several times later is deeply misleading. These additional costs are very likely to be even higher than shown as they are based on out-of-date running costs reported in February 2024 and building repair costs from July 2019.

Residents who worry about their area being left behind will discover that creating a new parish council opens up the opportunity for the forthcoming unitary councils to offload costly buildings. With an uncapped precept, residents can be made to pay for these offloaded buildings — whatever they cost. This can happen at ANY time AFTER the new parish council is created. The one thing that definitely won’t be left behind is your money. I am seeking further analysis to calculate itemised costs for all the many buildings, parks and open spaces which could be transferred in future years, adding to the parish precept even further.

Using figures in the Council report from 9th December, these are the expected Parish Tax bands for Epsom when the three key community assets are included after the consultation has closed.

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Band A — £197.75
Band B — £230.70
Band C — £263.66
Band D — £296.62
Band E — £362.53
Band F — £428.45
Band G — £494.36
Band H — £593.24

Residents are being treated like Turkeys. Not just voting for Christmas, but paying for Christmas too!

Yours faithfully,

Alex Coley (Independent – Ruxley)

From Cllr James Lawrence (Liberal Democrat, College Ward)

Dear Editor,

I would like to remind readers that this consultation is to set up two parish councils, that will only manage allotments. That is the only service proposed to be provided to residents. Of the 11 allotment sites in the borough, the council currently runs only 7. Some wards for which councillors are proposed don't even have any allotments in them. Before addressing the clear ambition to further expand responsibilities and costs, as indicated by "could work with East Surrey Council in the future to undertake any services which it is agreed may be better run at a local level, such as parks, open spaces and community buildings etc." I will first focus specifically on the proposals as written.

The consultation document (appendix 4 of 9 Dec 2025 Full Council papers item 11) on pg 8 states that "the budget essentially covers" two key things: "Parish Council Administration" and "Allotments". What is not explained anywhere in that document is the fact that of the total collective cost of £1.52mil, only £0.02mil is required for the management of the 7 allotment sites. This is the only part of the precept (the new tax) that may possibly relate to the suggested ambition to "improve community engagement, local democracy, and service delivery" (pg 2 of appendix 4), and even then only for the few hundred council allotment holders. At only 1% of the proposed cost, the "local democracy" part of the extra tax is at best a rounding error on the amount you will pay.

As has been indicated, in reality it is highly unlikely that the parish precept will remain at ~£45. What is the future projection of this additional tax? We will receive no discount on our unitary council tax rates. The council's own papers (appendix 7) predict significant rises to the tune of ~£220 above the £45 for a Band D property if the three big community assets of Bourne Hall, Epsom Playhouse and the Community & Wellbeing Centre are included. Why are none of these future expectations and cost breakdowns not included in the consultation document? I will leave the reader to decide.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr James Lawrence (LibDem College)

From Cllr Bernie Muir (Conservative, Horton Ward)

Dear Editor,

The white elephant of parish councils is an exercise in self-indulgence and self-interest at vast expense to the Borough's residents.

"The proposal adds an extra, unnecessary layer of cost and local bureaucracy with little, if any, benefit, especially given that all areas WILL be represented by new Neighbourhood Area Committees comprising of your Councillors, health, police and a tailored list of local groups or individuals that serve your community — a fact not mentioned in the Consultation."

Without having determined what the Parish Councils would do, other than manage allotments thus what it would cost, other than 'considerably higher' than the initial charge, they are asking residents their view on setting up two costly councils based on effectively no, or missing, information.

The maths reveal that lack of value — The council quotes an additional cost of £44–£46 for the first year (for a Band D property) to cover the cost of maintaining allotments, despite this costing only 60p per household with the rest of the precept, some 99% of the first-year charge, going on administrative costs.

The average cost per property would actually be almost 20% higher at £53 in the first year, exceeding the figures quoted in the consultation (around £45). That is because the average property in Epsom and Ewell is Band E, not the quoted Band D figure. The actual cost in the first year would vary between £30 (Band A) and over £90 (Band H).

However, that is only the tip of the iceberg.

The council has ambitions to take on much, much greater costs, all of which would be charged to residents as an additional council tax 'precept' in future years. The first three assets being considered for transfer to the new parish councils would alone increase the average additional precept cost per property in Epsom to around £350, with costs for Epsom households varying from £198 (Band A) to over £590 (Band H, Epsom) based on the council's figures.

The council's own public report pack goes on to state 'If other community assets (e.g. country parks etc) were to be

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transferred, the costs would be considerably higher'. Even £590 per year could go considerably higher! All this is on top of the standard council tax charge. Whilst borough council tax rises were capped at 3% each year, there is no cap at all on parish council precepts.

Before responding to the consultation, I encourage residents to ask themselves what, specifically, the proposed parish councils are going to provide, and whether it is worth the large, increasing and uncapped costs.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Bernie Muir (Conservative Horton)
Vice-Chairman Surrey County Council
Surrey County Councillor — Epsom West Division
Epsom & Ewell Borough Councillor — Horton Ward

From Cllr Hannah Dalton (RA Stoneleigh) leader of the ruling Residents Associations Group on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Dear Editor,

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is not alone in making the decision that, as a result of Surrey local government reorganisation, there is an urgent need to review or establish Community Councils (also known as Parish or Town Councils). This work is also being undertaken by Guildford Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council.

From July to October 2025, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council conducted the first resident consultation on the proposal to establish Community Councils, and 67% of respondents were supportive of the proposal. As a result of the consultation, and listening to our residents, further work has been carried out and the Council is undertaking a second and final resident consultation from December 2025 to February 2026.

It is disappointing that the Labour, Liberal Democrat, Conservative and Independent groups are seeking to derail this work and, in doing so, deny the residents of Epsom and Ewell the second consultation to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with establishing two Community Councils. To my mind, this is another example of political parties denying residents their democratic voice — which we have already seen through the cancellation of the Surrey local elections due to take place in May 2025, and more recently, through not listening to the resident voice in the consultation on Surrey local government reorganisation, where residents were vehemently opposed to the establishment of two Unitary Councils.

The case for establishing a Community Council becomes stronger when you consider what the new East Surrey Unitary Council — which will represent a population of 551,000 — will mean for democratic representation for the residents of Epsom and Ewell.

Currently, the residents of Epsom and Ewell have 35 Borough Councillors and 5 County Councillors. Following the establishment of the East Surrey Unitary Council, this will reduce to 10 Councillors for a population of 81,000; that is a 75% decrease in democratic representation. If ever there were a compelling reason to explore introducing a local Community Council, it is this.

The key areas the second consultation is seeking residents' views on are:

- to establish two Community Councils — one for Epsom and one for Ewell
- to maintain the 14 individual wards that currently make up the Borough of Epsom and Ewell
- to propose 2 Community Councillors for each ward, elected as usual, who would all be volunteers and receive no remuneration for representing residents at a local level
- a proposed precept of around £45 a year (approximately £3.75 a month or 12p a day)

The precept would cover the new Community Councils' administration — such as employment costs, office supplies and equipment, website and IT, insurances — but more importantly, services such as planning, because the Community Council would be a statutory consultee.

This is a pragmatic approach to the proposed introduction of Community Councils, as currently we do not know how the new East Surrey Unitary Council will function.

However, it is worth noting that evidence from areas which have already undergone local government reorganisation shows that there is a critical role for Community Councils, and that the 'Neighbourhood Area Committees' being proposed by Surrey County Council, in practice, do not have the requisite powers or representation to deliver for the residents they represent.

This Epsom and Ewell Community Governance Review consultation will close at 11.59pm on Sunday 1 February 2026 and can be accessed online at:

https://eebc.inconsult.uk/CGRproposal/consultationHome

Paper copies of the consultation can be found at:

The Town Hall
Bourne Hall
Stoneleigh Library

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Epsom Library
Ewell Court Library
Community and Wellbeing Centre

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Hannah Dalton

From Cllr Kate Chinn (Labour Court Ward)

Dear Editor

I do not believe there is a need for community councils and they will cause additional costs for residents. There are far too many unknowns. The new unitary council is only obliged to pass on management of allotments which, if the Residents Association councillors get their way, would be two costly administration systems set up for a minimal service.

Alternatively, all the borough's costly and heavily subsidised venues including the Playhouse and Bourne Hall could be transferred. Both need continued costly refurbishment. Costs that would be passed on to residents.

The RA- led council are clearly pushing for two parish/community councils – one for Epsom and one for Ewell. An increase of administration from the two currently representing the borough.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Kate Chinn

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council celebrates its first Young Legends graduates

8 January 2026

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council proudly marked the completion of its first Young Legends programme with a celebration event for participants and their families.

Over the last nine weeks, over 80 children aged 9-11 enjoyed a range of sports and creative activities as part of the council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy, that aims to improve the mental and emotional wellbeing of all residents. The programme supports the strategy by helping children and young people be more active, learn new skills and build connections—key to improving mental and emotional wellbeing.

Children from across the borough took part in Arts & Crafts, Basketball, Girls Rugby, Judo, Musical Theatre and Yoga. The programme was delivered by trusted and skilled coaches from the Body & Brain, Cadgers Basketball Club, Creative Minds, Laines Theatre Arts, Sutton and Epsom Rugby Club, and Westcroft Judo Nork at no cost to the children or their families.

The graduation was a celebration of the programme and included a performance by children who took part in the programme's Musical Theatre sessions, and an arts and crafts activity. The Council's Chief Executive, Jackie King, Councillor Clive Woodbridge and Councillor Bernice Froud joined families and coaches at the event.

Hayley, parent of an Epsom & Ewell Young Legends participant said: "The Young Legends Musical Theatre course gave my son an opportunity to experience performance arts in a way he might not otherwise have had. He discovered a passion for performing and the support and encouragement he received gave him the confidence to overcome any initial fears and showcase an amazing talent we were unaware he had!"

Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee commented: "Our Epsom & Ewell Young Legends programme has been a fantastic experience! We focused on children aged 9–11 to support their transition to secondary school, which we know can be a particularly challenging time, and we're delighted to have been able to give them the chance to take part in a variety of fun activities—helping to build their confidence as they navigate this key stage.

Parents have shared some wonderful feedback. One discovered their child has a real passion for singing, whilst another said yoga sessions have helped improve their child's emotional wellbeing.

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A huge thank you to everyone who made this programme possible: the coaches and practitioners who gave their time, and our dedicated council officers who worked hard to deliver a programme that supports children during this key stage.

We're proud to have supported local children and hope they feel inspired to keep exploring any opportunity that comes their way —long after the programme ends."

About Epsom & Ewell Young Legends programme 2025

More information about the Epsom & Ewell Young Legends programme can be found here: Epsom & Ewell Young Legends | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

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

About Body & Brain, Epsom

Body & Brain Epsom Centre offers classes in deep physical, emotional and spiritual healing through meditative movement, deep stretching and shaking exercises. The practice originates from Korea where it has a rich 5,000 year old history of holistic healing and mind-body practices. Devoted to helping individuals better manage and utilize their brains, this beautiful discipline is suitable for people of all ages and levels, and it is the perfect way to increase your physical activity and gain a greater sense of peace. Body & Brain | EPSOM | Class Schedule

About Cadgers Basketball Club

Cagers Basketball Club is committed to fostering a love for the game and providing competitive basketball for players of all ages and abilities. Their core values include hard work, respect, discipline, and enjoyment. Through teaching correct fundamentals and improving basketball knowledge and skills, we prepare players for the next level, emphasising individual success within a team-oriented framework. Epsom and Ewell Families » Cagers Basketball Club

About Creative Minds

Founded in November 2012, Creative Minds has been delivering accessible and empowering art sessions for over a decade, earning a reputation as a highly trusted and respected service provider across the UK. Their Creative Minds (CM) Artists bring creativity, expression, and human connection to every session they deliver. We work with a wide variety of venues, including care homes, schools, learning disability services, day centres, and many more, ensuring art is accessible to people of all ages and abilities. About Us – Creative Minds – Accessible Art Sessions For Everyone!

About Laines Theatre Arts

Since its inception in 1962, Laine Theatre Arts has been dedicated to the fostering of creative talent. Among their alumni are some of the most highly regarded performers, teachers, choreographers, and director-choreographers in the world. The College's outstanding reputation in the performing arts has been built on its unique identity as a training provider, exceptional employment records, and the company values instilled in its students which are noted, time and again by employers. Those familiar with Laine Theatre Arts agree unanimously that it is a unique environment. Who we are – Laine Theatre Arts

About Sutton and Epsom Rugby Club

Founded in 1881, Sutton & Epsom is one of the oldest active Rugby Clubs in England with a proud and magnificent history. We first played against Saracens as far back as 1883/84, as one of their very early opponents, and in 1901 beat Stade Francais on their home turf.

Today the Club is one of the largest amateur Rugby Clubs in the Country and from its main ground in Rugby Lane, Cheam, remains run by enthusiasts for enthusiasts. They have over 30 teams with 1,200 current and former playing members, plus 1,800 social members. suttonrugby.co.uk

About Westcroft Judo Nork

Their martial arts store offers an extensive selection of high-quality gear and apparel for practitioners of all levels. With products sourced from reputable brands, they ensure that both beginners and seasoned martial artists find the equipment they need to excel in their training. Westcroft Judo Nork

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Epsom and Ewell Council leader message for 2026

8 January 2026

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

26th November 2026

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Cllr **Hannah Dalton** (RA Stoneleigh) has outlined Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's goals for 2026 in a New Year message to residents. The leader has promised a smooth transition to the new mega council, East Surrey, and services will still be there for residents.

It has been a busy year for Cllr Dalton with growing financial pressures amid housing demand for those facing homelessness, planning applications on green belt sites and, of course, local government reorganisation and heated debates around parish councils.

The leader wrote:

"2026 will mark the final full year of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) as a local authority. As the one of the longest, independently led councils in England and Wales, that is quite a legacy and landmark.

"As Chair of the Surrey Leaders Group, I have been heavily involved in local government reorganisation (LGR) process since it was announced in December last year. The focus for me in the next 12 months will be around establishing the new East Surrey Unitary Council. As part of this I will be a member of the Joint Committee for LGR in Surrey, and I want to ensure the safe and legal transition of services to the new authority. My focus will also be on EEBC continuing to deliver for our residents and our legacy.

"Elections for the East Surrey Unitary Council in May 2026 will be pivotal, and I urge all Surrey residents to vote when the time comes. It's vital that everyone in our communities is represented, as these elections will decide the make-up of the new Unitary Council that will set the strategy for the next five years.

"EEBC is also currently carrying out its second and final consultation asking residents them whether they want to create two new community councils, Epsom Community Council and Ewell Community Council. Epsom & Ewell is unparished which means that when EEBC is dissolved, there will be no lower tier of local government, and we are asking if residents want new community councils to represent local voices, be a statutory consultee on planning matters, and more.

"Finally, next year I will look to reflect and recognise what EEBC has achieved during the 90 years since it was formed and the vast changes it has seen. It's an honour to lead the council in its final year of Residents' Association administration, and I'm proud to serve our community during this landmark time."

Emily Dalton LDRS

Hannah Dalton, leader of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. (Credit: Epsom and Ewell Borough Council)

Mole Valley leaders look to their final year legacy

8 January 2026



We are entering the final full year for councils in Surrey before they are dissolved and merged into mega authorities – and the leaders know time is running out if they wish to fulfil any lasting ambitions. In October this year, the government announced that Surrey would change forever. From the ashes will rise two mega authorities that split the map effectively in two. People living in Waverley, Guildford, Woking, Surrey Heath, Spelthorne and Runnymede will soon be calling West Surrey home, while East Surrey will cover Epsom and Ewell, Elmbridge, Tandridge, Reigate and Banstead, and Mole Valley. West Surrey will be the larger of the two authorities, but will also have its share of financial challenges given the debt issues in Woking, Surrey Heath and Spelthorne.

Next year voters will go to the polls to elect their new representatives to sit in a shadow council before taking over in 2027. It means 2026 will be the last full year for councils to achieve any remaining goals. The Local Democracy Service asked council leaders what they hoped to achieve before this seismic shift in how services are delivered in Surrey.

Councillor Bridget Kendrick, leader of Mole Valley District Council, said: "I can't believe how quickly the past year has gone and how much we've achieved in line with our vision for a fairer, greener Mole Valley that provides opportunities for all." She said highlights included delivering their best-ever programme of holiday activities for over 1,500 children,

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signing a Poverty Pledge that recognises and builds on their support for vulnerable people across Mole Valley, and progressing the development of much-needed small business units and housing on the Foundry site in the centre of Dorking. Other milestones included submitting a planning application for the regeneration of the Swan Centre and Bull Hill. The leader also singled out the council's action on homelessness, which she said prevented 233 households from becoming homeless, delivered 36 emergency housing units and 72 new affordable homes.

She added: "It's with a sense of nostalgia that I recognise next year's annual plan as the final one from Mole Valley District Council as we know it. From April 2027, the new East Surrey authority will take over, but until then we'll continue delivering for our residents and have a very busy schedule ahead. Our plans to refurbish playgrounds in Ashtead, Bookham, Dorking and Leatherhead are progressing, with a destination playground planned for Riverside Park. We also have a very ambitious action plan for increasing biodiversity in Mole Valley, including rewilding, planting additional species and introducing additional ponds. The second phase of works for Dorking Halls is scheduled for this spring to ensure the venue is accessible and ready to welcome future visitors. Pippbrook House, our Grade II listed building, is growing in strength as a cultural hub with a packed list of events planned for the coming months and unique rooms available for community hire.

"We're also pleased to confirm that funding has been obtained to continue the work of our incredible MV Employment Hub, delivering job advice and support to hundreds of residents. We're planning another successful year of summer holiday activities, and our bursary scheme financially supporting children to access sports clubs' membership is open for applications. Mole Valley Life team continues to support the most vulnerable in the district, providing lifeline alarms and support services via our Fairfield Community Centre. On a more practical side, parking improvements are planned for next year and we're procuring a new waste contract to commence from June 2027 too. As we head into what I know will be a busy and productive final year for Mole Valley District Council, I'd like to take this moment to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year."

Chris Caulfield LDRS

Image: New Mole Valley District Council cabinet ,including leader Cllr Bridget Kendrick (front left) and deputy leader Cllr Claire Malcomson (image MVDV)

Epsom Christmas Concert Triumphs After Last-Minute Conductor Crisis

8 January 2026



What could have been a genuine crisis for Epsom Choral Society's Christmas Concert on Saturday became a remarkable story of teamwork, professionalism, and musical courage.

The day began with unwelcome news. Early in the morning, Musical Director, Julian Collings, phoned to say he had been struck down with flu and was unable to conduct that evening's concert. This was to be no ordinary performance: it was completely sold out and featured two world premieres, making cancellation unthinkable.

From his sickbed, Julian immediately set about trying to find a replacement conductor for the evening. His first call was to Neil Ferris, conductor of the Leith Hill Music Festival. Unfortunately, Neil was unable to step in at such short notice, but he suggested a name: Victoria Ely. Crucially, ECS Chair, Helen Phillips, was able to recommend her with confidence, having seen Victoria in action when she took a rehearsal for Neil at one of the Leith Hill Music Festival rehearsals last Spring.

Victoria Ely, who had never met the choir before, bravely agreed to conduct the concert with just four hours' notice.

Meanwhile, Julian faced another formidable task. From home, he painstakingly scanned all of his marked-up scores – 20 different pieces, the parts for the brass quintet, and his detailed annotations and introductory notes. These were sent at speed to the ECS's Concert Management team, who rushed to print everything so it could be placed in Victoria's hands as soon as she arrived and so the brass had something to play! It was a race against the clock, but by 1pm everything was in place.

That afternoon's rehearsal was necessarily intense. Rather than imposing her own methods, Victoria immediately showed her musicianship and collaborative spirit by asking the choir to demonstrate how each piece had been rehearsed. She listened carefully, adapted quickly, and worked with the choir's established approach, creating a sense of trust and calm despite the extraordinary circumstances.

By the time the evening concert arrived, what might have felt like an emergency substitution instead felt like a confident partnership. Victoria conducted with assurance, clarity, and good humour, guiding the choir through a demanding and

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varied programme. Her warm presence and engaging manner extended to the audience, who responded with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment.

Against all odds, the concert was not merely rescued, it was a resounding success. For Epsom Choral Society the evening became a powerful reminder of the strength of its musical community and the generosity of fellow professionals. Thanks to Julian's determination, Helen's quick thinking, the Concert Manager's efficiency , and above all Victoria Ely's courage and skill, a potential disaster was transformed into a memorable and uplifting Christmas celebration.

Nina Kaye

'I don't believe I am a political person': Surrey leader reflects

8 January 2026



As Surrey heads into the new year, the mood at Woodhatch Place, the county council's head quarters, is one of reflection and quiet apprehension for the year ahead. For Tim Oliver, leader of Surrey County Council, the festive period comes at the end of what he described as a "busy" year. One that began with the announcement of the biggest shake up in local government for decades and will end with the council preparing for even more change in 2026.

"It's been quite a journey," he said, reflecting on the year since local government reorganisation was announced. "But we've ended it in a pretty good place in terms of setting ourselves up for the heavy lifting over the next 12 months."

While Christmas brings a lull in council business and many work places, Cllr Oliver joked that residents "with a bit of time on their hands" are still keen to get in touch about local issues. But there is no resentment in his voice, just a familiar sense of public service never stops.

Sat in an office of some description, a blurred bookshelf marked a hazy backdrop, the council leader seemed slightly weary but ready for a half-hour interview. Reflecting back on his time at the local authority, at the last full year in power, he said: "I just marked seven years as the leader of this council. I feel proud of what the council has done over that period in terms of financial stability, we've invested a lot into communities like 'Your Fund Surrey'."

"I don't believe that I am a political person," said Mr Oliver, the Conservative leader of the council, speaking to the local democracy reporting service. "Or that I run this council in an overtly political way."

It is a claim some of his colleagues and opponents may find laughable. Particularly when the councillors might claim the council is concerned about financial resilience despite all the criticism over its SEND service, asset-based funding and ambitions to empower communities and charities with funding rather than expand the council's services. But Mr Oliver confirmed the council should not be swayed by ideology and national movements. "There shouldn't be party politics in local government," he said. "We have one job here and we are elected to improve the lives of our residents."

Yet the past year has shown how difficult that principle can be to maintain. Debates over reorganisation, he said, have exposed what he described as a rise in "tribal politics" within the council's HQ. "One of the things that has been slightly disappointing over this last year is that there has been a bit of tribal politics around the reorganisation," he said. Mr Oliver added: "

However, this criticism has been robustly rejected by opposition councillors. Paul Follows, leader of the Liberal Democrats, said that while the Conservative leader was "disappointed" by the tone of the debate, the response from other parties reflected what they described as the reality that only the Conservatives supported pursuing local government reorganisation in its current form.

He said Lib Dems across Surrey had supported reform only where it was rooted in "genuine localism" and underpinned a proper assessment of the county's financial challenges. Cllr Follows said: "It is difficult to see what, if any, benefit this rushed process of local government reorganisation brings to Surrey – particularly to boroughs that are largely self-sufficient and solvent, such as Waverley, Guildford, and Reigate & Banstead."

Cllr Oliver acknowledged that local election results often reflect national sentiment, regardless of how councils perform. "You could be the most outstanding council," he said, "but if you're standing through a political party, it reflects the national position."

While he said he was proud of the council's record on financial stability and service improvement, he admitted he did not know how voters would respond in an election likely to be shaped by national politics, council tax pressures and public frustration. "I genuinely don't know what will happen here locally," he said. Mr Oliver said he saw no evidence that Reform-run councils were doing anything fundamentally different from authorities already under financial pressure.

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Despite his concerns, Mr Oliver said residents ultimately judge councils on outcomes rather than ideology, on results rather than rhetoric. As he prepares to take a step away from leadership, Mr Oliver said whoever takes over must remain true to acting in the best interest of residents.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Tim Oliver (credit Surrey Live) and County graphic credit SCC.

Related reports:

Epsom and Ewell to Go East in Surrey shake-up

Neighbour Area Committees in Surrey

Epsom and Ewell one of the most expensive places to own a home in the UK

8 January 2026



Residents in Epsom and Ewell could be spending the equivalent of more than four-fifths of a ***single*** average salary on mortgage repayments, according to a new affordability analysis published by property buying firm Sell House Fast. The study ranks Epsom and Ewell fourth among UK areas outside London for the proportion of “net annual pay” it estimates would be taken up by annual mortgage repayments, putting the figure at 82.2%.

The analysis combines earnings data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings with local average house prices from the UK House Price Index. It then models mortgage repayment costs by assuming a 20 per cent deposit and applying the Bank of England base rate. On that basis, Sell House Fast lists Epsom and Ewell with a median annual net pay of £35,380, an average house price of £560,957, and estimated annual mortgage repayments of £29,083.

Official figures suggest the house-price element of the estimate is broadly consistent with published data. ONS housing statistics show the average house price in Epsom and Ewell was around £556,000 in October 2025 (provisional), rising to about £570,000 for homes bought with a mortgage.

Housing analysts caution, however, that figures of this kind are highly sensitive to assumptions. The analysis does not describe what existing homeowners in Epsom and Ewell actually pay each month, but instead models repayments using a fixed deposit level and an interest-rate assumption that may not reflect the mortgage products many households are on, particularly those who secured fixed-rate deals in earlier years. The Bank of England base rate has also changed several times over the past year, which can significantly affect illustrative repayment calculations.

It is also important to note that the comparison is based on the average net salary of a single individual. In practice, many mortgages in Epsom and Ewell are taken out jointly, with repayments shared between two wage earners, which can substantially alter affordability at the household level.

Even with these caveats, the analysis adds to wider evidence that Epsom and Ewell remains one of the least affordable areas in the South East when local incomes are set against local house prices, underlining the continued pressure faced by first-time buyers and households seeking to move within the borough.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Image: An Epsom Street – Google Maps

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