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Ignorance of ULEZ is no bliss for Surrey drivers

9 November 2026



Surrey County Council has stood by its decision not to allow ULEZ signs in the county, despite data showing tens of thousands of Surrey motorists have been hit with fines for breaking the zone's rules.

More than £15 million in penalties has been charged to addresses in Surrey for breaching the terms of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone, figures obtained through a freedom of information request have revealed.

The ULEZ, which imposes a £12.50 daily charge on high polluting vehicles that enter its boundaries, was first implemented in central London in 2019, but has since grown to cover almost the entirety of Greater London.

Surrey County Council vehemently opposed the 2023 expansion into the outer London suburbs, and refused to install ULEZ signage on Surrey's roads.

But tens of thousands of Surrey drivers have received penalty charge notices (PCNs) for not paying ULEZ charges almost every year of its existence, hitting a peak of 76,305 fines handed out in 2024.

The council's transport lead Councillor Matt Furniss (Conservative: Pilgrims) told the Local Democracy Reporting Service the council's stance on refusing ULEZ signage and cameras in Surrey would remain "unchanged" as no measures to mitigate its impact on motorists had been agreed.

He said: "Many other local authorities also refrained from entering into this agreement. This situation remains unchanged as sadly none of the mitigation measures put forward to support Surrey residents have been put in place by the Mayor of London or Transport for London (TfL)."

A scrappage scheme to replace older, non-compliant cars was offered to London residents by Mayor Sadiq Khan, but this was not extended to people living in the home counties – many of whom commute by car into the capital.

Councillor Furniss added: "We continue to urge the Mayor and TfL to do what is right and extend the scrappage scheme outside of London for those that are impacted, provide exemption for key workers, and provide more and better bus routes between Surrey and London."

The figures, which came from a freedom of information request to TfL, showed that £15.513 million in fines to drivers for not paying ULEZ charges have been issued to addresses in Surrey since the scheme started in 2019.

TfL's data revealed Surrey accounts for around three percent of all ULEZ penalties issued across this time period.

Fines are typically issued at £180, but this is reduced to £90 if it is paid within 14 days. However, if the PCN is still unpaid 28 days after it was issued, then a £270 charge certificate can be sent out.

In addition, tens of thousands of Surrey motorists have appealed fines imposed upon them for this reason – with more than two thirds being successful at the first appeal stage according to TfL data.

When a motorist receives a PCN, they can first appeal directly to TfL itself – and the figures showed that 43,664 appeals reached this stage from Surrey since 2019, of which 29,931 were accepted – meaning the fine was cancelled.

If an appeal is rejected at this stage, there remains the option to pursue it further at a tribunal.

A total of 2,049 Surrey appeals reached this stage over the same period, although 1,107 of these were refused. Some appeals listed at both stages remain pending.

Sadiq Khan has vigorously defended the ULEZ scheme as a vital measure to reduce dangerous levels of pollution in the capital – with recent air quality studies suggesting it has been successful to this end.

However, critics say it is punitive to lower income households, and that many motorists in the home counties who frequently drive into London were given no say over its introduction.

A TfL spokesperson said: "Those outside the London boundary are also benefitting from cleaner air, with drivers outside the capital shifting to vehicles that meet the standards.

"The ULEZ is not about making money. It is generating ever smaller net revenues as it matures, with the most recent data showing that more than 97 per cent of vehicles seen driving in the zone are compliant."

Any income raised by ULEZ charges is invested into improving TfL's public transport network, some of which stretches into Surrey.

The spokesperson added: "We worked with councils on the boundaries of London ahead of the expansion of ULEZ and rely on their cooperation to put up ULEZ warning signages on the approach to the zone.

"There is extensive signage on the boundary itself and to raise awareness, we launched a multi-channel campaign

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targeting Londoners and home counties drivers, including radio ads, ahead of the expansion and welcomed their views on our consultation.”

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

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Image: ULEZ signs on A3 near New Malden Google Street view

Good shots beat Badshot

9 November 2026



Saturday 7 November 2026 · Chalky Lane, Chessington · Combined Counties Premier League South · Full time: Epsom & Ewell 3–1 Badshot Lea · Attendance: 116

Before kick-off, players, officials and supporters observed a minute’s silence in remembrance of those who gave their lives in service to their country.

The Salts started brightly, with Jason Bloor and Blessing Hombessa involved in several early chances. Badshot Lea’s first opportunity of note came from a free-kick just outside the penalty area, but the effort sailed over the crossbar.

Two goals in three minutes

Bloor broke the deadlock on the half-hour, collecting a cross before firing a powerful strike into the net. Three minutes later, top scorer Hombessa broke through the visitors’ defence and calmly slotted home to make it 2–0. He nearly added a third before half-time, sending an effort narrowly wide.

Epsom & Ewell remained in control after the restart. Badshot Lea were temporarily reduced to ten men when Zak Horkin was shown a yellow card and sent to the sin bin. Two more bookings followed for the visitors.

Alex Foord replaced Bloor in the 61st minute, and captain Brendan Murphy-McVey went close with a free-kick that drifted just over the bar. Kionte Waul replaced Angel Monte in the 72nd minute, Callum McAlistair was booked five minutes later and Oba came on for Murphy-McVey in the 85th minute.

Hombessa curls in the third

Hombessa sealed the win in the 89th minute, weaving past defenders before curling his second goal of the afternoon into the top corner. Frankie Lynn replaced Luke Miller, and Niall Stillwell came on for Courtney Swaby in stoppage time.

Badshot Lea pulled a goal back in the sixth minute of added time when Alfie Edwards’ low shot caught goalkeeper Ben Grummitt off guard, but the Salts saw out a deserved 3–1 win.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

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Epsom and St Helier hospital workers bring pay and pension claims

9 November 2026



Around 250 cleaners, porters and catering workers at Epsom and St Helier hospitals are pursuing employment tribunal claims over the pay and pension arrangements they were given after becoming NHS employees in 2021.

The workers, who are predominantly Black, brown and migrant, allege indirect race discrimination by Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust. Their union, United Voices of the World (UVW), says they are seeking to recover four years of lost pay and pension contributions, as well as compensation for injury to feelings.

The staff previously worked for contractor Mitie. When the trust took the services in-house, the workers became direct NHS employees but remained on different terms from colleagues covered by Agenda for Change, the NHS pay and conditions framework. The union says affected staff were paid £13.85 an hour compared with £14.92 for Band 2 colleagues. They were enrolled in the Nest pension scheme, where UVW says the employer contributed 3 per cent of qualifying earnings.

Dispute over backdated pension contributions

The trust told the Morning Star that it had agreed to pay backdated employer contributions for staff who chose to join the NHS Pension Scheme. A spokesperson added that the trust was “sorry we didn’t get this right first time.”

The dispute now includes how workers can make up their own pension contributions for the four years. UVW says staff were asked to find the money upfront. The hospital group disputes that account, saying it offered workers the option of making back payments. The union says the group should have considered alternatives, including whether existing Nest contributions could be transferred or whether arrears could be recovered from future pension benefits.

Ioana Paduraru, a cleaning and portering supervisor at St Helier Hospital, said: “Nobody explained to us at the time that we should have been enrolled in the NHS pension scheme.” She said finding four years’ worth of contributions at once would be unaffordable for her household.

Claims follow deal on NHS terms

Epsom and Ewell Times previously reported on the workers’ campaign for the same pay and conditions as NHS colleagues. In November 2025, after staff voted in favour of strike action, the trust reached a deal covering more than 500 workers. It provided for full NHS terms to be phased in, including improved sick pay and enhanced rates for nights and weekends. The tribunal claims concern losses the workers say they incurred before those improvements.

The case follows a separate ruling involving cleaners at Great Ormond Street Hospital. In January, the Employment Appeal Tribunal upheld their indirect race discrimination claims for the period after they became direct NHS employees, when they waited 18 months to move onto full NHS terms. The Epsom and St Helier claims will be decided on their own facts.

UVW says the pension hearing is scheduled for 14 June 2027 and the back pay hearing for 7 July 2027. The union is representing workers in the pension claim, while law firm Leigh Day is acting in the back pay case.

Sam Jones – Reporter



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Related report

Epsom Hospital workers to strike for equality?

Photo: Credit: United Voices of the World

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Bourne Hall in Ewell to lodge social housing

9 November 2026



A historic Surrey building is set to return to use as social housing after “sensitive” renovation works were given the green light. Planning permission and listed building consent have been granted for The Lodge at Bourne Hall in Ewell to be turned into residential use.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council submitted an application to itself for the works to go ahead, which have now been approved by the planning committee. “The primary driver for this application is to rescue the vacant building from deterioration and render the property fit for modern human occupation,” the council’s planning documents read.

“The property is intended to be brought into service as social housing. To achieve this, the applicant is legally and morally bound to meet the decent homes standard in terms of thermal comfort, safety, and structural integrity.”

They noted that the property in its current state is “unhabitable”, with defects ranging from joinery failure to fabric decay and inadequate insulation. While planning officers had to consider potential impacts on the Grade II listed property’s heritage assets, they nonetheless deemed the benefits of the scheme would outweigh any harms.

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Residents Associations of Epsom and Ewell: Ewell Village Ward) told the planning committee: “The best way to protect the historic building is to have somebody living there and looking after it. And that’s what this application does.”

The internal layout of the property is expected to broadly remain the same, although the internal staircase is earmarked for replacement. “The existing inappropriate, non-period external doors will be removed”, the planning documents add.

“They will be replaced with bespoke, four panel doors engineered to match the early 19th-century aesthetic dictated by the Lodge’s listing context. They will incorporate modern high-performance draft seals and security features hidden completely within period-accurate panelled designs.”

While the site will remain car-free, the documents note that “the site is sustainably located close to Ewell town centre and to public transport”.

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

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Bourne Hall Ewell (Credit: Google Maps)

Epsom foodbank charity aims to raise £11,300 in Christmas appeal

9 November 2026



Fourteen years after local churches and community groups opened the first Epsom & Ewell Foodbank centres, the Surrey charity that grew out of their work is asking residents to help raise £11,300 for its foodbanks and community pantries this Christmas. Good Company

Good Company (Surrey) is taking part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge for the first time. Its *Living with Hope* appeal aims to raise £5,650 in public donations between noon on Tuesday 1 December and noon on Tuesday 8 December. Pledges from existing supporters and the Reed Foundation will match those donations, taking the total to £11,300 if the

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target is reached. Epsom and Ewell Foodbank

From two local foodbank centres

Good Company traces its roots to a public meeting in July 2012, when more than 70 people turned up to discuss whether Epsom and Ewell needed a foodbank. Some doubted there was enough need in the borough to justify one. By October, two centres had opened, one in Epsom and one in Ewell, with support from Generation Church. Leatherhead and Tadworth followed in 2013, and Banstead in 2014. In April 2022, the foodbank became part of the new charity, Good Company (Surrey), while keeping its original name. Good Company

The charity still provides emergency food, alongside one-to-one support, counselling and help with energy costs. It runs Epsom Pantry, a member-led community food shop, and Banstead Pantry. Its wider work includes the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network and the East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission, launched in 2019 to give people with first-hand experience of poverty a say in how local organisations respond to it. Good Company says 535 households came to one of its foodbank centres for the first time in 2025. Good Company

What the Christmas appeal will support

The appeal will help fund the charity's foodbanks and pantries. In its Christmas newsletter, Good Company shared the experience of a pantry member who said spending less on basic essentials had made it easier to pay off other debts. Another person, who had received one-to-one support, said: "It changed my life really. I got a sense of dignity back. It changed everything."

The artwork for the appeal was drawn by Alison, a community commissioner from the charity's most recent Poverty Truth Commission, and is available as an electronic Christmas card. Good Company is encouraging residents to hold coffee mornings, schools to organise cake sales and businesses to consider donating a share of a day's takings. Readers can sign up for a reminder on the charity's Big Give Christmas Challenge page. Epsom and Ewell Foodbank

Lionel Blackman

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Related reports

- Keeping Good Company
- New Epsom Pantry offers more than food to the struggling
- Epsom Pantry breathing life into the community

How three Epsom and Ewell wedding venues came into public hands

9 November 2026



On Wednesday 29 September 1937 the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey presented Epsom and Ewell with its Charter of Incorporation, from a platform put up for the day in Epsom High Street. The same day, Nonsuch Park had its official opening.

The mansion in that park is one of six places in the borough licensed for civil ceremonies. Three of the six are at Epsom Downs Racecourse, Epsom College and the Royal Automobile Club's Woodcote Park.

The other three, Nonsuch Mansion, Ewell Court House and Bourne Hall, are in public hands, and each got there by a different route.

Bought by four councils

Nonsuch is named after the palace Henry VIII began there in 1538. It was mostly pulled down in the 1680s.

The house in the park today took its shape between 1802 and 1806, when Jeffry Wyatt, later Sir Jeffry Wyatville, enlarged an older house for Samuel Farmer, MP for Huntingdon. Historic England's listing calls it an early commission in the Tudor Gothic style that Wyatt later took to Windsor Castle. He modelled its entrance front on pictures of the lost palace.

Beside the front door is a terracotta tablet inscribed with the date 1543 and Henry VIII's name in Latin, which the listing describes as a fragment of the palace.

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The Farmers held the estate for more than a century. Between the wars new houses went up along its southern edge, and work began on an arterial road through the park.

Four councils bought the mansion and 263 acres of the Little Park as public open space: London County Council, Surrey County Council, Sutton and Cheam Borough Council, and Epsom and Ewell, then still an urban district.

The road was abandoned, though its embankment can still be traced. A joint committee has managed the park ever since.

Couples now marry in the mansion's Orchid Room, which has stained glass and large bay windows.

Saved by its neighbours

Ewell Court House on Lakehurst Road was rebuilt for a marriage.

It began as Avenue House, named for the elms that lined its approach from Kingston Road. It was one of the gentlemen's houses built after the fame of Epsom's spa drew London merchants here in the late 1600s.

The house passed to the Bridges family, whose money came from gunpowder mills on the Hogsmill. The mills closed in 1875 because they could not meet new safety laws.

Four years later John Henry Bridges married Edith Tritton and set about making a new home for them both. J. Alick Thomas, a local architect then new to practice, rebuilt the house in the Old English style, keeping its old core, and the millpond became an ornamental lake.

Stonework and panelling were marked with a B and an anchor, for the family motto, "Heaven My Haven".

The Stoddarts, who followed the Bridges, sold the house to the council in 1935.

In the autumn of 2003, the Epsom and Ewell History Explorer records, the council resolved to dispose of it for residential development. Local residents formed the Ewell Court House Organisation, ECHO, whose business plan for a mix of commercial and community uses persuaded the council to reverse its decision.

Ceremonies are held today in the Social Suite, with its polished maple floors and high moulded ceilings, which opens onto a terrace overlooking the lake. The grounds still have their cascades, rock pools and grotto.

Listed for its space-age flair

Bourne Hall in Spring Street takes its name from an older house. Garbrand Hall, a country house of about 1770, was praised in the gardening press of the 1870s for its chrysanthemums and orchids. It was renamed Bourne Hall when it was bought for a school in 1926.

The council later bought the estate on condition that the grounds were preserved. The old house, in poor repair, was demolished in 1962.

In its place A.G. Sheppard Fidler and Associates designed a round building under a copper dome, with twenty precast concrete ribs rising out of it and a glass-fibre rooflight at the centre. It opened in 1970.

Historic England, which listed it at Grade II on 30 April 2015, says the result resembles a flying saucer and was designed to sit low in the mature grounds. The café inside is the Flying Saucer Café.

The listing also cites its generous, top-lit interior and a ramp and lift that built in disabled access from the start. It notes a stainless steel plaque in the foyer recording the official opening by the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey.

Bourne Hall holds weddings and civil ceremonies, and some of Garbrand Hall's trees can still be seen in its grounds, above the springs where the Hogsmill rises.

All six are on Surrey County Council's list of approved venues. The Wedding Venue List, which covers every licensed wedding venue in England and Wales, has them on one page at weddingvenuelist.co.uk/venues-in/epsom-and-ewell.

Guildford seeks Sanctuary status

9 November 2026



A Surrey borough council leader has warned of an "increase in propaganda" from people seeking to "spread hatred" in the community.

Guildford Borough Council's leader Julia McShane (Liberal Democrats: Westborough) praised the authority's "strong record" of supporting vulnerable people and groups during a council debate this week.

It came as councillors considered a motion to apply to be a recognised Council of Sanctuary – a network of local authorities that are committed to supporting asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants.

Councillor McShane hailed Guildford's aid for Ukrainian, Afghan and Syrian refugees, and thanked members of the

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community for their “kindness and support”.

However, she added: “Sadly, we have seen an increase in propaganda from those whose sole interest is to spread hatred and disharmony amongst our communities.

“We cannot stand by and let this go unchallenged, and we cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering of those who are victims of racism, discrimination or intimidation.”

The motion, tabled by Councillor Carla Morson (Liberal Democrats: Ash Vale), called on Guildford to seek Council of Sanctuary status and promote the inclusion of vulnerable people in society.

It also recommended the council leader ask the incoming West Surrey Council to consider taking on this status too.

Councillor Morson said: “Although the initiative has a particular focus on refugees and people seeking asylum, I think it’s important to recognise that its principles go much wider than that. It’s about the sort of borough we want Guildford to be.”

While the motion was resoundingly adopted by the council, some members attempted to pass an amendment that would have seen the proposals go through public approval before adoption.

Proposed by Councillor Philip Brooker (Conservative: Worplesdon), the amendment asked for a four-week public consultation on whether to proceed, that would have a majority of at least 2,000 respondents to get the green light.

Councillor Brooker said he has “absolutely no problem” with the wording of the motion, but wanted it to be “put to the residents first”.

However, other members of the council pushed back at the need for a survey to reach this decision, with Councillor Joanne Shaw (Liberal Democrats: Merrow) saying “I think it’s ridiculous to ask for a consultation when we’ve been elected to represent our residents on something like this.”

And Councillor Maddy Redpath (Residents for Guildford and Villages: Castle) added: “My concern about going to 2,000 residents and getting them to reply is it would get hijacked.

“It would become a political statement, and it wouldn’t be representative of the Guildford borough of 150,000 people.”

The motion as originally presented was adopted by councillors following the debate, while Councillor Brooker’s amendment was defeated when put to a vote.

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

SES Water revives Surrey farm grants as leakage rises

9 November 2026



SES Water has reopened a grant fund to help Surrey farmers protect rivers and groundwater from agricultural pollution. The relaunch comes as Environment Agency figures show that leakage from the company’s drinking water network rose by more than 10 per cent in 2025–26, although SES still lost less water per household than the England average.

The Catchment Fund is open to farmers and landowners in priority areas where changes in land management could help protect water at source. Fertilisers and pesticides can reach rivers in runoff or seep into groundwater. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s infrastructure plan says around 85 per cent of the water supplied by SES comes from underground chalk and greensand sources.

What the grants have paid for

One grant paid for a bladed roller to loosen compacted soil, alongside soil tests and a subscription to an app to track changes. SES says loosening the soil can help roots grow deeper and rain soak in. Deeper roots could also help crops take up more nitrogen, leaving less nitrate to seep into groundwater.

The farmer told SES that roots were already growing into cracks made by the roller. There was a practical benefit too. Fence posts were easier to push into the ground. The company’s announcement gave no measurements showing whether less nitrate had reached groundwater.

A second grant paid Surrey Wildlife Trust to assess a 2.2km stretch of the River Eden between two farms. The assessment

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identified possible measures including wider riverside buffer strips, tree planting, ponds and other wetland features. These could help intercept runoff and reduce bank erosion. The grant paid for the survey, and the assessment explored whether biodiversity net gain funding could pay for the restoration work. SES did not disclose the value of either grant or the budget for the reopened fund.

Less water lost than average, but leakage is rising

The Environment Agency says SES lost around 75 litres per property per day through leakage in 2025–26, against an England average of about 101 litres. Leakage accounted for 14.4 per cent of the water entering its distribution network, compared with 18.6 per cent nationally. Even with that better-than-average performance, the volume SES lost rose by more than 10 per cent in a year when leakage across England was broadly flat.

SES is part of Pennon Group, which reported £25.2 million of capital investment at SES in 2025–26. Pennon says that covered work on network resilience, leak detection and repairs, replacement of lead pipes and metering. Pennon also reported a group dividend of 29.29p per share for the year. That figure covers the whole group, which includes South West Water, and gives no breakdown of what shareholders received from SES's operations.

Who is responsible for sewage in Epsom and Ewell?

Thames Water is responsible for public sewerage in Epsom and Ewell, including the storm tanks that discharge into the Hogsmill system. The Environment Agency recorded 22 serious pollution incidents from Thames Water's sewerage assets across its operating area in 2025, including 11 from foul sewers. In a separate enforcement action, Ofwat imposed £122.7 million in penalties on Thames Water in May 2025, comprising £104.5 million for wastewater breaches and £18.2 million for breaches of dividend rules.

Across England, monitors recorded 291,492 storm overflow spills in 2025, down 35 per cent on 2024. The Environment Agency said unusually dry conditions accounted for much of the fall. Storm overflow counts record how often monitored outlets discharged. The agency separately records pollution incidents from sources such as foul sewers and treatment works.

Agricultural pollution is also a significant pressure. An Environment Agency report published this year cites national data identifying agriculture as adversely affecting 40 per cent of England's water bodies. A parliamentary inquiry cited sewage and wastewater as a pressure affecting 36 per cent, based on the same generation of river basin evidence. The categories can overlap, and the balance varies from river to river.

For the River Eden, the next question is which of the proposed works will be funded and carried out. For the farm trial, it is whether the soil tests show a lasting improvement and whether monitoring can establish that less nitrate is reaching groundwater.

Sam Jones – Reporter



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78 year old Epsom runner's 100th marathon to support Ukraine this winter

9 November 2026



An Epsom charity is asking residents to help families facing winter without power in Ukraine — while one of its most dedicated volunteers prepares to run her 100th marathon at the age of 78.

Surrey Stands With Ukraine (SSWU) hopes to provide more than 200 families in hard-hit areas with Winter Family Survival Packs as the country faces the fifth winter of Russia's full-scale invasion.

Each £50 pack contains a portable gas cooker and gas canister supplies, a power bank, a rechargeable torch or lamp and a fleece blanket. Together, these basic items can help a family prepare a hot meal, keep a phone charged to contact relatives and emergency services, and have light when the electricity is out.

The appeal has a £10,000 target, with donations of any size welcomed. Its message is simple: help provide "#warmthlightlife" to families enduring another winter of war.

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Ann’s century of marathons

Supporting the charity’s humanitarian work is Ann Bath, who will run her 100th marathon on Sunday 8 November.

The 78-year-old will follow the Thames towpath between Walton-on-Thames and Hampton Court, covering the stretch four times to complete her marathon challenge. Her fundraising appeal aims to raise £2,000 for SSWU’s work supporting people in Ukraine.

Ann has supported the Epsom-based charity since its inception. She volunteers at its Ashley Centre kiosk, helps pack donations and sort medical aid, and raises money through cake sales.

She has also run the London Marathon twice carrying a fundraising bucket and a SumUp card machine — giving supporters more than one way to contribute along the route.

Running is only part of Ann’s active life: she is also a keen cyclist, hiker and skier, somehow finding time to bake cakes for fundraising too.

Fellow volunteer Denise described her as “one of the strong stalwarts” of the charity, adding: “Ann always does these with a smile on her face.”

“Ann is an inspiration to us all!”

Two ways to help

Residents can support the Winter Family Survival Packs appeal directly or sponsor Ann’s milestone marathon to help fund the charity’s humanitarian work.

A £50 donation funds a complete winter pack, but smaller contributions can combine to help another family meet some of its most basic needs.

Donate to the Winter Family Survival Packs appeal.

Sponsor Ann through her 100th marathon fundraising page.

Lionel Blackman

Epsom and Ewell Times discloses that Lionel Blackman is a director of Epsom and Ewell Times and is also the Director of Surrey Stands With Ukraine that operates under registered charity Harrop HR Missions Ltd 1117155

Epsom’s silent firework display seeks public home

9 November 2026



Epsom radio founder hopes vintage fireworks will spark a museum

Thousands of vintage British fireworks collected by Epsom-born Radio Jackie founder Tony Collis could one day help preserve the history of a once-thriving British industry.

Tony, who still lives in Epsom, has spent more than 30 years assembling a collection stretching from the 1920s to the 1990s. Behind it are memories of childhood Bonfire Nights, when his father turned the family’s back garden into the setting for one of the highlights of the year.

“I remember Bonfire Night being a big feature of the year. My father thoroughly enjoyed it, and, as kids, my brother and I would be taken to the bottom of the garden, where there was a bonfire. Back then, the fireworks were very small, but because we were small and they were let off in close proximity, they always looked bigger!”

The celebrations extended beyond the family garden.

“It was a magical time. We’d have potatoes cooking on the bonfire to eat afterwards, and the whole street seemed to join in. The gardens were laid out in a line, with a bonfire at the end of each garden, so the atmosphere along the street was electric, really fabulous.”

From garden memories to glass cabinets

Speaking to World of Collecting, Tony explained how those memories inspired him to begin collecting in the early 1990s. Most of his thousands of items date from the 1950s and 1960s.

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Manufacturers represented include Standard, Brock's and Pains, the latter having a local connection through its manufacturing base in Mitcham.

The collection is arranged by manufacturer and type, with much of it displayed in glass cabinets away from sunlight to protect the colourful paper designs. A recreated shop-counter display, complete with stock boxes, recalls childhood shopping trips with his mother.

"I also have a short counter display, like the sort you might have seen in a newsagent, with stock boxes of fireworks."

Among his favourites are air bombs, remembered for their noisy contribution to garden celebrations in the 1960s.

A museum ambition

Tony hopes the collection will eventually find a permanent home where the designs and history of British fireworks can be appreciated by future generations.

"I'd love people to learn a bit more about them, so ideally I'd love my collection to go into a dedicated museum about British firework making through the ages. I understand that people can be wary of fireworks, but a museum could help them appreciate the designs, colours and history of the industry.

"I'd also like the museum to be dedicated to the ethos of Bonfire Night, which I feel is slowly being wiped out at the moment."

A member of a Sussex Bonfire Society, Tony previously organised large displays himself. These days he attends the celebrations in Lewes, valuing the communal traditions of gathering around a fire as well as the fireworks.

Appeal for forgotten fireworks

For Tony, collecting is about preserving something he loves rather than pursuing a financial return.

"My collection isn't about making money. I collect these things because they interest me, and I enjoy showing them to people."

He hopes anyone discovering old fireworks will contact him rather than set them off.

"This is part of an appeal: If anyone comes across old fireworks, particularly examples with blue touch paper, I'd ask them not to set them off and to give me a call on 07956506300. I'd be happy to collect them."

The full interview and photographs of the collection appear on the World of Collecting website.

Lionel Blackman

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Image credit Tony Collis

Payroll Essentials for Independent Businesses in Epsom and Ewell

9 November 2026



From the independent shops lining Epsom's high street to small firms around Ewell Village, local businesses require a reliable payroll process to ensure employees are paid correctly and on time. However, without the right tools, payroll can be a huge administrative burden, even with a small team.

So, with that in mind, here are the main payroll considerations for independent businesses in Epsom and Ewell and how employers can keep on top of their responsibilities without spending hours on paperwork and manual calculations.

Important Payroll Considerations

Holiday Pay

Calculating holiday pay is fairly straightforward for full time staff with fixed hours. However, when it comes to part-time employees or those who work irregular hours, it can be a little more complicated.

For part time workers with fixed hours, holiday entitlement works on a pro-rata basis, whereas workers with irregular

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hours build up their entitlement at a rate of 12.07%. Because of these differences, classifying workers accurately and documenting calculations correctly is essential for staying compliant.

Workplace Pensions

Employees aged 22 and over who earn more than £10,000 a year must be automatically enrolled into a qualifying workplace pension. They are allowed to opt-out, but they must always be auto-enrolled if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Employers must then contribute the correct amount (at least 5%) and deduct the right amount from the employee's pay (at least 3%).

HMRC Deadlines

HMRC requires employers to submit accurate reports. This includes:

- An FPS (Full Payment Submission) on or before payday
- An EPS (Employer Payment Summary) by the 19th of the tax month
- Year-end FPS by 5 April

New starters or leavers must also be declared, and if any of the information submitted is incorrect, it must be rectified as soon as possible.

How Employers Can Simplify the Payroll Process

It's not uncommon for small and independent businesses to handle payroll manually. However, particularly if part time or seasonal employees are involved, this can lead to huge amounts of admin. And any errors can lead to further complications, fines, and even legal disputes.

To ensure businesses aren't spending hours upon hours calculating wages, holiday entitlement, deductions, and contributions, and aren't worrying about creating accurate reports and submitting them on time, do follow managed payroll services.

By outsourcing payroll, employees consistently receive the right amount of pay, and businesses remain compliant without having to spend a considerable amount of time and money in the process.

Balancing Compliance and Admin is Essential

Maintaining payroll compliance is critical, but it's important that businesses aren't bogged down by admin in the process. By outsourcing payroll instead, employers can have confidence that their employees will be paid correctly and on time and reports will be submitted to HMRC accurately and before their deadline.

[Sponsored article]

Surrey's ancient woods among England's richest – at risk?

9 November 2026



New BBC analysis shows Surrey is home to some of the densest concentrations of ancient woodland in England, as conservation groups warn that the drive to build 1.5 million homes and the new "grey belt" could weaken protection for habitats that have stood since at least 1600.

Surrey is one of the most important counties in England for ancient woodland, according to new figures from the BBC Shared Data Unit – and campaigners fear the national push for housing could put some of those woods under growing pressure.

Ancient woodland is land that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600. It covers only around 2.5% of England, yet it is regarded as one of the country's most valuable wildlife habitats. Because these ecosystems take centuries to develop, conservation groups describe them as irreplaceable.

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The BBC's analysis of Natural England mapping shows that across England as a whole, ancient woodland covers 2.6% of council areas.

In Surrey, the picture varies sharply from borough to borough. Mole Valley, which borders Epsom & Ewell to the south, is among the most heavily wooded districts in the country, with ancient woodland covering 12.7% of its area – placing it eighth of roughly 290 council areas in the data. Waverley (11.4%) ranks tenth. Tandridge (7.1%) and Guildford (6.8%) are also well above the national figure.

By contrast, Epsom & Ewell has about 34 hectares of ancient woodland – roughly 340,000 square metres, or the equivalent of around 47 football pitches – covering 1.0% of the borough. That is below the national average, reflecting the borough's small size and largely built-up character. Much of what survives lies within the borough's countryside: the council describes much of the woodland at Horton Country Park as ancient coppice woodland, including Butcher's Grove, where coppicing dates back to medieval times.

Taken together, Surrey's eleven districts and boroughs contain around 12,150 hectares of ancient woodland – about 47 square miles.

"Wholly exceptional"

Under national planning policy, development that would cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland should be refused unless there are "wholly exceptional reasons" and a suitable compensation strategy exists. Natural England advises councils to keep a buffer of at least 15 metres between new development and ancient woodland.

But the BBC Shared Data Unit found dozens of housing schemes across England proposed or approved on land immediately beside ancient woods – including around 450 homes close to Hook Wood in Kent, 150 bordering Chaddesden Wood in Derby and about 130 beside Gelster Wood near Doncaster.

Campaigners say much of the controversy is not about felling trees but about building right up to the woodland edge. Ecologists warn that construction can damage root systems, change drainage, increase pollution and bring noise and light – while new residents' pets can threaten ground-nesting birds and bats.

They also point to the government's target of 1.5 million new homes by the end of 2029 and the creation of the "grey belt" – poorer-quality parts of the Green Belt that can be built on – as raising the pressure, particularly in the South East.

Lucy Graebe-Watson, chairwoman of Ancient Woodland UK, said: "We are already seeing cases where existing protections are struggling." She said her organisation had seen a rise in concerns and alerts from local groups since recent planning reforms, especially around land allocations and buffer zones, and warned that because protection is based on policy rather than law, any increase in pressure raises the risk. Ancient Woodland UK wants statutory legal protection for ancient woodland.

Carl Bunnage, head of nature policy at the RSPB, described the "wholly exceptional" provision as a potential loophole for developers. He said that while the RSPB welcomed improvements to the definition of irreplaceable habitats in the new National Planning Policy Framework, protection should be strengthened – including a definitive list of irreplaceable habitats given the strongest safeguards, as historic buildings are. He added that housing and growth policies are generally given "substantial" weight in planning decisions while nature policies are not, meaning efforts to protect nature often start as an uphill battle.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said ancient woodlands have "very clear and strong protections" and that proposals resulting in their loss or deterioration should be refused, with very limited exceptions such as nationally significant infrastructure – where measures to compensate for the impact would be required.

Local Plan

The figures come as Epsom & Ewell's own Local Plan remains under examination. The plan was submitted to the government in March 2025, and earlier this year, at the inspector's request, the council consulted on additional sites that could be allocated for housing through main modifications.

Surrey's ancient woodland at a glance (share of each council area)

Mole Valley – 12.7% (about 3,287 hectares)
Waverley – 11.4% (3,942 ha)
Tandridge – 7.1% (1,770 ha)
Guildford – 6.8% (1,836 ha)
Reigate and Banstead – 4.5% (578 ha)
Runnymede – 4.0% (312 ha)
Elmbridge – 2.8% (268 ha)
Epsom and Ewell – 1.0% (34 ha)
Surrey Heath – 0.8% (76 ha)
Woking – 0.8% (51 ha)
Spelthorne – less than 0.1% (2 ha)
England average – 2.6%

How the figures were calculated: the BBC Shared Data Unit combined Natural England's mapping of ancient woodland with Office for National Statistics council boundaries, and divided the area of ancient woodland in each council by that council's total area. Hectare figures, the Surrey total and rankings have been calculated by Epsom and Ewell Times from the BBC data.

This story was produced with data from the BBC Shared Data Unit, part of the BBC Local News Partnerships.

Sam Jones – Reporter

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Image: Butchers Grove Horton Country Park Epsom aerial from google maps

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Horsham spooked by Sutton & Epsom hat-trick

9 November 2026



Sutton and Epsom RFC 43 Horsham 26. Saturday 31st October. Rugby Lane

Spookily, in the annals of Sutton and Epsom RFC league history, there have only been two previous occasions when the club have played on Halloween. In the inaugural season of 1987–88 they won at home 14–3 against Old Gaytonians, and in 2009–10 they lost 14–9 at Haywards Heath. This campaign had seen four wins from five outings, but a points difference of plus two indicated that their matches had been extremely hard-fought affairs. The visitors, Horsham, had done the double over the Black and Whites last season and arrived full of confidence. For the home supporters, it was a delight to see their team at Rugby Lane for only the second time in 2026–27. The match did not disappoint, with the Black and Whites recording a 43–26 victory.

The only change in the Sutton and Epsom squad was the absence of the Lurch-like lock Ewan McTaggart, which enabled Steve Munford to add to his considerable aggregate of appearances. Horsham's Archie Fox initiated proceedings in conditions that were ideal for rugby and a delightful contrast to the previous Saturday. The hosts were immediately on the attack, but white line fever overcame Tipene Maxwell with Adam Bibby free. The visitors switched from determined defence to potent attack as centre Tom Saunders marauded into the 22, but this initial sortie came to nought. The early indicators hinted that a thoroughly thrilling afternoon was on the menu.

The frenetic pace continued as Sutton and Epsom were indebted to a superb Angus Findlay tackle. Equally, Horsham were grateful that the hovering Bibby received a pass on his laces and the subsequent kick ahead rolled safe a split second after he touched down. Finally, on the quarter-hour, the deadlock was broken. A sweeping attack by the Sutton and Epsom backs culminated with Gareth O'Brien sending over Adam Bibby for a try in the corner. Freddy Bunting converted from the flank for 7–0. A minute later, the home supporters were applauding a second score. Following a jinking break by Angus Findlay, the ball found its way to Adam Bibby, who sauntered in for his second. Freddy Bunting's kick made it 14–0.

Horsham joined the party a couple of minutes later with their opening score. Wonderful control from their pack saw them remorselessly advance to the line for flanker Tyrese Makasi to take the glory. The visitors would have been on the scoreboard, but ghosts in the machine meant that the board remained blank whilst spectators totted up the score to 14–5, with the kick drifting wide. Sutton and Epsom replied in an instant as the brilliant Bibby transformed from finisher to provider when he broke free, passing to Josh Rea and on to Euan Findlay for try number three. The Bunting boot erred, but Sutton and Epsom led 19–5. A minute later, Tipene Maxwell was touching down for his first try for the Black and Whites after a 40-metre charge on the half-hour. The hosts led 26–5 following four tries in a breathless 15 minutes to secure a bonus point.

Not to be outdone, the Green and Whites scored again in the blink of an eye. The formidable Tom Saunders accelerated through a gap and scored untouched from halfway. Joe Wilde added the extras as the Sussex men trailed 12–26. There were still ten minutes until the break. After six tries in under 20 minutes, the game seemed to be quietly meandering to the interval. However, Gareth O'Brien had other ideas as he changed direction to break the line. Tipene Maxwell quickly carried on the attack from the breakdown, and Euan Findlay burst into the 22 with only one man between him and the line. For the second Saturday on the spin, a delightful kick did not produce a favourable bounce for the number nine, but Adam Bibby was on hand to fall on the ball to complete his first hat trick for Sutton and Epsom. Freddy Bunting bisected the uprights and Mr Clinton Mill, soon after, ended the half with Sutton and Epsom leading 33–12.

At the interval, Horsham appeared to be in hot water. This was a rather ironic state of affairs as earlier in the week the Rugby Lane boiler had expired, but through the efforts of the committee in general and Jeff Parsons in particular, normality was restored. The players would enjoy 21st-century comforts rather than endure the Victorian public school charms of the physically and spiritually reviving benefits of cold water. Sutton and Epsom's euphoria at the stunning display by their backs was tempered by the knowledge that the Horsham pack had shown itself to be a formidable unit when in possession. The Black and Whites resumed attacking the clubhouse end with a 21-point cushion, with the Green and Whites eager for an early score to revive their fortunes.

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Horsham dominated possession from the start of the second period and were good value for the opening score of the second half after ten minutes. Again, they were indebted to their forwards. Powerfully, the juggernaut pack advanced and, after multiple phases, captain Jacob Denhart forced his way over from close range. Joe Wilde's conversion made it 33–19. The visitors had commendably turned the tide in the third quarter, and their fourth, bonus-point try arrived on the hour mark. Sutton and Epsom captain Rob Hegarty appeared to have lifted the siege with a familiar muscular carry towards halfway. The Coolhurst men turned over the ball, Tom Saunders made the initial break and then the forwards took over, with prop Freddy Kilfeather the beneficiary with the try. As Joe Wilde's kick sailed over, the game was now in the balance, with Horsham only nine points adrift as they trailed 24–33 with twenty minutes on the clock.

In the final quarter, the mood of the crowd changed as cheers for tries from their scintillating back play were replaced by appreciative roars greeting every thunderous tackle from Sutton and Epsom's defence as concern grew over the outcome. There was considerable relief when the hosts were awarded a penalty and Freddy Bunting stepped up for a kick at goal from 40 metres, with the ball soaring over the posts. In recent times, the Rugby Lane team had opted for the kick to the corner, but the pragmatic approach was not only popular but also successful as they now led 36–24.

Slowly but surely, Sutton and Epsom regained control by monopolising possession as the game condensed in the middle third. This impressive game management and discipline was strikingly undone. The Black and Whites conceded a penalty and, after an injudicious aside to Mr Mill, they were marched back a further ten metres. Perhaps sportsmen should adhere to the cautionary advice of Baruch Spinoza: "The world would be happier if men had the same capacity to be silent that they have to speak." The visitors were threatening another score that would have potentially secured an additional bonus point and guaranteed another dramatic finish for Sutton and Epsom. However, the kick to the winger landed safely in the grateful hands of the home defence, who called for the mark.

It was Sutton and Epsom who were to enjoy the final score in time added on as they recalled memories of their first-period panache. A wonderful move with forwards and backs linking swept down the pitch. Perhaps it was appropriate that Angus Findlay scored, as he had enjoyed a splendid afternoon in attack and defence in arguably his best performance for the first XV. Freddy Bunting took his tally to 13 points. There was just time for the restart to be secured and the ball booted to touch to conclude a very entertaining game, with Sutton and Epsom impressive 43–26 winners.

Sutton and Epsom's success advanced them to second in the league, a solitary point behind Beckenham. The fluency and potency of the backs was a joy to behold. Adam Bibby was transformed from perennial provider to try-scoring tormentor. In the second half, Horsham threatened a spectacular comeback, but Sutton and Epsom showed steely resolve in the final quarter to secure a thoroughly deserved victory. Horsham were hampered by notable absentees but showed great character in the second half. Their forwards were superb, and in Tyrese Makasi they have the archetypal number seven who combines all the attributes of that key position. He was tireless in his work, tackling and carrying with power and pace all afternoon. In their backs, Tom Saunders added to his reputation as one of the most potent attackers in the league.

After an exhausting six games on the bounce, the league goes into abeyance before hostilities resume on 14 November. Time for teams to lick their wounds, exorcise the ghosts from round six and return reinvigorated for the run of games up to Christmas. The Black and Whites will be visiting Old Elthamians for the first time since the 2011–12 campaign, which was the source of horrific nightmares for Sutton and Epsom as they entered Dante's Inferno and experienced all nine circles of Hell in a season of a full haunted house of 26 defeats from 26 outings.

Sutton and Epsom

O'Brien, Bibby, Maxwell, Bunting, Findlay A, Lennard, Findlay E, Johnson, Lennie, Boaden, Tame, Glanville, Rea, Jones and Hegarty (captain). Replacements: Howes, Scott and Munford.

Horsham

Fox, Wadley, Sanders, May-Miller, Grogan, Wilde, Sakakini, Earle, White, Kilfeather, Denhart (captain), Anderton, Lovett, Makasi and Howard. Replacements: Murphy, Brock and Thompson.

John Croysdill

What are the benefits of a Surrey Mayor? MP asks

9 November 2026



Guildford's MP says she is "concerned" at the lack of public consultation over the introduction of an elected mayor in Surrey.

Liberal Democrat Zöe Franklin told the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) that any devolution deal must provide

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“real benefits” for the county as major changes to local government loom.

The government revealed in supporting documents to last week’s Budget that several new mayoral combined authorities are on the cusp of creation, including one for Surrey.

If followed through, a new Mayor of Surrey would be directly elected by voters and would work alongside the new West and East Surrey councils on key strategic priorities – the details of which would be cemented in a final devolution agreement.

However, Ms Franklin, who is the Liberal Democrats’ local government spokesperson, told the LDRS: “While I welcome the government’s commitment to devolution, I am concerned by the lack of a vote or public consultation – which is odd considering their promise to not impose mayors without local approval.”

She added: “I am surprised by the lack of engagement from the government with MPs and local council leaders given the statement that talks are at an ‘advanced’ stage for establishing a mayoral authority in the area.”

It comes as Surrey faces major changes to its local government structure in the coming months, with the current county and district councils all slated for abolition next spring. The new unitary councils in West and East Surrey will take their places in April 2027.

Under the current system, local government responsibilities are divided between the two types of council, but the two new councils will instead be in charge of all services in their respective areas.

If a mayor is adopted, they would oversee the entire county, focusing on certain issues set out in any final devolution agreement – as currently seen in areas like Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and the Tees Valley.

Other options for regional devolution deals would include a foundation strategic authority, in which several councils pool resources on major issues – but without an overarching mayor guiding the process.

Ms Franklin added: “Once we see more detailed information, I shall work hand in hand with my fellow West Surrey MP’s and the leadership of West Surrey Council to evaluate the pros and cons of a mayoral strategic authority versus a foundation strategic authority for Surrey.

“It must provide real benefits for local people, businesses, and communities.”

She added that the proposals would “do nothing” to address the levels of debt inherited by Surrey’s incoming councils, as well as the major challenges facing SEND and social care services.

However, other political figures in Surrey have been more welcoming of the proposals for a regional mayor.

Surrey County Council’s outgoing leader Councillor Tim Oliver (Conservative: Weybridge) previously said: “I hope the incoming leadership of East and West Surrey councils go full throttle in working with government to deliver it.”

And West Surrey’s opposition leader Jane Austin (Conservative: Waverley Eastern Villages) said: “With an economy worth more than £50 billion, Surrey has enormous potential to drive growth, attract investment and create opportunities for our young people.

“A mayor with meaningful powers over transport, infrastructure, skills and economic development could help us unlock that potential for residents and businesses across East and West Surrey.”

A Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government spokesperson said: “The government is in the final stages of agreeing a mayoral strategic authority with Surrey, and this includes gaining formal consent from local councils.

“This is part of our ambitious programme of devolution as we give communities greater control over the decisions that shape jobs, transport, housing and public services in their area.”

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

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A Surrey Mayor is on the horizon

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- Surrey Council leader urges an elected Mayoral office for the County
- Tourist tax to boost Surrey finances?
- Epsom and Ewell to have three tiers of government when promised one?
- Surrey eyes a share of its own taxes under devolution plans
- Burnham ‘commitment’ to Surrey devolution

Image: Official Portrait Of Zöe Franklin MP (Credit: House of Commons / Roger Harris)

Drawing conclusions from Epsom and Ewell FC’s

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one pointer

9 November 2026



Chipstead 1–1 Epsom & EwellFC. 31st October 2026. NRT Stadium, High Road, Chipstead. Combined Counties Premier League South. Attendance: 93.

The Salts had to settle for a point at Chipstead after a competitive encounter in the afternoon sunshine.

Backed by a strong travelling following, the Salts started brightly. Jason Bloor was caught in the face by an off-the-ball elbow after just three minutes, but the incident went unpunished. Angel Montes, returning from injury, was also on the receiving end of another heavy elbow soon afterwards, which was again missed by the referee.

Chipstead registered the first attempt of the match in the 13th minute, but the shot went wide. Epsom & Ewell continued to press, and on the half-hour a fine move, started and finished by Blessing Hombessa, ended with his effort flying narrowly over the crossbar.

The Salts deservedly took the lead in the 40th minute. After the home goalkeeper failed to hold the ball, Jason Bloor reacted quickest and fired into the net. There was still time before the interval for Callum McAllistair to find Hombessa, whose shot went just wide.

Blessing Hombessa went close again early in the second half, but Chipstead equalised in the 59th minute when Diego Munoz broke down the right and fired past Grummitt.

Salts captain Brendan Murphy-McVey was booked in the 65th minute, before a Chipstead player also received a yellow card two minutes later following another late challenge.

The Salts then thought they had regained the lead when Murphy-McVey’s free-kick was powerfully headed home by Toby Young. However, the referee disallowed the goal for a foul which nobody else appeared to see, much to the frustration of the Salts players and supporters.

Niall Stillwell replaced goalscorer Jason Bloor in the 70th minute, while Kionte Waul came on for Luke Miller after 84 minutes. Murphy-McVey later sent another free-kick narrowly wide of the upright.

Antonios Nazareth was forced off through injury in stoppage time and was replaced by Harry Murphy.

The Salts will feel they created enough opportunities to win and were particularly unfortunate to see Young’s goal disallowed. However, a point on the road was still a useful reward from a competitive afternoon.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

A Surrey Mayor is on the horizon

9 November 2026



Surrey is on the verge of getting its own elected mayor like those in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, according to plans announced in the Budget today.

Chancellor John Healey unveiled fresh devolution measures in the Budget – which set out the government’s finances and

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fiscal policies for the coming year.

As part of this, the government is in the “final stages” of establishing several new mayoral combined authorities across the country – of which one would be Surrey.

Mayoral combined authorities – such as in Greater Manchester, the Tees Valley and the West of England – see several unitary councils pool resources on key strategic issues, overseen by a directly elected mayor.

The news was welcomed by Surrey County Council leader Tim Oliver (Conservative: Weybridge), who has long pushed for the creation of a Mayor of Surrey.

He said: “I absolutely welcome the government’s intention to secure a mayor for Surrey and I hope the incoming leadership of East and West Surrey councils go full throttle in working with government to deliver it.

“Surrey needs to grab this opportunity with both hands to unlock the funding, infrastructure investments, and local decision-making powers that our residents deserve.”

In the Budget, Mr Healey promised a “radical rewiring of the state” in a push for greater devolution of power to England’s regions – which has been a key priority for Prime Minister Andy Burnham.

Other measures to this end included plans for regional government to keep 100 percent of business rates income by the decade’s end and allowing strategic authorities to charge an overnight visitor levy – often known as a tourism tax.

From next April, Surrey County Council will be abolished along with the 11 district councils and replaced with the new West and East Surrey councils.

A mayor for Surrey would be elected separately to these two new councils, but work alongside them on any strategic issues on which they decided to collaborate.

East Surrey’s council leader Steve Wotton (Liberal Democrats: Horley West , Salfords & Sidlow) said: “A Mayor of Surrey could mean more decisions closer to our communities and help secure the strategic leadership and investment they deserve. We’ll engage with government to explore that potential.

“There are examples elsewhere in the UK of mayors helping improve public services and drive economic growth, and we’d like to secure similar opportunities to improve life for the people we represent.”

And West Surrey’s leader Paul Follows (Liberal Democrats: Godalming South, Milford & Witley) said: “We will work closely with Government, our partners across Surrey and local stakeholders to ensure that any future governance arrangements are designed in the best interests of West Surrey residents and businesses.

“However, it is essential that discussions about future structures do not distract from the key issue of resolving the significant financial and structural challenges that local government in Surrey continues to face.”

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

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Related reports

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Oxshott weighs in with traffic control camera

9 November 2026



A Surrey village is set to get a new traffic camera to protect its streets from heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) following a residents’ petition – although many believe this measure does not go nearly far enough.

Oxshott community group Fedora launched a petition this summer calling for stringent new actions to stem the flow of

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large vehicles through the village's narrow roads.

The petition gathered more than 800 signatures, and Surrey County Council has now agreed to install a single automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) camera in Oxshott. It will be placed at the Copsem Lane end of the A244, and is expected to be operational in early 2027.

But the original petition demanded more sweeping measures to improve road safety – including ANPR and speed control cameras in both directions and building continuous pavements so pedestrians do not have to cross the busy road so frequently.

Fedora chair Ian Dilks told councillors that installing just one ANPR camera would only solve "half of the problem" as HGVs travel in both directions through the village.

His petition noted that Oxshott has more than 1,000 children attending its schools, many of whom have to walk to school through the village despite the lack of continuous pavements.

"All of this has a direct impact on the quality of daily life," he said. "Residents face noise disturbance, particularly at night – and it creates health and safety risks. Road conditions continue to deteriorate."

Mr Dilks wants the council to further consider the full list of requests in his petition, saying: "We welcome [Surrey County Council's] recognition of the problems, but we are concerned by the response."

He added: "On behalf of Oxshott residents, we ask you to respond positively to these requests and suggestions and agree to work with local residents on solutions."

Surrey County Council's transport lead Councillor Matt Furniss (Conservative: Shalford) noted there had been a similar situation in Farnham, where the deployment of a single ANPR camera quickly brought down the number of vehicles exceeding weight restrictions.

He said: "As soon as the camera was introduced, it dropped off dramatically within a matter of weeks once the tickets started to be issued. We do know it is an effective solution."

The Fedora petition had welcomed measures from three years ago to bring in a night time HGV ban and a 20mph speed limit in the village centre, but claimed the problem was lack of enforcement.

Division Councillor Andy Burton (Liberal Democrats: Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott), who supported the petition, said further measures should be considered to control the "unacceptable" weight of traffic bearing down on Oxshott.

"The cause of all of this is the volume of traffic going through Oxshott, and I think at a strategic level, something needs to be done about that," he said.

"There are things that we could talk about now, a ULEZ expansion potentially, maybe a charging regime going through the road, or a daytime HGV ban. I think all of these things need to be tabled and considered at a strategic level."

While Surrey County Council is currently responsible for the county's highways, this will pass over to the two new unitary authorities in the West and East from next April.

Councillor David Lewis (Conservative: Cobham) said: "We've mentioned the fact there are currently plans just for a single ANPR camera.

"I think two cameras would be better – and I think if there's anything the county council can do between now and the end of March to obtain funding for a second camera, that would be very welcome."

But Councillor Furniss warned that ULEZ-style measures – such as London's Ultra Low Emission Zone, which charges high polluting vehicles to drive – could be "deeply unpopular".

"There needs to be a bit of a realisation about what can and cannot be done on the network," he said. "We can target particular vehicles such as HGVs, which is what we're doing in this case.

"But I do think we need recognition that we have the highest car ownership and twice as many vehicles on our roads as other areas do."

He also expressed his desire to see the impact of a single ANPR camera before considering a second one. "If it's having the impact already, without having to install a second camera, that would be particularly key," he said.

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

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Image: Oxshott Road Sign (Credit: Google Maps)

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