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Surrey to get a higher level of heart care

14 November 2025



Heart patients and the tiniest and most vulnerable babies across Surrey are set to benefit from major investment in local specialist services, following confirmation of a £3.2 million upgrade at Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in Chertsey. Although the improvements are centred at St Peter's Hospital, the effects will be felt across the county, including by patients who would typically access services at Epsom.

The investment is being funded largely by Runnymede Borough Council's Community Infrastructure Levy, and will see the cardiac catheter-lab at St Peter's upgraded to deliver more complex and less invasive heart procedures at a faster rate. It will be complemented by a £296,000 refurbishment of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, which is the only Level 3 neonatal facility in Surrey. Councillor Robert King, co-leader of Runnymede Borough Council, stated to the BBC's LDRS: "For families, the moments when a loved one needs specialist care are when the NHS matters most. That is why this investment we have championed at St Peter's Hospital is so vital."

Across Surrey, hospitals offer a range of cardiac services. Epsom provides extensive inpatient and outpatient cardiology care, including angiograms, non-complex stenting, pacemakers, complex device implants and heart-failure treatment. However, for confirmed heart attacks and the most complex interventional procedures, patients are transferred to the regional heart-attack centre at St George's in London. Other Surrey hospitals, including East Surrey Hospital and the Royal Surrey in Guildford, also run catheter labs and offer broad specialist cardiology care, though not all services are identical between sites.

The enhancements at St Peter's therefore represent a significant expansion of Surrey's own capacity to deliver more advanced, less invasive heart procedures locally, reducing pressure on London hospitals and improving access for patients across the county. In neonatal care, the upgraded Level 3 unit will strengthen Surrey's ability to care for the sickest and most premature babies, with facilities designed to improve comfort, privacy and support for families during long and emotionally demanding stays.

Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals CEO, Louise Stead, stated to the BBC's LDRS: "These improvements will strengthen our ability to deliver timely, life-saving care in modern, purpose-built environments." The funding, described as one of the most significant local healthcare investments in recent years, is expected to deliver the improvements within the next two years.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Image: St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey (Google)

From Ukraine to Epsom: How Music and Kindness Struck the Right Note

14 November 2025



When the Ukraine National Opera arrived in the UK on tour in early 2022, none of its musicians could have imagined how

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the world, and their lives, were about to change. Two weeks later, Russia invaded Ukraine. Many members of the orchestra, seeing the escalating conflict at home, made the painful decision to remain in the UK and claim asylum. Among them was clarinettist and saxophonist Vlad Voloshyn.

Now living in Epsom with local resident Nina Kaye, one of the founders of the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network, Vlad has continued to rebuild his life through music. Together with five of his former orchestra colleagues, he formed a brass ensemble called Freedom Pulse, which performs Ukrainian and classical repertoire across Surrey and beyond.

Alongside his performing career, Vlad is in his final year at the British Institute of Modern Music (BIMM) in Fulham, where he studies music and sound production and hopes to work as a sound designer after he graduates.

Recently, an extraordinary act of local generosity brought his story full circle. Vlad had long hoped to buy a tenor saxophone, an instrument essential for his expanding repertoire but out of reach financially. By chance, his host Nina, who also volunteers for Nucleo, a London-based social action charity that helps children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to music, received an email offering a donated tenor saxophone. Nina runs Nucleo's National Instrument Bank, which matches donated instruments with musicians in need.

The offer came from a donor in the Lake District. Determined and hopeful, Vlad took the long train journey north to collect what he thought was a tenor saxophone. Only on the journey home did he discover it was actually an alto sax, an instrument he already owned. Disheartened, he returned to Epsom unsure how to continue his search.

A few days later, Vlad was performing at a Ukrainian Music Evening in Epsom, attended by His Worshipful The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Robert Leach. Sitting beside the Mayor, Nina recounted Vlad's misadventure with the saxophone. Without hesitation, Councillor Leach said, "I've got a tenor sax at home which I haven't played for 30 years and he would be welcome to have it, if I can find it."

True to his word, after the concert Vlad was welcomed to the Mayor's home and given the instrument which left him both astonished and grateful.

What began as a story of loss and exile has become one of connection and kindness. From the national stage in Kyiv to community halls in Surrey, Vlad's journey shows how music continues to build bridges where politics and geography divide.

When Vlad plays his tenor sax in Freedom Pulse's performances, he will know that even in times of war and displacement, the power of human generosity, and of music itself, resonates far beyond borders.

Nina Kaye

Related reports:

Music and dance for Ukraine at Epsom Methodist Church

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Green Guide

14 November 2025



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is proud to launch its Green Your Home Guide to help residents take simple, everyday actions to contribute to a healthier environment and help combat climate change. The guide offers practical advice and tips for making small changes that collectively make a big difference.

The initiative empowers individuals and households to take ownership of their environmental impact through easy-to-follow steps. From reducing waste and conserving energy to choosing sustainable transport and supporting biodiversity, the guide highlights how everyone can play a part.

The Green Your Home Guide is being rolled out as part of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029, which has already helped reduce the council's operational emissions by 16% since 2019/2020. This is part of the council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2035.

Councillor Liz Frost, Chair of the Environment Committee, said:

"This guide is about showing people they don't need to make radical changes to their lives to make a difference. Simple, ongoing changes—whether building on existing efforts or starting something new – can have a meaningful, long-term impact. From making homes more energy efficient, to planning wildlife-friendly gardens, and investing in systems that reduce reliance on fossil fuels, every step counts. We want residents to feel confident and motivated to take action, and

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we hope the guide supports their decision-making along the way."

The Council's Green Your Home Guide is available here – Green Your Home Guide | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

More information about the Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029 can be found here – Climate Change | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

About Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's (EEBC) Green Your Home Guide
The council's Green Your Home Guide explains a number of ways residents can improve their property and garden, helping homes work with nature and reduce their household carbon footprint. Topics include: Insulate to end heat waste; generate green energy with renewable technology; let it drain with permeable driveways; go ahead, go electric; lights out to help nocturnal wildlife; mind the gap to save hedgehogs; give nature a home; save our streams with water butts; turn scraps to soil by composting; turf for earth; wild your garden with diverse, native landscaping; plants for bees; plants for butterflies; plants for birds; plant for the planet: plant new trees and keep existing ones. Green Your Home Guide | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

About EEBC's Climate Change Action Plan including progress so far

In 2020, the council's first Climate Change Action Plan (2020-2024) was developed, setting an ambitious target of becoming carbon neutral by the year 2035. It set out plans to implement a range of measures to reduce the council's own emissions as well as promoting good practice throughout the borough. The council has since adopted its second Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029. The plan is a living document which will be reviewed and updated over time. Climate Change | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

About EEBC Biodiversity Action Plan 2020-2030

The council's local Biodiversity Action Plan is a long-term plan aimed at protecting, maintaining and, where possible, enhancing biodiversity at a local level, taking into account both local, regional, national and sometimes international priorities. Epsom and Ewell Borough Council – Biodiversity

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Sara Sharif murder report on Surrey services

14 November 2025



Numerous safeguarding flaws over many years "cumulatively laid the foundations for the severe abuse" Sara Sharif experienced, a new independent report has revealed. The 10-year-old schoolgirl was found dead in her dad's home in Byfleet, Surrey, in August 2023. After Sara's dad, Urfan Sharif, and stepmum, Beinash Batool, were sentenced for murdering the girl in December 2024, Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) launched an independent safeguarding review. The reviewers were tasked to investigate how professionals responded to concerns about Sara's welfare throughout her life. The 62-page review, published on November 13, concluded that weaknesses in how professionals assessed risk, shared information and followed safeguarding procedures meant signs of harm were not acted on effectively. "Expected robust safeguarding processes were not followed," the report found. "Information gathering and assessment at this stage did not adequately triangulate information and respond to the presence of bruising alongside inconsistent explanations. Sara's 'voice' expressed through her change in demeanour was not heard."

In March 2023, Sara's school raised concerns with Surrey's children services after she appeared with bruising on her face and teachers were given inconsistent explanations for how it had happened. Her normally positive demeanour had also changed, but the report found that this was not sufficiently recognised as a sign that she might be at risk. Instead, the service decided no further action was needed after speaking to her father and did not hold a formal strategy discussion with other agencies. The review also found that information was held across multiple agencies but not consistently shared, leading to an incomplete understanding of the family's situation and therefore assessment of Sara's safety. It read: "This serves to highlight the challenge for practitioners in coming to a holistic understanding of a child's life both in the past and present and using this understanding to identify risk of harm."

Sara was withdrawn from school to be home educated in April 2023, which the review said removed her from professional oversight. Surrey's policy at the time required a home visit within ten working days when a child is withdrawn from school

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but this did not take place. The report added that management oversight failed to identify this gap in practice. The decision to home educate should have triggered further checks given the family's history with children's services. The review also identified long-standing domestic abuse concerns, finding that professionals underestimated the risks posed by Sara's father and relied too heavily on his reported attendance at a perpetrator's programme rather than assessing if his behaviour had changed. The authors recommended domestic abuse training and awareness should be strengthened across agencies locally and nationally.

Additionally Sara's mum had limited access to Polish interpreters during key family court proceedings in 2019. The report said her views were not fully heard and that little consideration was given to Sara's mixed Polish and Pakistani heritage in decision-making. The review also admits that sometimes agencies must "think the unthinkable" and consider the potential risk of harm in daily practice. It states: "Although the aim will always be to try and work alongside families and support them to care for their children, […] we must remain alert to the possibility that some parents will deliberately harm their children […] This is not the responsibility of any one agency." The review made 15 recommendations, including ensuring multi-agency discussions in all cases of unexplained injuries, improving home education oversight, and embedding cultural and domestic abuse training for staff.

Terence Herbert, Chief Executive of Surrey County Council said: "We are deeply sorry for the findings in the report related to us as a local authority. We have already taken robust action to address those relating to Surrey County Council, and that work will continue with every recommendation implemented in full. We will also work with partners across the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure a joint action plan is implemented as quickly as possible." In 2019 Surrey's Children Services was given an 'Inadequate' rating from Ofsted. This was then upgraded to 'Requires Improvement' in 2022 and then 'Good' in 2025. Surrey County Council has said it has already made "significant change" to how it handles child safeguarding. These include the creation of a multi-agency safeguarding hub to improve information sharing between social care, the police, and health services and mandatory domestic abuse training for all children's social workers. The council said it has also strengthened oversight of home education cases and requires additional checks and management reviews when a child is taken off the school roll.

However, the council has not clarified how it will acknowledge the importance of race and culture when considering child safeguarding, or how it will provide access to a translator if needed. Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council said: "I am certain that everyone involved with this family will have reflected on what more could have been done to protect Sara, and my thoughts and condolences are with anyone affected. The independent and detailed review makes a number of recommendations both for national government and local partners and it is now essential that every single person in every organisation involved in child safeguarding reads this report and understands the lessons learnt. I am deeply sorry for the findings in the report that relate to us as a local authority. We will now act on those findings and continue to review and strengthen our culture, systems and processes designed to support good practice in working with children and families, as per the recommendations. I call on the government to review the findings and, where appropriate, legislate for the changes in the national system that it calls for."

Emily Dalton LDRS

Image: Surrey County Council headquarters. Credit: Emily Coady-Stemp

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Surrey's Satellite bio-diversity project promoted at COP30 Brazil

14 November 2025



Surrey's Space4Nature project, which uses satellite data and community science to protect biodiversity across the county, is currently being showcased by the UK Government at the COP30 UK Pavilion in Belém, Brazil (10–21 November 2025). The display forms part of the UK's official presentation of research and innovation tackling global climate and nature challenges.

Co-led by the University of Surrey's Centre for Environment and Sustainability (CES) in collaboration with Surrey Wildlife Trust, Buglife, and the Painshill Park Trust, Space4Nature brings together scientists, local communities and conservation groups to map and monitor key habitats across Surrey – from chalk grasslands to heathlands and acid grasslands that support some of the nation's rarest species.

Using advanced satellite imagery and artificial intelligence trained with data from local volunteers, the project can classify habitats to Level 4 of the UKHab system – producing one of the most detailed environmental maps of its kind. This allows conservation partners to pinpoint where biodiversity is under threat and focus restoration efforts, such as reconnecting fragmented chalk grasslands – often called the "rainforests of Europe" for their carbon storage and rich

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biodiversity.

Surrey Wildlife Trust plays a central role in Space4Nature, leading the project's citizen science programme, training volunteers and coordinating the collection of field data that makes its satellite and AI mapping possible. The Trust's on-the-ground expertise connects technology and conservation, turning local knowledge into invaluable data for protecting Surrey's landscapes.

Dr Ana Andries, Lecturer in Remote Sensing and GIS at the University of Surrey, and project lead, said:

"We're using satellite data and artificial intelligence in a way that directly supports conservation on the ground. Citizen scientists help train our machine learning models, thus turning local field data into high-resolution habitat maps that reveal where biodiversity is under threat. To see our work featured on a global stage at COP30 highlights how our region's innovation and collaboration can help shape the future of biodiversity monitoring."

Andrew Jamieson, Space4Nature Project Manager at Surrey Wildlife Trust, says:

"It's time for conservation organisations like ours to step outside traditional boundaries and focus not just on land management and individual species recovery, but also on delivering the tools and partnerships that will drive change on a landscape level. This project exemplifies that approach."

Space4Nature was among the first projects in the United Kingdom to receive Space for Climate Observatory (SCO) accreditation from the UK's Space4Climate network, recognising its excellence in using Earth observation data to tackle environmental challenges. This year, it has been selected as one of just 19 organisations featured in the UK Government's Pavilion at COP30, with a video and QR-linked display presented by government representatives throughout the conference.

Dr Zoe M Harris, Director of Surrey's Centre for Environment and Sustainability and Co-Director of the Institute for Sustainability, said:

"The Centre for Environment and Sustainability was founded on the idea that solving environmental challenges means bringing disciplines and people together. Space4Nature embodies that vision – combining engineering, data science and community insight to create practical tools for nature recovery. Seeing this work recognised at COP30 highlights Surrey's role as a global leader in sustainability research and innovation."

Surrey University

Image: Centre for Environment and Sustainability, University of Surrey

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Epsom and Ewell Times adds – the Surrey project is one of only twenty presented by the UK at the COP30 summit. See the full list HERE.

Conditional nod to southern rail link to Heathrow

14 November 2025



Spelthorne Borough Council has agreed to support a new rail link between Staines-upon-Thames and Heathrow Airport, but only on strict environmental and local benefit conditions.

The proposed Heathrow Southern Rail (HSR) scheme would connect Heathrow Terminal 5 directly to the south-west rail network, using existing track between Staines and Windsor before running in a new tunnel under Staines Moor. Supporters say it could slash road congestion, help people reach work at the airport, and give the town's economy a boost.

Councillors say they welcome the idea in principle but have made clear that their backing comes with safeguards. They want guarantees that trains will actually stop at Staines, that there will be no damage to the sensitive Staines Moor landscape, and that the council will get to sign off on final plans once detailed studies are complete.

Cllr Chris Bateson, who led the council's review, told the BBC's Local Democracy Reporting Service: "We've looked at both proposals in detail. A direct rail link from Staines to Heathrow could reduce congestion and support our local

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economy. But we must protect Staines Moor and make sure residents benefit."

His colleague, Cllr Howard Williams, chair of the Business, Infrastructure and Growth Committee, added: "Our support relies on clear guarantees. The environment can't pay the price for progress. We will keep working with HSR to make sure residents' interests come first."

The link would run mainly in tunnel to limit disruption, emerging to join the existing railway near Staines. The promoter, Heathrow Southern Railway Ltd, says the route could remove millions of car journeys to the airport every year and cut thousands of tonnes of carbon emissions.

If built, the line could open in the second half of this decade, though no firm construction timetable has yet been confirmed. Earlier proposals suggested the service could be running between 2026 and 2028, offering a six-minute journey from Staines to Heathrow Terminal 5.

An alternative "Southern Light Rail" idea — which would have involved a surface-level route — was rejected by councillors as too intrusive, with greater impact on privacy and the landscape.

While the majority of councillors supported the HSR plan with safeguards, some voiced concern that the benefits might not be evenly spread across the borough, particularly in Stanwell, where many residents already work at the airport.

The council says it will continue talks with HSR to ensure local voices are heard before any final decision. For now, the message from Spelthorne is clear: Heathrow's southern rail link is welcome — but not at the expense of Staines Moor or local control.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Photo: Train sign (Credit: Spelthorne Borough Council)

Related reports:

Surrey's new rail link to Heathrow?

Epsom Hospital braces for strikes amid winter pressures

14 November 2025



Further strike action by resident doctors – formerly known as junior doctors – is set to add strain to NHS services just as winter illnesses begin to rise. The British Medical Association (BMA) has confirmed walkouts from 7am on Friday 14 November until 7am on Wednesday 19 November in what will be the latest round of industrial action in a long-running dispute with the Government over pay and working conditions. Hundreds of medics across St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group could join the five-day stoppage. The Trust says services are already under pressure from rising flu cases, which have climbed earlier than expected this year. Dr Richard Jennings, Group Chief Medical Officer, warned of disruption ahead and said hospitals are "always very busy at this time of year" and are experiencing "significant pressure" due to the combined impact of seasonal illness and the upcoming walkouts. He said consultant doctors and other staff will work extra shifts "to keep patients safe", but appointments may still need to be rescheduled to safeguard care for emergency and critically ill patients.

Local impact so far

During the previous round of resident-doctor strikes in July, 144 elective procedures and 1,084 outpatient appointments were rescheduled across the Group. On an average strike day, 211 resident doctors were recorded absent across the Trust's sites. The public will be contacted directly if their appointment needs to be rearranged, and the Trust emphasises that any appointment not specifically cancelled should be attended as normal. Emergency departments remain open for life-threatening conditions.

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Why doctors say they are striking

The BMA has repeatedly argued that resident-doctor pay has been eroded by more than a quarter in real terms since 2008. Representatives say pay restoration is essential both to retain doctors within the NHS and to halt a pattern of experienced staff leaving for better-paid roles abroad. Doctors' leaders also say the dispute is about patient safety: they claim chronic understaffing means resident doctors are covering too many gaps in rotas, working excessive hours, and taking on responsibilities that stretch beyond their training. The BMA says that improving pay and working conditions would reduce burnout and stabilise the workforce, ultimately shortening waiting lists. The organisation has also expressed frustration that talks with Government have repeatedly stalled, arguing that below-inflation pay offers fall far short of resolving the dispute.

Government position

Ministers have previously said that the level of pay demanded by the BMA is unaffordable in the current economic climate and would divert funds from frontline services. The Government maintains that it has accepted independent pay review body recommendations and has urged doctors to return to negotiations without pre-conditions. Officials also argue that strike action adds further pressure to already stretched NHS services and risks longer delays for patients waiting for operations and specialist appointments.

Advice for patients this week

The Trust is urging the public to continue using NHS services responsibly. NHS 111 online should be the first port of call for non-emergencies, pharmacies can advise on minor illnesses, and GP services are unaffected by industrial action. With flu infections rising, eligible residents are being encouraged to get vaccinated without delay, and people are asked to check in on vulnerable friends and neighbours. Dr Jennings emphasised that anyone with a life-threatening condition must still attend A&E or call 999.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Doctors' strike to hit Epsom Hospital

Epsom Hospital workers to strike for equality?

Surrey braces for doctors' strike

Primark finally indicates a season to open in Epsom

14 November 2025



The Ashley Centre in Epsom has confirmed that Primark is set to open its doors in Spring 2026, occupying a two-floor, 44,000 square foot retail unit. The arrival of this major fashion retailer is being billed as a milestone for the Centre and for the local retail offering in Epsom.

Background and delays

The unit which Primark will occupy has had a long and troubled history of vacancy. The previous occupier closed three years ago, leaving the large space empty ever since. Work to transform the unit was delayed when the first building contractors appointed to carry out the full refit went bust, setting the project back significantly. After these setbacks, the confirmation that Primark will finally open its Epsom store marks the end of a long wait for local shoppers and a major boost for the Ashley Centre.

The new Primark store

Primark will open next to fashion giant JD Sports and within easy reach of other major retailers such as NEXT, Marks & Spencer and Oliver Bonas. The store will span two floors and showcase the brand's extensive range of women's, men's and children's clothing, accessories and homeware. Its size and location will make it one of the key anchors within the shopping centre.

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A boost for the town centre

Ashley Centre Assistant Manager Will Greenland said: “The opening of Primark is one of the most highly anticipated openings that Ashley Centre has had for quite some time, and we know just how much local shoppers are looking forward to it. Primark’s arrival will not only bring a fantastic new retail offer to Epsom, but it will create new job opportunities, increase footfall, and further elevate the centre’s role as a prime shopping destination in the community.”

The store is expected to generate new employment, draw additional visitors from across Surrey, and strengthen the Centre’s position as Epsom’s prime shopping hub.

About Primark

Primark was founded in Dublin in 1969, trading as Penneys in Ireland, before expanding to the UK in the 1970s. It has since grown into one of the country’s biggest clothing and homeware retailers, known for its affordable fashion and high turnover of seasonal collections. The company continues to rely on the appeal of physical stores rather than online sales, promoting what it describes as a lively, social shopping experience.

In recent years, the brand has invested in sustainability and responsible sourcing, aiming to improve transparency across its global supply chain. Despite broader challenges in the retail sector, Primark has consistently reported strong growth and remains a major draw for shopping centres across the UK.

Looking ahead

For Epsom, the long-awaited opening of Primark represents more than just another store. It brings one of Britain’s best-known brands to the town centre, fills a large empty space, and sends a signal of renewed confidence in the local retail economy. Shoppers can expect a broad and affordable range of fashion and homeware when doors finally open in Spring 2026.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Primark to open in Epsom

5 Shops that could replace House of Fraser in the Ashley Centre

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Epsom and Ewell Borough Council gears up for – you know what

14 November 2025



It’s that time of year again – Christmas is coming to Epsom! Join us on Sunday 23 November for the Christmas lights switch-on in Epsom marketplace, led by the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell and the cast of this year’s pantomime at Epsom Playhouse, *Aladdin*. Enjoy a day of festive cheer, with performances from local dance schools and a community choir, family-friendly rides, seasonal stalls, and a special visit from Inka the Polar Bear. The fun starts at 10.30am and the Christmas lights in Epsom marketplace will be switched on at 4.30pm.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village), Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said: “Seeing Epsom lit up for the Christmas season is one of my favourite moments in the community calendar. It’s heart-warming to see people from across the borough and beyond come together to enjoy seasonal, festive fun. The day would not be possible without the support of Go Epsom, and local Epsom & Ewell charities and community groups. Thank you to all those who have worked so hard to make it possible for us to hold the event again this year.”

The Paparazzi Guys will also join the festivities, providing the perfect opportunity for family Christmas pictures.

Find out about more events taking place in Epsom & Ewell over the festive period, including Christmas activities at Bourne Hall, What’s on | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

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Free parking days in Epsom & Ewell

Over the Christmas period, there will be selected days when it will be free to park in Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) managed car parks:

- 5 December: Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks – free from 4pm until 7am on 6 December
- 7 December: EEBC car parks – free all day
- 14 December: EEBC car parks – free all day
- 21 December: EEBC car parks – free all day
- 25 December: EEBC car parks – free all day
- 26 December: Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks – free all day

Full details about EEBC-managed car parks are available on the council's website. Please note; Hook Road car park is closed on Sundays and bank holidays.

Changes to council services

The Town Hall will be closed on 24, 25, and 26 December 2025 and 1 January 2026, and will close at 3pm on 31 December 2025.

Waste and refuse services

During the Christmas and New Year's weeks, collections must accommodate the public holidays, and at a time when bins are much fuller than usual. Some services may not be available as usual, and your normal collection day may change.

- All planned changes can be found on the council's website: Christmas and New Year collections | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
- Christmas week: there will be no refuse collections during Christmas week. Please leave out food and recycling (including glass recycling) only. During Christmas week, collection days may change. Please check the EEBC website for recycling and food bin collection days during Christmas week.
- New Year's week: normal refuse collections start again in New Year's week. However, collection days may change. Please check the EEBC website for collection days during New Year's week.
- Before Christmas, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will place a label on resident bin handles with collection details for the festive period. If you are an Epsom & Ewell resident, please look out for this reminder about how services will be changing in your road over Christmas and New Year's weeks.

Community support services

Opening times will differ over Christmas and the New Year. Please check the EEBC website for details: Council services over Christmas and the New Year 2025 | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Christmas tree recycling

In January, EEBC offer free real Christmas tree recycling for all residents. This is a fortnightly service – check your Christmas bin label for details of when real Christmas tree collections happen in your road. Don't cut up your tree – it's easier to collect whole.

- The Christmas lights switch-on in Epsom marketplace will take place at 4.30pm and there will be local performances from 10.30am. The fun fair and stalls will close at 10pm.
- *Aladdin* will be performed at The Playhouse, Epsom, from Friday 12 December to Sunday 4 January. Book tickets on the website: Aladdin | Epsom Playhouse

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Image background credit Andrew Tijou. Licence Details

Epsom and Ewell 5th least obese 10 year olds in the UK

14 November 2025

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Year six schoolchildren in Surrey have some of the lowest obesity rates in the country, with Mole Valley leading the way. The figures were published as part of the Government's National Child Measurement Programme, which covers mainstream state-maintained schools. Children in Year 6 are aged 10 to 11 and the data is based on the address of the child rather than their school.

Mole Valley, at 9.7 per cent, was the only borough in the country where fewer than one in 10 children were classed as obese. Three boroughs, Sandwell and Wolverhampton in the West Midlands and Knowlsey in the North West had rates above 30 per cent.

The complete top ten was:

- Mole Valley – 9.7 per cent
- St Albans – 12.0 per cent
- Richmond upon Thames – 12.1 per cent
- Cambridge – 12.7 per cent
- Epsom & Ewell – 12.8 per cent
- Elmbridge – 13.1 per cent
- Waverley – 13.1 per cent
- South Hams -13.1 per cent
- Uttlesford -13.2 per cent
- Guildford – 13.6 per cent

The remaining Surrey boroughs had the following obesity rates among year six children:

- Surrey Heath – 14.5 per cent
- Woking – 15.2 per cent
- Reigate & Banstead – 15.7 per cent
- Tandridge – 16.7 per cent
- Runnymede – 16.9 per cent
- Spelthorne – 18.2 per cent

Councillor Nick Wright, Mole Valley District Council cabinet member for leisure and community assets, said one of their priorities was to support residents to live healthy and fulfilling lives. He said: "These childhood obesity figures, which shine such a positive light on Mole Valley, are very encouraging for parents, carers and young people who live in our district. For our part in contributing towards these low obesity rates, we are proud of the work we do and the initiatives we provide which can only help participating children be healthier and more active. Examples include our popular free summer holiday activities programme, most recently run this past summer, and the wide range of indoor activities – such as the kids swim for a pound offer – available at Dorking Sports Centre and Leatherhead Leisure Centre, both run on our behalf by Better."

"Our sports club access scheme also provides up to £250 per eligible young person to cover all, or part, of a sports club membership and free taster session at that specific club. "The Mole Valley parkrun and junior parkrun initiatives that we helped to establish also continue to go from strength to strength, most recently highlighted by the junior park celebrating its sixth anniversary. "The funding opportunities we provide, for example our neighbourhood fund, are available for sports clubs or other youth projects to apply for money to help improve existing and build new facilities which young people can benefit from."

"Our commitment to improving our already impressive range of play facilities, including playgrounds and skate parks, across Mole Valley will always be a high priority for us, and a decision due to be taken by cabinet later this month could see several million pounds of Community Infrastructure Levy funding become available for a major parks and recreation ground enhancement programme."

Chris Caulfield LDRS

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Epsom and Ewell bow out of FA Vase

14 November 2025



Eastbourne v Epsom and Ewell FC Saturday 8th November. The Salts succumbed to a wonder strike from Eastbourne midfielder Brett Paton early in the second half to bow out of the FA Vase, 1-0 at The Oval ground in Eastbourne in front of a crowd of around 200. Almost to rub “salts” into the wound, Paton said after the game he had not scored for 3 years, which probably shows where the shot would normally end up.

Ben Grummitt started in goal for only his second start of the season, Obasanjo Akinniranye replaced Jason Vincent, who was cup-tied, up front and Ali Fofahan came in for Emmanuel Limpo, who went to the bench. We came into the game in a run of 7 games without a win, so we really needed a good performance to progress to the 3rd round. United have a good recent record at home, although they are only mid-table in their division. Eastbourne had the best of the early exchanges except in the 4th minute where Jason Bloor put Oba through on goal. He ran onto the pass with two defenders bearing down on him. Unfortunately, his shot lacked power and the keeper was able to get down to his right to make a good save.

Apart from that there was little for the keepers to do. There were a lot of fouls and certainly the United players like to yell during each tackle. Murphy-McVey was booked on 13 minutes for pulling back an Eastbourne midfielder and then a few minutes later was subject to a poor challenge which seemed to deserve a yellow card at least, but the ref decided to keep his cards in his pocket, to the angst of Salts co-manager Max Johnson. The referee decided to have a quick chat with Max in order to calm him down. In between, on 15 minutes, Eastbourne had their first real chance with a good move down the left, the ball was quickly moved across the goal before Rhyle Ovenden, Eastbourne’s captain, tried to curl a shot into the top right corner but he put a little too much height on it and it sailed harmlessly over.

Eastbourne’s No.7 was causing trouble down our left but Harry Murphy was generally coping and in most cases blocking any cross before any real danger. Jason Bloor and Luis Oliveira were also running the home defence and it led to a couple of free kicks in dangerous areas but we failed to take advantage. There was a bit of trouble where we allowed a long ball up front to bounce. Aiwone let it bounce over his head and tried to clear it. As he hit it the Eastbourne No.9 attempted to head it and it was unclear from our position if he connected with Aiwone’s boot or the ball. He fell to the ground clutching his head and it started the “normal kerfuffle” with United players screaming for a penalty and maybe a card, but the referee stayed firm and didn’t even give a free kick, just a drop ball back to Grummitt.

After another series of moves around the Eastbourne box Luis was again brought down and this time the referee did bring out the yellow card. McVey hit the wall with the initial shot but Fofahan caught the rebound on the half-volley and a powerful shot was deflected wide. Fofahan then curled the corner onto the bar but it was cleared by the defence. Eastbourne then went down our end and had a couple of corners. Naz then made a clearance off our own line on the 44th minute.

We went into half time all square: Eastbourne United 0-0 Epsom & Ewell FC

Overall, the game was pretty equal with both sides moving the ball well but failing to trouble either keeper really. Eastbourne had the first attack in the second half and the ball fell to Brett Paton who was on the Eastbourne left just outside the box. He looked up and quickly hit a great shot that flew into the top left-hand corner, giving Grummitt no chance in goal. Eastbourne United 1-0 Epsom & Ewell FC.

The Salts didn’t really deserve to go behind but it did take a “worldie” to put Eastbourne in front. We started to move the ball around but got caught a couple of times too. On 52 minutes Luis lost the ball on the halfway line and, being the last man on that side, enabled the Eastbourne attack to get to the byline where a good cross was put in but Grummitt managed to just get his hand on the ball and tip it away from a couple of players coming in at the back. On 58 minutes we made a couple of changes with Conor McShane replacing Brendan and Ryley Merritt replacing Niall as we went in search of the equaliser. On 64 minutes we were given a little lift when Tyano Wilson, who had been causing problems on their right, had started a run through the centre of the pitch but the ball just started to get away from him. McShane took the ball but Wilson lunged in two-footed in an attempt to keep the ball but only made contact with Conor and the referee had little hesitation in showing a red card. Now, following our recent form facing 10 men, it could be said it was a blessing in disguise but we are pleased to say we did really start to cause problems. We forced a few corners and McShane put in some lovely balls. The keeper just managed to get one hand to push the ball away and the second corner found Oba whose shot was deflected across the goal where Naz came in on the far side but his header crashed off the post for the second time.

On 78 minutes Oba found himself in the box and, twisting and turning, found a little space as he went to shoot. He was tackled and he went down. We appealed for a penalty of course and unfortunately, amidst cries of “diving“ from the opposition, the referee decided the contact was not enough for a penalty and waved our appeals away. After a couple more half chances we made another couple of subs: Emmanuel Limpo came on for Kionte and Callum O’Keefe for Jason Bloor. On 88 minutes Ethan Nelson-Roberts came on for Antonios Nazareth. The referee showed 6 minutes of injury time which gave us a little hope of just getting an equaliser. On 90+2 Eastbourne nearly put the game out of reach when a slip

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allowed their forward in and having sent Grummitt in goal one way, he placed the ball towards the other corner only to see it slip by the post. We managed another couple of half chances but failed to trouble the keeper. Eastbourne then moved the ball down their right and succeeded in keeping the ball in the corner wasting valuable minutes. We managed one last foray into the Eastbourne half and won a corner. With Grummitt also getting into the box, it was our final chance but the corner didn't get past the first defender and was cleared which gave the referee the chance to blow his whistle.

So we bowed out of a cup again to Eastbourne United – Eastbourne United 1-0 Epsom & Ewell FC. After the game our joint managers spoke about their delight in the overall performance and had actually forgotten about the fine goal that separated the sides. Also United officials were kind in their assessment of the game, agreeing it was a good cup tie and very little separated the two sides. Again we feel it is the lack of a striker that cost us. Oba and Ali battled well up front but were beaten by a towering defence. When we played the ball on the ground we did cause trouble.

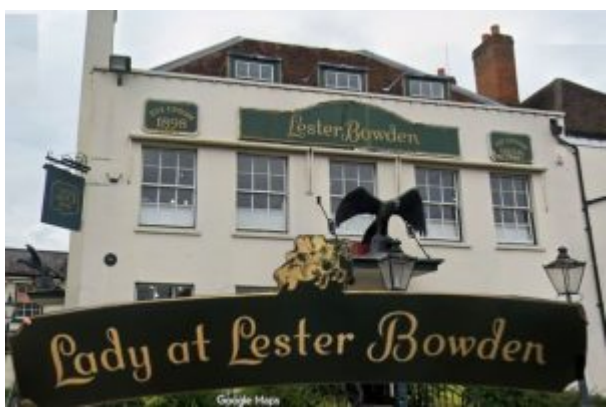
The end was marred by a few home supporters who decided to have a few unnecessary words with our players as they left the field. It is a shame as you expect people to be gracious in victory as well as defeat. The situation was quickly nipped in the bud by the Eastbourne security and officials. They apologised in the bar after and confirmed that the "supporters" concerned would be dealt with.

It is a quick turnaround again for our next home game on Tuesday night v Eversley and California at Chalky Lane, KO 7.45. This is probably an early "must win" game to put a bit of space between us and the bottom few clubs.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

Bit of Epsom history for sale

14 November 2025



A distinctive slice of Epsom's high street history has surfaced for sale — the original **"Ladies at Lester Bowden"** shop sign, once proudly displayed beneath the old walkway of the famous **Lester Bowden** outfitters in the heart of town. The sign, around seven feet long and built to last, has survived in remarkably good condition thanks to its sheltered position and evokes the golden age of a business synonymous with Epsom's racing tradition.

For generations, **Lester Bowden** was the name every jockey, trainer and racegoer in Surrey knew. Established in the early 20th century, the gentleman's outfitters was famed for its bespoke tailoring and equestrian style — a cornerstone of Epsom's identity as the home of The Derby. In later decades, as fashions evolved, the store expanded to include a dedicated ladies' section: "Ladies at Lester Bowden," which served as both a stylish boutique and a symbol of the business's adaptability.

The building itself has a pedigree even older than the brand. Before Lester Bowden moved in, the site at the corner of the High Street and Spread Eagle Walk was home to one of Epsom's most historic hostelries — **The Spread Eagle Inn**. For over two centuries, weary travellers, jockeys, and race patrons found food, drink, and lodging there. The Spread Eagle's name became woven into Epsom's folklore — a meeting place during Derby week and a landmark at the heart of town life. It even was home to the Epsom Magistrates during a Court refurbishment.

When **Lester Bowden** took over the premises in the mid-20th century, they carried forward the building's long association with Epsom's equestrian and social history. Its large, distinctive frontage, tailor's fittings and wooden signage became part of the visual fabric of the High Street for decades — until the shop's closure brought the end of an era.

Now, with this **original shop sign** up for sale, a tangible piece of that story is back in circulation. The seller describes it as "about seven feet long," heavy, and needing two people to lift — a proper relic of a bygone retail age. Protected from the weather under the old walkway, it remains in fine condition and could easily be restored or displayed as an artefact of Epsom's retail past.

For heritage enthusiasts, collectors, or anyone with affection for Epsom's racing roots, this is a rare opportunity to own a genuine link to the town's layered past — one that spans from coaching inns to couture.

Those interested in the sign can find details through this Gumtree ad, but the real story is larger: it's a reminder that every piece of Epsom's architecture tells a tale — and that sometimes, those tales are still for sale.

Sam Jones – Reporter

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Leatherhead to be home to 500 Surrey Police Officers

14 November 2025



Surrey Police will get its new East Surrey headquarters after huge plans including hundreds of homes was approved. The force has been on the lookout for a new hub after its Reigate base was forced to close suddenly when dangerous crumbly RAAC concrete that can collapse without warning was found through the old site in 2023. The plans, on the former ERA site in Cleeve Road, Leatherhead, will be built in phases after being approved by Mole Valley District Council's development committee on Wednesday, November 5.

The first work at the site will be to build a new strategic divisional police headquarters for Surrey Police with 500 officers and staff moving into the building. Stage two will see the existing redundant buildings demolished to make way for a residential block accommodating 40 affordable residential homes that the police said would ideally be for its own staff. Stage three would build out 185 new homes.

Despite being voted through without any formal objections, concerns were raised over the lack of affordable housing in the project and that the council's affordability targets had been made a mockery. It was admitted that, in the current market, it was practically impossible for new developments to have 40 per cent of the new homes be affordable, and the project be financially viable.

Speaking on behalf of the force, a spokesperson said: "We needed to move out of our Reigate Headquarters in 2023 due to the discovery of RAAC. We are lucky enough to have secured temporary accommodation, but very much a temporary solution in the knowledge that we needed a long-term divisional headquarters." He said Surrey Police settled on Leatherhead because its gave their teams "good access to the local area and the major road links so officers can fight crime and protect people in the area."

Better facilities would allow the force to attract and retain staff. He added that while there will be serving officers operating from the base it would not act as a fire type response meaning that, while they could not guarantee there would never be sirens going off, it would be "highly unlikely."

Chris Caulfield LDRS

ERA Site, Cleeve Road, Leatherhead, Surrey (image Google)

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New Surrey police division HQ plans

Surrey police to move to Epsom and Ewell constituency

Batteresea stun Sutton & Epsom rugby

14 November 2025

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Battersea Ironsides 24 Sutton & Epsom 22. Saturday 8th November.

This fixture has produced last-minute drama since the sides first met in league action two seasons ago. It is certainly not a contest to leave with ten minutes to go in the hope of a swifter journey home or to purchase a pint before the rush. Once again it lived up to its reputation as Battersea Ironsides overhauled a 15-point deficit to secure the win with a long-range penalty with barely a minute left on the clock. The hosts have twice been on the wrong end of denouement drama and on Saturday it was a case of third time lucky as they won 24-22.

Captain Bunting returned to the helm of the good ship Sutton to relieve First Mate McTaggart, who had navigated the parlous seas several leagues under the Premiership with five wins from five, to return below decks to the engine room of the pack. S&E were minus two stalwarts with Messrs Bibby and Jones nursing injuries. The latter had played the last 34 consecutive league matches, a rarity these days.

As for the hosts, they were an unrecognisable team from the corresponding fixture last season. No longer guided by the regal splendour of Charles Stuart at 10, there were only three survivors from the thrilling 19-19 draw. For that matter the Black & Whites only had eight from that match – *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

Cameron Baker initiated proceedings on Garratt Green, a surface with deceptive declivities, on a day blessed with glorious sunshine and thankfully with no hint of rain at a venue offering no shelter for the loyal patrons. The first quarter implied that it might be one of those unfortunate afternoons for the Black & Whites. It included balls dropped by usually safe hands, promising openings that came to nought and penalties conceded for unwarranted verbosity with Mr Harry Hopkins that questioned his interpretation of the laws rather than any family connection to FDR's New Deal stalwart.

After ten minutes the hosts took the lead, capitalising on a penalty to establish themselves in the 22, and following admirable control Matt Bell was on hand to cross the whitewash for his first try of the afternoon. Cameron Baker started his perfect kicking afternoon with an impressive conversion from the flank to give the Ironsides a 7-0 lead.

There was a significant area of consolation for the visitors as their forwards were enjoying one of their most impressive scrummaging performances for many a long day. The efficiency of the lineout was not far behind the set scrum in impressing the travelling support. However, it continued to be a frustrating afternoon in terms of points on the board for S&E.

Clinical efficiency in the 22 was sadly lacking but just as the crowd were anticipating the teams turning around with Sutton trailing, the game was transformed. The Rugby Lane men produced their try of the season. Wonderful surges from locks Duey and McTaggart were aided by sumptuous offloads. Prop Dan Johnson maintained continuity to release Josh Rea who sidestepped past the cover and strode home. Bunting levelled the scores with his conversion for 7-7.

Battersea Ironsides, robust and organised in attack and defence, had frustrated Sutton at the breakdown. The hosts were coping admirably with a scrummage that was regularly in reverse and much credit must go to Raphael Arboine who not only gathered the challenging ball back-pedalling but also frequently made yards with his powerful running. S&E, liberated by their opening score, pressed on for further first-half glory.

As the first period entered time added on they went into the lead. The Ironsides conceded a penalty on their 22 which Bunting drilled into the corner. McTaggart soared skywards to secure the lineout possession and the formidable Sam Lennie scored after an impressive catch and drive. The conversion drifted wide but the Black & Whites led 12-7.

There was still five minutes of additional time with a revitalised Sutton eager to add to their account. With the last action of the half the visitors were given an opportunity to extend their advantage. Sutton & Epsom were awarded a penalty a couple of paces within the Battersea half but very central. Freddy Bunting opted to go for goal but his effort fell short and the sides went into the interval with Sutton leading 12-7.

Sutton started the second half brightly, though the flow of the game was interrupted by numerous penalties. After ten minutes they had a most promising position deep in the 22. Once again the lineout was followed by a dominant drive that Battersea bested with determined defence. The ball was transferred from the pack to the backs and Tom Lennard kicked with precision to winger Kyren Ghumra who scored in the corner. For those with a statistical disposition it was a red-letter moment as the winger now had 74 tries in 148 appearances. The challenging kick failed to add to the 17-7 lead.

If Sutton thought it would be one-way traffic for the remainder of the contest they had a stark reminder that Battersea Ironsides were a very dangerous outfit. A sweeping attack appeared to have created a wonderful try. A man, who shall remain nameless, not only finished with power and pace but also intelligently arced around endeavouring to make the conversion simpler. Unfortunately, Garratt Green is not the Parc de Princes and the in-goal area is miserly rather than magnificent, and he went beyond the parameters of play. There was to be no addition to the score.

Five minutes later the visitors were imposing themselves once more on the game. A driving maul in excess of 20 metres from halfway did not bring immediate results but it placed S&E in the right area. Sutton went through their phases and the ball arrived in the hands of Sam Lennie. The Kiwi hooker is a force of nature and with 20 yards to go and multiple defenders he found a most direct route to the line for his second try of the afternoon. Despite the encouraging roars from the Rugby Lane supporters the Bunting conversion high over the pigmy posts was adjudged to have not done the

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necessary. Sutton & Epsom led 22-7, having secured a bonus point, and were 15 points up with 15 minutes of normal time remaining.

As the game began to meander towards the inevitable, the Ironsides initiated a remarkable recovery in a magnificent seven minutes. Hope and inspiration was provided by winger Will Ford whose fine finish to a sweeping move was improved by a clinical conversion from the extremities by Cameron Baker. The fly-half ran back towards his team declaring the deficit was only eight points as S&E led 22-14.

A couple of minutes later the reinvigorated hosts were celebrating another try. A defensive lapse on halfway was punished as Battersea flooded into the Sutton half. Scrambling defence halted the advance in the 22 but the ball was quickly released for Matt Bell to secure his second score of the afternoon. The reliable Baker boot meant the hosts trailed 21-22 with three minutes to go.

The inevitable occurred as the sands of time were drifting away. Battersea were awarded a penalty. Though it was only just in the Sutton half, Cameron Baker, without hesitation, opted for the posts. His powerful kick was perfectly straight and Battersea Ironsides led 24-22. There was just time for the re-start that failed to travel the allotted distance, and the subsequent scrum to the hosts. Despite going back at a rate of knots and the harrying of Steve Munford, the ball was kicked dead to spark Battersea celebrations of an epic 24-22 win.

Many salutary lessons will hopefully be learned by Sutton but great credit must be given to the spirit of Battersea embodied by Raphael Arboine's performance and the nerveless kicking of Cameron Baker. For Sutton the scrummaging was superb, Sam Lennie was, as usual, immense, and Josh Rea had his best performance to date for the Black & Whites.

Next Saturday is free from league action and Sutton will endeavour to return to winning ways at Rugby Lane on Saturday 22nd November when they host Horsham for the first time in a league encounter.

Sutton & Epsom:
O'Brien, Benson, Scott, Bunting (c), Ghumra, Lennard, Wise, Johnson, Lennie, Mount, McTaggart, Duey, Rea, Tame & Hegarty.
Reps: Boaden, Finney & Munford.

Battersea Ironsides:
Diamond, Ford, Campbell, Bell, McGwire, Baker, Thomas, Chetwynd, Jones, Gomm, Bishop, Wharton, Pender, McCleary & Arboine.
Reps: Chetwynd-Talbot, Singh & Bourke.

John Croysdill

Image: Action of the two sides from an previous fixture. Credit: Robin Kennedy

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Vital Surrey bus reduced from hourly to three mornings a week

14 November 2025



People who wait for buses are often left disappointed and that only looks set to continue after the company behind an axed service said it was "not likely" to return. Residents in Horley gathered at what they have dubbed a 'ghost' stop in protest to the axing of the hourly 424 bus which served their estate and went between the town centre and Gatwick Airport. It has left them with just a single service – but that just runs three mornings a week.

Councillor Neha Boghani, Green Party member for Horley East and Salfords said: "For Surrey County Council, whose strapline is 'we leave no-one behind', to cut buses this savagely without even any public consultation is shameful, and a dereliction of their commitment to serve all residents. Our residents deserve better." One resident at the bus stop protest said the loss of the route had taken away her social life with another adding the impact had been unbelievable. She said: "There are so many elderly people and people with disabilities living around here and we can't afford to keep taking taxis."

Metrobus's commercial director Nick Hill said the two-way loop the 424 used to run along made it unreliable and the decision was made to simplify the route. The detour through Horley Riverside Gardens Estate was then dropped to make scheduling more reliable and because it was so poorly used – it would only pick up passengers on one in five journeys. He said: "It is not likely that a conventional bus service will return to the area on a frequent basis due to such low demand. Residents in the area do also have other alternatives: much of the area is a short walk to access more frequent bus

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services.”

The dial-a-ride type service Surrey Connect is to be made available in the area and for Gatwick Airport. A spokesperson for Surrey County Council said they understood the disruptions alterations to bus services can make but that no areas have been left unserved by the cuts. They said: “Residents in the Horley Gardens Estate were previously served by Metrobus service 424, however data showed less than one passenger per journey travelled on most of the 424 journeys, which was unsustainable. This area continues to be served by local bus service 26 three days a week, providing links with Horley Town Centre and Hookwood Tesco, as well as the Surrey Connect service, which operates between 7am to 7pm weekdays and 8am to 6pm on Saturdays, with alternative services available for most passengers within a five-minute walk.”

“These changes form part of a wider review, which has seen the off-peak service 100 rerouted from Park 25 in Redhill, where data showed a usage of less than one passenger per journey, to instead serve residents in Westvale Park, Horley. This has enabled in the region of 4,000 otherwise isolated residents to be served, and initial patronage figures from the bus operator indicate that the number of passengers now travelling in the area have since quadrupled. Residents in Park 25 continue to be served by service 100 in the peak hours and on Sundays, and off-peak service 424 provides an hourly service throughout the day. We will continue to work alongside bus operators to create travel opportunities which encourage greater bus use and will keep the prospect of rerouting an alternative service via Park 25 under review.”

Chris Caulfield LDRS

Image: Cllr Neha Boghani right), Green councillor for Horley East, with residents of the Gardens Estate, south Horley, at the ‘ghost bus stop’ where they used to get on the 424 Metrobus (image Cllr Boghani)

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