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For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

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Leatherhead boy’s circus dream takes him onto European stage

3 October 2026



A 13-year-old Leatherhead boy who once strapped balloons to himself in an attempt to fly has been selected as the only UK performer at this month’s European Youth Circus in Germany.

Olivier Wehbe will perform his award-winning pirate-themed aerial silks act in Wiesbaden from 22 to 25 October. He is also the youngest artist selected for the festival.

The international audition process attracted 152 applications from 23 European countries, with 25 acts from 11 nations chosen to appear. The festival brings together circus artists aged 12 to 25, performing before an international audience and a professional jury.

For Olivier, who dreams of joining Cirque du Soleil, the invitation marks another step in a journey that began with gymnastics classes at Leatherhead & Dorking Gymnastics Club when he was five.

He later discovered aerial and circus arts at Acrosphere Circus Studio in Brockham, where he trains with Katherine and Igor Karpovich, both former Cirque du Soleil performers.

Under their guidance, he has developed skills in aerial silks, straps and hoop, combining demanding physical routines with characters ranging from a French mime to a sinister clown and a pirate.

Olivier is now homeschooled, allowing him to balance his education with intensive training and performance commitments.

His international achievements include gold on straps and bronze in aerial silks at the Madrid Aerial Art International Competition in 2025. His gold-winning routine featured a French mime character, while his bronze medal came with a creepy clown performance. He was seven years younger than the next youngest competitor in his straps category.

Earlier this year, he won gold, the Overall Best title and the Best Tricks award at the International Pole & Aerial Art Tournament with an aerial hoop act.

He also performed at Zirkusfest in Hückelhoven, Germany, in October 2025, where his silks routine earned him a place in the festival’s final gala. His pirate-themed act has won several UK competitions.

Alongside his regular training, Olivier has attended workshops with a current Cirque du Soleil artist performing in KURIOS, giving him an insight into the professional circus world he hopes to join.

His coaches said: “Olivier has worked incredibly hard to get to this point. His dedication, perseverance and commitment to his art have really paid off.”

They added: “We’ve watched him progress from local competitions, shows and in-house events to national and international stages, and we couldn’t be prouder of him.

“This is such an exciting next step in his journey. He has a bright future ahead of him, and we are all incredibly proud to see him representing the UK on such an important international stage.”

For Olivier, the appeal lies as much in storytelling as in the aerial skills themselves.

“I feel so excited and so proud to be representing the UK. Performing is all I want to do. I train really hard and I’m always thinking of ways to develop and create new ways to express myself and bring characters to life without saying a single word,” he said.

“I feel incredibly lucky to have such amazing coaches who have believed in me and supported me from the very beginning. Their hard work, creative guidance and encouragement have helped me develop not only as a performer, but also as an artist.”

His fascination with flight began long before his first circus lesson.

“When I was three, I strapped balloons to myself because I wanted to fly. I really believed I could, and I was always trying to find a way to make it happen. Now I actually can!

“I get to soar high above audiences and bring my characters to life, and it makes me so happy to be able to share that with people.

“My dream is to work for Cirque du Soleil.”

Lionel Blackman

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Pride and Prejudice takes a Wild West turn in Epsom

3 October 2026



Epsom audiences will be the first to see a new immersive adaptation of Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice when an Ashtead-based theatre company launches the show at Labyrinth on Saturday 17 October.

Best Life Productions will present a preview of Pride & Prejudice – The Hoedown Edition at 2pm, ahead of a planned tour of venues across Surrey, London and Kent.

The production transports Lizzie Bennet, Mr Darcy and the Bennet family to a 1930s frontier saloon, combining Austen’s romance with line dancing, audience participation and a wedding disco finale.

Rather than watching from rows of seats facing a stage, audiences will find the story unfolding around them. Guests can enjoy a drink, learn some simple line-dancing steps and become part of the action.

Producer Claire Zuurbier said choosing Epsom for the first public performance reflected the company’s local roots.

“As a local company, it felt right that our home audience should be the first to experience this new show. Before we take Pride & Prejudice – The Hoedown Edition further afield, we wanted to share it with the community that has supported our work from the beginning.”

The company hopes the combination of Austen’s characters and country dancing will offer audiences a different kind of theatre experience, with opportunities to meet and interact with fellow guests.

“Most theatre is face-forward,” said Zuurbier. “You sit in your seat, watch the action and go home. We wanted to create something more visceral. Something that surrounds you, includes you and helps people connect with each other.”

She added: “In a world where so much of life happens through screens, we think there is huge value in gathering people together in the same room to laugh, dance and experience something collectively. This show is designed to leave your worries at the door. For a few hours, it’s simply about joy, connection and having unapologetically good fun.”

Charlotte Farrer will play Lizzie Bennet alongside Filippo Brozzo as Mr Darcy. Amaya Clarke takes the roles of Lydia Bennet and Mr Collins, while Ata Dirilgen plays Wickham and Mrs Bennet. Eleanor Bayford appears as Annie Penrose and Joseph Burdge as Fitzwilliam Allen, with both also serving as swings.

Friends, couples, book clubs and family groups are encouraged to attend, and solo visitors are also welcome. The performance ends with a wedding disco, inviting the audience to join the celebrations.

“We aren’t just retelling Pride & Prejudice,” said Zuurbier. “We’re creating an occasion. The aim is for audiences to walk out smiling, having met new people, danced a little, laughed a lot and remembered how much fun live experiences can be.”

Pride & Prejudice – The Hoedown Edition previews at Labyrinth, Epsom, at 2pm on Saturday 17 October 2026.

Tickets and further information are available from Best Life Productions.

Lionel Blackman

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The photo is by Simon Vail Photographer and were taken at an advertising shoot where the people featured are friends of Best Life Productions and the show’s creative team.

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Epsom and Ewell Mayor leads delegation to Chantilly to celebrate 30th anniversary of twinning

3 October 2026



Epsom and Ewell enjoys a robust, and mutually beneficial, twinning arrangement with Chantilly in France and this year marks the 30th anniversary of the close fraternal ties between the two historic horse racing towns. To commemorate the occasion a 14-strong delegation from Epsom and Ewell, led by the Mayor, Cllr Lucie McIntyre, made the journey to Chantilly for a packed programme of events.

The visit, which was paid for by individual contributions, also included representatives from Nescot and the Jockey Club, four current borough Councillors, three former Mayors and other members of the twinning association, all with varying abilities in speaking and understanding French.

This was Mayor Lucie's first visit to the historic twin town, and she was able to meet her opposite number, Benedicte De Cacqueray, and several Maires-Adjoint (Deputy Mayors). There was a certain poignancy to the visit in that Lucie will be Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's last-ever Mayor following local government reorganisation and the precise future of twinning arrangements between the two towns is under review.

Of the programme of events provided by the French hosts over the weekend of September 11-13, four were horse related, and some not without incident. A morning visit to the training stables of Alessandro and Ilaria Botti was followed by a drive deep into the forest which is criss-crossed with world-class all-weather training runs. Just as the delegation arrived, a jockey fell from a galloping horse but thankfully neither was harmed.

Marin Lecour-Grandmaison Director of France Galop showed the delegation round the Chantilly race course which operates 11 months of the year with 55 race days. Other equine-related highlights included a visit to the Living Horse Museum and the presentation by Mayor Lucie of prizes at the Polo Club de Chantilly, a facility big enough for seven playing pitches.

The Epsom and Ewell delegation also visited the town's Lace Museum, home to some exquisitely beautiful pieces, one of which for example took 20 people a year to produce, as well as the Tennis Club of Chantilly. The agenda also included a trip to the historic St Peters Church, which has strong ties with the anglophone community in Chantilly, and a chance to see a new film on the wartime life of De Gaulle, including his time in the UK.

No trip to Chantilly would be complete without a visit to the fabulously beautiful Chateau and a chance to make Chantilly creme – a task that the Mayor excelled at!

Councillor Lucie McIntyre says, "I was delighted to join the Epsom and Town Twinning Association in celebrating this milestone and thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality provided by our French hosts as well as a chance to see so much of the wonderful town of Chantilly."

While the 30 year anniversary celebrations are taking place in 2026 it was in fact on 30th September 1995 that the Mayor of Chantilly signed the Twinning Charter. However a similar ceremony followed in Epsom in March 1996, signed by our then Mayor, Councillor Cyril Frazer, and this completed the formalities. The Epsom and Ewell Twinning Association was subsequently appointed by the Borough to develop and run the twinning which it has done ever since.

Cllr Clive Woodbridge (RA Ewell Village)

Former Mayor Brian Angus (RA)

The Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association

Photo credit: Steve Bridger

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Calling Epsom and Ewell's young musicians: your chance to shine

3 October 2026



Do you know a young singer or instrumentalist who deserves to be heard? Epsom Rotary Club is inviting entries for the local round of the Rotary Young Musician Competition 2026/27.

Returning to Epsom College for the twelth consecutive year, the competition offers young performers an opportunity to share their talent, gain experience on a public stage and receive feedback from professional judges.

There are two categories: **Solo Instrumental** and **Solo Vocal**. The competition welcomes amateur young musicians aged 17 or under on 31 August 2026, with classical and modern musical styles welcome.

This year's local round will take place on Monday 16th November and will be judged by two distinguished musicians:

Natalia Zadorhizna, a graduate of the Glière Kyiv Municipal Academy of Music, is a piano teacher, performer and accompanist.

Dr Graham Jones MBE is the former Senior Director of Music for the Household Division, bringing extensive experience of musical performance and leadership.

Successful entrants selected at the local round can progress through district and cluster finals, with the national final scheduled for **Saturday 24 April 2027**.

Whether your passion is singing, piano, strings, woodwind, brass or another instrument, this is an opportunity to work towards a performance goal and celebrate your musical achievements.

Parents, schools, music teachers and youth organisations across Epsom, Ewell and the surrounding area are encouraged to spread the word and help young musicians take part.

For local entry details and enquiries, contact Lionel Blackman, Epsom Rotary Club's local round organiser, at epsommusicsoc@gmail.com.

Full competition guidelines and the 2026/27 information pack are available on the official Rotary Young Musician webpage.

Bring your talent to the stage — we would love to hear from you.

Epsom Rotary

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Photo from the 2024 competition. Instrumental winner Satomi Brocklebank with Mayor of Epsom and Ewell Steve Bridger

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Epsom Council declares transparency progress — but Rainbow questions remain unanswered

3 October 2026



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council says it has addressed an audit finding on transparency. Yet a straightforward question about one of its largest public assets remains unanswered: how did the Rainbow Leisure Centre come to face apparent dilapidations costs of up to £500,000?

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At the Council's Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 29 September, Chief Executive Jackie King defended improvements to governance and communication with external auditors.

"This council does not have a governance issue," she told members.

But for residents, transparency can be measured more simply than through meetings with auditors, constitutional amendments or changes to committee reporting. Can the public find out what happened to a building they own, why substantial expenditure became necessary, and whether anyone is being held responsible?

On the Rainbow Centre, those questions remain unresolved.

A public building, an unexplained liability

Epsom and Ewell Times has repeatedly sought an explanation of the circumstances behind a confidential urgent decision authorising access to Council reserves of up to £500,000 in connection with the leisure centre's condition and disputed dilapidations.

That figure represents an authorised provision, rather than an established final bill. Nevertheless, the potential exposure is substantial.

The Council has previously acknowledged that it holds no records of routine landlord inspections over the former operator's lengthy tenure. It has withheld condition papers, relying on claims of legal professional privilege and commercial sensitivity.

Neither position explains how the apparent liability arose.

Were defects identified before the change of operator? Were they reported and left unresolved? Did the Council adequately monitor the condition of its building? What obligations rested with the operator, and what steps did the Council take to enforce them?

Former operator GLL has said it returned the building in the condition required by its agreement and was unaware of any legal claim. EET's recent requests for clarity on whether proceedings against the previous operator are contemplated have received no response.

The absence of an answer leaves residents unable to assess whether the Council is pursuing recovery, negotiating a settlement, or expecting public funds to meet the costs.

What the committee was told

The September meeting concerned an External Audit Transparency Report arising from Grant Thornton's earlier finding of a significant governance weakness.

Officers said the problem concerned a failure to inform the auditors promptly about changes to governance arrangements. The report stated that subsequent improvements had satisfied the auditors and that the previous recommendation had been closed.

Cllr **Chris Ames** (Labour, Court) challenged that account. He argued that the auditors' published findings covered wider concerns about openness, including changes to the constitution and scheme of delegation that had not been fully discussed publicly.

"This is a question of transparency, and we have a mismatch between what's being said publicly and what was said privately, and that should concern us all," he said.

Ms King rejected his interpretation and pointed to the more favourable subsequent audit assessment.

She also described improvements to urgent-decision reporting, including attaching decision forms to committee papers.

Cllr **Steven McCormick** (Conservative, Woodcote and Langley Vale), a former committee chair, said his written questions had been answered as fully as possible and that he had no supplementary questions.

The committee voted to note the report.

Publishing a decision is only the beginning

Better publication of urgent decisions is welcome. But publishing a form does not, by itself, explain the events that made the decision necessary.

The Rainbow controversy illustrates the difference.

On 16 July, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee concluded that the process followed for the Rainbow urgent decision had not complied with the Council's stated procedure and was not justified by the information presented to members.

That finding concerned how the decision was taken. It did not establish how the building's condition had been monitored, why the potential costs arose or who should bear them.

Those are questions about stewardship of a public asset, rather than simply the administration of committee business.

Claims of privilege or commercial sensitivity may protect particular documents or negotiating details. They do not give residents a substantive explanation of whether the Council fulfilled its responsibilities as landlord.

Who is protecting the public interest?

The unanswered questions also concern the role of elected councillors.

Their responsibility is to scrutinise the use of public money and the management of public property. Where possible failures of inspection or maintenance oversight arise, residents should be able to expect councillors to demand an explanation.

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There is presently insufficient disclosed evidence to conclude that incompetence caused the Rainbow liability, or that officers are being deliberately protected from accountability. The continuing lack of information prevents those possibilities from being properly examined — and prevents the Council from demonstrating that they are unfounded.

That is why the unanswered requests matter.

A satisfactory audit assessment is relevant evidence of improved arrangements. It does not answer every outstanding question about a particular building or financial decision.

The Council says lessons have been learned. On the Rainbow Centre, the public still needs to know what happened, what the Council is doing about it, and whether taxpayers will ultimately pay.

Until those answers are provided, declarations of transparency remain difficult to reconcile with residents' experience of trying to obtain information.

Sam Jones – Reporter



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Related reports

- Epsom's scrutiny committee slams Dallen's urgent £500K Rainbow approval — 17 July 2026.
- Epsom Council Rainbow Centre secrecy row deepens over "pre-election silence" advice.
- Epsom and Ewell Council transparency row erupts as council backs publication of urgent decisions — 17 March 2026.
- "It's my meeting": Cllr Dallen stops questions about his role in alleged Rainbow "cover-up".
- Epsom and Ewell Council CEO contests 'culture of secrecy' claim and outlines fixes — 1 October 2025.
- Epsom & Ewell Council not much in the red but too much in the pink! — 11 February 2025.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council publishes final Annual Report

3 October 2026



Today, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has published its 2025/26 Annual Report, marking the authority's final annual report before local government reorganisation and reflecting on almost 90 years of service to residents.

The report showcases both the council's achievements over the last financial year and key moments from its history since the Borough of Epsom and Ewell was established in 1937.

The council will be 90 years old when it is dissolved ahead of East Surrey Council's Vesting Day on 1 April 2027.

The report highlights key achievements over the past year, including:

- setting a balanced budget for 2026/27 without cuts to services
- allocating more than £1.6 million to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) projects supporting local infrastructure and community organisations
- determining around 94% of planning applications within statutory timescales, including 100% of major applications
- progressing the borough's Local Plan through Public Examination, helping to shape how future development is managed while protecting the borough's green spaces, heritage and character

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- progressing the council's Climate Change Action Plan through energy-efficiency improvements and renewable energy investment
- preventing or relieving homelessness for 525 households and supporting vulnerable residents through housing and home improvement services
- launching new health and wellbeing initiatives for young people and families across the borough.

As well as highlighting the council's work during 2025/26, the report celebrates 90 years of local government in Epsom & Ewell, featuring notable milestones from the borough's history, including the creation of the borough in 1937, the establishment of Bourne Hall and the council's support for residents through national events including the Second World War and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jackie King, Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said:

"This Annual Report is a particularly significant one, as it will be the last published by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council before the authority becomes part of the new East Surrey unitary council in April 2027.

"While the report highlights the achievements of the past year, it is also an opportunity to reflect on almost 90 years of public service and the people who have made that possible.

"Over nine decades, generations of councillors, officers, volunteers and community partners have helped shape Epsom & Ewell into the thriving borough it is today. As we enter a period of significant change for this borough and Surrey as a whole, this report recognises the lasting legacy they leave behind.

"It has been an honour to serve this borough and I hope residents will enjoy looking back on the council's history as we prepare for the next chapter of local government in Surrey."

Hannah Dalton, Leader of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, added:

"This report is an opportunity to reflect on 90 years of service to our communities and the lasting contribution the council has made to life in Epsom & Ewell.

"Since the council was established in 1937, it has been led by the Residents' Association, with a strong focus on local priorities and community values. As we prepare for local government reorganisation, I am proud of what has been achieved by generations of councillors, officers and community partners working together on behalf of residents.

"While this chapter is coming to a close, the legacy of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and the strong sense of local identity that defines our borough will endure."

The report is available on the council's website at: Epsom & Ewell Annual Report 2025/26 | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

East Surrey seeks planning head start as Epsom faces two Local Plans at once

3 October 2026



East Surrey's incoming council has urged ministers to let it begin preparing a Local Plan before it takes over next April, highlighting a problem already confronting Epsom and Ewell: being required to start another plan while still struggling to complete the current one.

In a letter to Housing and Planning Minister Matthew Pennycook MP, cllr Bradley Nelson (LibDem Dorking), the shadow council's executive member for strategic planning and growth, has asked for arrangements allowing the new authority to begin plan-making preparations before 1 April 2027.

East Surrey will replace Epsom and Ewell, Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, and Tandridge councils. Its press release warns that requiring those authorities to continue separate planning processes, while their successor cannot formally begin a plan for the whole new area, risks duplication and wasted resources.

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For Epsom and Ewell, the request follows months of controversy over Green Belt development, councillor scrutiny and the cost of preparing a plan that will outlive the council responsible for it.

Five councils and competing timetables

The five authorities are at different stages. Mole Valley adopted its Local Plan in December 2024, while the others are progressing existing plans or beginning work under the new planning rules. Epsom and Ewell faces both processes simultaneously.

Cllr Nelson said: “The challenge is that the councils which currently hold planning responsibilities are being asked to continue, or in some cases start work on plans that they may not ultimately be able to complete, while East Surrey Council cannot formally begin the process until it becomes a vested authority.”

He added: “We believe there is an opportunity to make better use of the period before April 2027 by allowing preparatory work to begin sooner. This could help avoid duplication, make the best use of public resources and enable the new council to progress plan-making at the earliest opportunity.”

The shadow council says it wants a single Local Plan to guide housing, employment, infrastructure and environmental protection across East Surrey. Nelson’s letter also identifies rail capacity and sewage treatment as constraints on growth.

Epsom’s long road to a plan

Epsom and Ewell’s current examination follows an already protracted process. The council paused preparation in March 2023 before voting to resume it that October. Its 2022–2040 Local Plan was eventually submitted for examination on 10 March 2025, shortly before a national transitional deadline.

Submission did not end the disputes. EET has reported repeated challenges over additional evidence submitted during the examination and whether elected members had sufficient opportunity to scrutinise it.

At an extraordinary council meeting on 21 July 2026, a motion seeking greater committee oversight was defeated by 15 votes to 12, with three abstentions. Proposed amendments seeking an independent governance review were ruled out of order. The disagreement concerned the use of delegated powers and democratic oversight as well as the planning merits of development sites.

On 22 September, the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee recommended, by six votes to three, that Full Council approve consultation on the Inspector’s proposed modifications. These include 12 additional urban sites and four additional Green Belt sites, with proposals for at least 530 homes at Downs Farm and 275 at Priest Hill.

As EET reported on 25 September, that recommendation was a further step towards consultation, rather than approval to adopt the plan. The Inspector must consider consultation responses before issuing a final report, and Full Council would still have to decide on adoption if the plan is found sound.

Why another plan is required

The requirement to begin a second plan stems from national reforms and higher assessments of housing need.

Government rules require certain authorities whose plans were submitted under transitional arrangements, but provided for less than 80 per cent of the newly calculated housing need, to start again under the new system while their existing plans continue.

Epsom and Ewell is explicitly listed among those authorities. Its deadlines were to publish a notice of intention by 30 June 2026 and a “Gateway 1” readiness assessment by 31 October. That assessment starts the new system’s 30-month plan-making timetable.

In an August letter to the council, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government acknowledged the resource pressures involved in producing two plans simultaneously. It nevertheless rejected impending reorganisation as a reason to defer the new work and reiterated the deadlines.

The financial implications are substantial. EEBC’s September committee report estimated that taking the new plan through to adoption would cost approximately £1 million, plus officer time. No budget had been allocated.

The report also recorded earlier allocations for the existing plan of £75,000 in 2019, £712,000 in 2021 and £629,000 in 2023. These are funding allocations, rather than a statement of final expenditure.

The committee voted seven to two for officers to seek discussions with East Surrey’s chief executive and planning executive member about how to proceed, with the outcome to return to a future meeting.

National pause offers Surrey no reprieve

The Government’s wider pause and review of local government reorganisation does not extend to Surrey.

Planning guidance updated on 24 September expressly confirms Surrey’s exemption. It also says councils must continue plan-making even where they cannot complete adoption before their successor authority becomes operational.

The same guidance exposes the difficulty behind East Surrey’s request. A plan for the new unitary area cannot begin until that authority is operational, although existing councils can collaborate on joint plans, shared evidence and cross-boundary issues beforehand.

Ministers intend to introduce transitional regulations covering unfinished plans, existing adopted plans and the timetable for new unitary-wide plans. However, the guidance describes itself as a statement of intention, rather than finalised

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policy.

East Surrey's press release says further details and timings remain unconfirmed. Nelson has requested a meeting with ministers and officials.

Housing need remains urgent

The argument over duplication comes against a stark local record. EET's latest report on the September committee meeting recorded just 37 homes completed in Epsom and Ewell during 2025–26, none affordable, and an inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

Cllr Julian Freeman (LibDem College) described the consequences for younger residents: "My own children can't even imagine owning their own home."

East Surrey's intervention therefore raises a practical question: how can councils meet urgent housing needs while spending money on overlapping plans during their final months?

The request does not itself remove EEBC's obligations or halt its current examination. It asks ministers to make the transition work more efficiently. For Epsom and Ewell residents, the test will be whether that produces a clearer, properly scrutinised route to homes and infrastructure—and a credible explanation of what the additional planning work will cost.

Sam Jones – Reporter



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Related reports

- Epsom and Ewell's New Local Plan sites advance amid clash over scrutiny and cost — 25 September 2026. epsomandewelltimes.com
- East Surrey is still going ahead – so what happens next? — 25 September 2026. so what happens next?
- Plans for East Surrey Council continue to progress — 14 September 2026. epsomandewelltimes.com
- The shake up of Epsom and Ewell's local government: was it all a waste of time as Rayner puts pause on LGR elsewhere? — 7 September 2026. epsomandewelltimes.com
- Bitter exchanges in Epsom and Ewell Council Chamber on Local Plan oversight — 22 July 2026. epsomandewelltimes.com

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Bust mains, bust company?

3 October 2026



A burst main that is leaking up to 750 litres of water every second has cause widespread outages across north east Surrey and forced a raft of school closures.

The issue, affecting Molesey, Esher, and the surrounding areas, was first reported at about 5am but the Local Democracy Reporting Service understands the leak is still ongoing and the valve has yet to be switched off.

Esher and Walton MP Monica Harding has described the widespread problem affecting her constituency as a massive failing of Thames Water saying years of under-investment in its infrastructure has once again hit residents.

Shops in the towns have run out of bottled water and huge tankers have been brought in to help top up the mains – but even these have run dry.

The Wilderness area of Molesey is underwater and is thought to be the source of the leak, but as of 9.30am water was continuing to flood the playing fields.

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Mrs Harding said: “The whole of the Wilderness is flooded, I’m at the perimeter of Island Barn where the leak is.

“My understanding is the leak was first reported at about 5am this morning but it took Thames Water a while to find it.

“It’s still flowing, they haven’t turned off the valves.

“It’s because Thames Water doesn’t have data loggers and they were scrabbling around to find it.

“This is an infrastructure failing, the regulators haven’t done their jobs for years and the money has been sucked out of Thames Water.”

As yet, no decision has been taken on whether to set up bottle stations, or how long the problem will last.

Some suspect the issue could become more commonplace as rainfall returns; the long dry summer has left the ageing pipe network in a brittle state and the system is not resilient enough to cope.

Mrs Harding added: “The teams working on the pipes have been brilliant, they’ve been working really hard but they are dealing with the fallout of a failed infrastructure.”

Thames Water has been approached for comment.

In a statement the firm had previously said: “We are sorry customers in parts of south west London do not have any water or are experiencing lower pressure than normal this morning. Our engineers have located the leak and doing everything they can to ensure water is back on as soon as possible.

“The latest updates will be posted on our website, thameswater.co.uk.”

Chris Caulfield Local Democracy Reporter

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Esher and Molesey water outage – tankers are being used to top up the mains and shops have run out of bottled water (image Chris Caulfield)

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Related EET reports

- Dirty water double: sewage spills and blocked drains put Epsom and Ewell under pressure – 14 August 2026. Thames Water sewer flooding, storm overflows and drainage problems across the borough. Epsom and Ewell Times
- An Epsom and Ewell education in water shortage – 18 December 2024. A major SES Water infrastructure failure left homes, businesses and schools without normal supplies. Epsom and Ewell Times
- Thames Water’s reputation going down the drain – 3 February 2024. Councillors scrutinised Thames Water after widespread outages affecting tens of thousands of Surrey homes. Epsom and Ewell Times
- Hosepipe ban not reached Epsom and Ewell yet – 19 July 2025. Thames Water faced criticism over leaks and ageing infrastructure while imposing restrictions elsewhere in the South East. Epsom and Ewell Times
- Epsom & Ewell households drowning as water bills rise? – 2 February 2025. Thames Water customers faced a sharp increase in bills amid continuing concern over investment and service performance. Epsom and Ewell Times

Sutton & Epsom squeeze home in Hurlingham thriller

3 October 2026



Hammersmith & Fulham 33 Sutton & Epsom 35

It was a belated welcome to the 2026/27 Regional 2 South East campaign at Hurlingham Park on Saturday.

The RFU had wisely delayed the start of hostilities as the country recalled the summer of ’76 and the drought had impacted pitches. No doubt RFU committees, puffing on their Montecristo No. 2s, paraphrased Lieutenant Colonel Bill

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Kilgore's immortal words with relief: "I love the smell of petrichor in the morning."

The Black & Whites' season began with a first-ever league encounter against Hammersmith & Fulham. The honour of winning the inaugural edition of the "Ampersand Cup" went to S&E as they narrowly defeated H&F 35-33, despite being outscored five tries to four.

There was a solitary debutant for S&E, with James Beck, formerly of CS Stags, starting in the front row. In contrast, it was a red-letter day for Sutton prop Thomas Boaden, who made his 100th First XV league appearance off the bench.

Unfortunately H&F president Jason Leonard – a fellow prop who achieved a rather more notable century of caps – was not in attendance to offer his congratulations.

The hosts made a host of changes from their final game of the previous season, with ten alterations, but prospective debutant Jack Coman was unfortunately sidelined with a calf injury in the warm-up.

There was a minute's silence before the match to remember Bob Lawless, the former Middlesex president who sadly passed away in June.

Referee Cyril Brognard's whistle initiated proceedings as Sutton's Frederick Bunting kicked off the campaign.

The Black & Whites were on the board almost instantly. The enveloping frame of Euan McTaggart blocked a box kick and the ball stayed in play. A couple of passes later scrum-half Euan Findlay was on hand to touch down in the corner.

The Bunting boot added the extras for a 7-0 S&E lead.

Maintaining the early momentum, a high tackle a few minutes later offered the visitors a chance to increase their advantage. It was no surprise to regular S&E followers that the easy three points were shunned in favour of a kick to the corner.

H&F stood firm and there was no further addition to the score.

After a dozen minutes came the unfortunate sight of debutant James Beck leaving the field with an Achilles injury that has ended his season.

Play resumed with another Sutton penalty, converted by Frederick Bunting – much to the relief of the travelling onlookers – to extend Sutton's advantage to ten points. Thomas Boaden entered the fray for his 100th cap far earlier than he had expected.

Hammersmith now showed they had plenty to offer with a devastating attack that left the Sutton defence in tatters. However, they were thwarted a yard from glory as S&E secured not only a turnover but also a relieving penalty.

That disappointment was soon replaced by joy as H&F opened their account. A clearance kick bounced back towards the hosts and two timely prods saw the ball roll over the try line, where Ben Morris won the race to score.

Geoff Mahon's excellent strike from the flank made it 10-7 to Sutton.

The visitors returned to attacking mode with the dazzling feet of Adam Bibby and a powerful arcing run by captain Hegarty bringing them to the line.

This time it was Sutton's turn to be frustrated by conceding a penalty when so close to success, but like the hosts they soon had another chance.

Flanker Joshua Rea made the initial break before a sidestep and dummy from Gareth O'Brien cut through the backs, enabling him to pass to hooker Samuel Lennie, who cantered home.

The conversion narrowly missed as the Black & Whites led 15-7 on the half-hour.

Hammersmith & Fulham bounced back instantly to send the Hurlingham Park supporters into raptures.

The score was a fraternal affair as full-back Douglas Russell cleared and brother Tim skilfully claimed the bouncing ball before speeding upfield and passing back to Douglas, who ran it home.

Geoff Mahon bisected the uprights to reduce the deficit to 15-14.

The remainder of the half offered no further scoring opportunities, but on the evidence of the opening 40 minutes the crowd could look forward to plenty more entertainment.

Sutton took shelter in the shade to ponder their strategy for the remainder of the contest.

Sutton made another rapid start with a sensational score soon after the restart.

Daniel Jones carried the ball out of defence before being enveloped by H&F players, but he managed to pass to fellow flanker Joshua Rea.

To say the Kiwi had plenty to do would have been an understatement, but he covered more than 60 metres to score despite tacklers being in hot pursuit for virtually every stride.

Bunting converted as nonchalantly as a smoker flicking ash from a cigarette and S&E led 22-14.

Five minutes later the Rugby Lane followers were cheering the bonus-point try.

Daniel Jones made another telling break and found the ideal man in support, Euan McTaggart, who used every inch of his considerable reach to place the ball over the line.

The metronomic Bunting made it 29-14.

Those two scores were not, however, the precursor to a relaxing romp for the Black & Whites, as H&F replied instantly.

It was a score that will have had defensive coaches muttering profanities when reviewing the match afterwards.

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S&E were awarded a penalty but failed to find touch. At least the ball remained deep inside the Hammersmith 22.

The hosts' adventure was then aided by poor tackling. A speculative kick ahead, recalling the fortunate bounce for H&F's first try, led to a diving attempt to catch the ball.

It was spilled forward and hacked on to within five metres. Quickly recycled, it went to fly-half Ed Shand, whose stylish dummy enabled him to stroll in for the try.

Geoff Mahon made the score 29-21 and put his side firmly back into the contest.

With Benjamin Tame and Joseph Lovatt coming off the bench, Sutton hoped fresh legs on a sweltering afternoon would provide the necessary vitality to extend their advantage.

With a keen eye on the scoreboard, they sensibly took advantage of Frederick Bunting's kicking talent. He added a penalty at the start of the final quarter to make it 32-21.

A minute later the Middlesex men were offered a kickable penalty but sought premium points by kicking to the corner.

Their bravery was rewarded as they secured the lineout ball and advanced relentlessly.

It was left to scrum-half Geoff Mahon to score. The number nine then made it four conversions from four as H&F closed to within a score at 32-28.

The game continued with mounting tension as both sides tenaciously scrapped over every ball, each seeking the decisive blow.

As the match entered added time Sutton fly-half Thomas Lennard made the significant intervention. His arcing break saw him scuttling into the opposition 22 and the scrambling defence conceded a penalty directly in front of the uprights.

There was no hesitation in choosing to kick and, as expected, Frederick Bunting did the necessary for 35-28 as referee Brognard announced that three minutes remained.

For experienced watchers of the Black & Whites, extreme anxiety immediately set in as they watched the restart descend.

Their fears were realised when the hosts were awarded a penalty.

With a sense of inevitability Sutton found themselves defending a lineout ten metres from their own line.

H&F won the ball and their forwards did superbly to patiently advance towards the line before the final surge.

Referee Brognard, perfectly positioned on one knee, raised his arm aloft to signal the try.

The exultant home crowd soon fell silent as Geoff Mahon stepped up to take the final kick of the game from the extremities.

It fell short.

Sutton had survived to win 35-33.

Sutton & Epsom were good value for their victory, with the lineout and set scrum impressing throughout. Joshua Rea produced perhaps his finest performance in a Sutton shirt and S&E wisely exploited the Bunting boot to secure a winning start.

Hammersmith & Fulham showed themselves to be an excellent addition to the league, both on and off the field, as all concerned retired to The Temperance to enjoy the traditional rugby fellowship after the game.

Next Saturday Rugby Lane hosts Battersea Ironsides for Sutton & Epsom's first home league fixture of the season.

Sutton & Epsom

O'Brien, Scott, Bibby, Bunting, Findlay A, Lennard, Findlay E, Johnson, Lennie, Beck, McTaggart, Glanville, Rea, Jones, Hegarty (capt).

Replacements: Boaden, Tame, Lovatt.

Hammersmith & Fulham

Russell D, Russell T, MacLeod, Louis, Scott, Shand, Mahon, Rogan, McCarthy, Poulton, Lang, Rivett, Morris, Perry, Proctor.

Replacements: Cowls, Chamberlain, Thompson.

John Croysdill

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Image: non-specific S&E in rugby action

Epsom Racecourse: Double for Cieren Fallon and

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William Haggas

3 October 2026



We had some typically competitive racing at Epsom on Sunday afternoon, with a good spread of results. Those going home happiest, though, were jockey and trainer combination Cieren Fallon and William Haggas, who together celebrated a double that afternoon.

Read on for a report of the Epsom card, with ***horse racing odds*** *from BOYLE Sports.*

We began with a seven-furlong nursery handicap (13.37). The result was less than expected, as the Archie Watson-trained Rogue Imperial came home as the winner at a price of 10/1. Favourite Give Hand could do no better than fifth place, and the winner had made all and kept on well enough to win by just under a length.

Next we had a conditions stakes race run over an extended mile (14.12). Here, William Haggas and Cieren Fallon had the first of their two winners as Quite Cheeky crossed the line nearly two lengths in front at a price of 7/2. The colt had run on well inside the final furlong to lead and keep going away, with 11/1 Sword Salute back in second.

Following was a 10-furlong novice (14.47). The winner here was short in price but not the favourite. William Haggas' Rowlf had been expected to win, jumping out of the stalls at 6/4, but it was in fact the second favourite who came home in front; Richard Hannon's Blue Noon, ridden by Sean Levey, winning well despite drifting left in the final furlong.

Race four was the Jump Jockeys Derby Handicap (15.22). Professional jump jockeys rode here, with James Davies aboard the favourite; Seeking Charles, who could do no better than seventh. Instead, it was the Gary and Josh Moore-trained Zarakerjack who took the lead and ran on well in the closing stages to win by over a length, ridden by Freddie Mitchell at a price of 12/1.

The fifth race was a 10-furlong handicap (15.57). Here, William Haggas and Cieren Fallon brought in the second leg of their double, as Matins justified his price of 4/7F to win by a very impressive five and a half lengths. Carnival Day was second and Echalar was third.

Second to last was an extended mile handicap (16.32). Ralph Beckett had a winner here with Rossa Ryan, as Swiped made all to stay on and win by a good margin of over two lengths. Thanos was second for Harry Charlton and Likeness was third for Jack Channon.

Finally, racing concluded with a seven-furlong handicap (17.07). We had joint favourites here; Musical Angel and Eazy On The Eye, both at 7/2. It was the latter, though, who came home in front for Heather Main and George Wood, holding on gamely to win by a short head to Short Trumpet in second.

Epsom results – Sunday:

13.37 – Rogue Imperial (10/1)

14.12 – Quite Cheeky (7/2)

14.47 – Blue Noon (13/8)

15.22 – Zarakerjack (12/1)

15.57 – Matins (4/7F)

16.32 – Swiped (100/30)

17.07 – Eazy On The Eye (7/2J)

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Image: Epsom racing idealised

Epsom fight back from two down to earn Abbey Rangers draw

3 October 2026

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Abbey Rangers 2 Epsom & Ewell FC 2 – Combined Counties League Premier Division South – Saturday 26 September 2026 Addlestone Moor

Epsom & Ewell recovered from two goals down to earn a point at Abbey Rangers, although their stronger second-half performance left them with chances to take all three.

The Salts made a slow start, and Alfie Essex put Abbey ahead after eight minutes. Josh Stepney doubled the hosts' lead in the 22nd minute, capitalising on a mistake by Epsom goalkeeper Ben Grummitt.

Captain Brendan Murphy-McVey nearly pulled one back with a free-kick, but the Abbey goalkeeper saved well. The hosts then came close to a third when an attempted lob from around 25 yards beat Grummitt and struck the crossbar.

That escape sparked an improvement from Epsom. In the 36th minute, Jason Vincent supplied Blessing Hombessa, who fired home to make it 2-1 at the break.

The Salts were level just two minutes after the restart. Obasanjo Akinniranye marked his 50th appearance for the club by scoring in a goalmouth scramble.

Harry Murphy was injured soon afterwards and replaced by Kionte Waul. Epsom then thought they had taken the lead through defender Harry Grant, but the referee disallowed the goal.

Akinniranye, Courtney Swaby and Hombessa all had further opportunities as Epsom pressed for a winner. Callum O'Keeffe replaced Murphy-McVey with 10 minutes remaining, while Jason Bloor and Luke Miller came on for Vincent and Swaby. Toby Young, returning from suspension, replaced Hombessa in added time.

A point represented a strong recovery from 2-0 down. Epsom will next host Corinthian-Casuals in a local derby on Saturday 3 October.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

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Care planning gap exposed as most Surrey residents aged 60 and over have yet to plan ahead

3 October 2026



Seven in 10 Surrey residents aged 60 and over are concerned about how they would pay for care and support if they needed it, yet only around one in 10 have made specific plans for the future, new research shows.

The YouGov survey, commissioned by Surrey County Council, reveals a gap between concern and preparation, with men appearing to be more complacent than women about future care needs and financial planning.

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The findings also show that many people have yet to put a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) in place, despite its importance in helping families manage future decisions.

While awareness of LPAs is high, with 82 per cent saying they fully understand what they are, over half (55 per cent) have not put one in place. An LPA allows a trusted person to make decisions on someone's behalf if they are no longer able to do so themselves. It can cover health and welfare, property and financial affairs, or both.

The findings will help inform the county council's ground-breaking Planning for your Future programme, run in partnership with Age UK Surrey, which supports residents to plan ahead and discuss their wishes with loved ones. 130 people registered for the programme's first dedicated finance and legal event in Leatherhead on 22 September**,** highlighting the demand for trusted information and advice to help residents plan for the future.

The YouGov survey of nearly 300 Surrey residents found that 70 per cent are concerned about how they will finance any future care needs, while even more are worried about losing their independence (81 per cent) or having to rely on others (77 per cent). Women were significantly more likely than men to report concerns about how they will pay for care (78 per cent compared with 61 per cent).

The findings suggest that residents have a realistic understanding of care costs in Surrey, with 68 per cent estimating care homes fees to be more than £1,400 a week, yet this awareness isn't translating into action to prepare for them.

Just nine per cent of respondents have made any specific plans for their future care and support needs, which could include making financial plans or agreeing arrangements with others, while a further 18 per cent are considering their options or discussing them with family, but have yet to put firm plans in place.

The research comes against a backdrop of continuing wider public misunderstandings about how social care is funded and provided. National research by Ipsos UK for the Health Foundation in 2025 found that 31 per cent of people believe the NHS provides the majority of social care services for older people, and 33 per cent believe that social care services are generally free at the point of need.

Sinead Mooney, Surrey County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: "Nobody knows what the future holds but we do know that planning ahead can make a real difference. Our research shows that many people are worried about future care and support needs, yet relatively few have started preparing.

"It was encouraging to see so much interest in our recent finance and legal event, and I hope these findings prompt more people to start thinking about what matters to them and make use of the information and support available. Whether it's understanding the costs involved, having a conversation with loved ones or putting a Lasting Power of Attorney in place, taking some steps now can save a lot of worry later on. We're committed to helping Surrey residents access the information they need to make decisions about the future with confidence."

Jane Finnerty Joint Chair of the Society of Later Life Advisors (SOLLA) said: "It's clear that many of us worry about paying for any future care we might need. Talking to an accredited adviser is a simple first step towards better planning and can offer peace of mind for people and their families."

Liz Dalgetty, Consultant Solicitor representing the Association of Lifetime Lawyers added: "Don't leave it too late. It is never too early to plan ahead with help from a trusted and qualified advisor.

"Hope for the best, plan for the worst, and be prepared for the unexpected. No-one knows what the future will hold. Planning ahead whilst you are well gives you time to understand and think about what is best for you and your family. You will then all have support in place to help you in the future."

Visit www.ageuk.org.uk/surrey/planningforyourfuture to learn more about future free events taking place around Surrey, access more information and download a free planning checklist. More than 5,200 people have already attended sessions.

The council's Care Cost Indicator, which can be found at www.surreycc.gov.uk/carecostindicator, is an online interactive slider to help people estimate the long-term financial costs of social care.

**All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 296 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 26th August – 1st September 2026. The survey was carried out online.*

Surrey County Council

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Related reports

- Calculating the cost of care in Surrey — the council's Care Cost Indicator and the question of paying for future care.
- 2030 vision for the elderly in Surrey — plans to help older residents remain independent and receive care when needed.
- Surrey's challenges with social care — pressures on care services and the choices available to residents.
- Respite for carers in Surrey to increase? — support for families providing care.
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Epsom students enter the Dragons' Den and secure Tycoon Competition success

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Four Business students at Nescot College in Epsom recently joined Peter Jones at a charity day, following their success in the national Tycoon Enterprise Competition. As part of their course, the students created a business concept and presented it Dragons' Den style to five local business leaders. Their product impressed and generated enough income to secure them third place in the national competition.

Students on the Nescot Business and Entrepreneurship course had to create a business, research the market, launch a product and try to make as many sales as possible. The winning students – Reem Abid, Johnny Connolly, Nathan Dean and Mattie Ray – created The WalkBottle, a 3 in 1, double insulated dog water bottle with two detachable bowls for food, water, or to carry treats.

Earlier in the course, a variety of local businesses supported the competition and the college by offering up 'dragons', to review each group's business idea and pitches, giving feedback on each one. Matt Thomas – CEO and Founder of Matthew Thomas Garden Design, Andi Drishi – Director and Owner at HICL Builders, Jon Skinner – CEO and Founder at Glow Homes, Lance Harris – National Sector Lead at Ministry of Justice UK and Vanessa McCormack – Hub Manager at the Epsom and Ewell Hub all gave up their time to help motivate and encourage the students as they competed not just with their coursemates, but also against groups nationwide.

Securing third place in the national Tycoon Enterprise Competition saw the team invited to the Peter Jones Foundation Charity Clay Pigeon Shoot earlier this month at the prestigious Holland & Holland Shooting Grounds. They were able to meet Peter and run a promotional stall during an afternoon showcase, to present their products, branding and entrepreneurial journey to guests.

Julie Kapsalis MBE, CEO and Principal at Nescot College said "I am so proud of our students, who pushed themselves out of their comfort zone and created a credible business, which beat hundreds of others across the country. I want to thank the Peter Jones Foundation and the local businesses who supported them by offering up their experienced, inspiring leaders to act as 'dragons' in our Nescot den. Our students learned a huge amount and could absolutely be tycoons of the future. We've provided a launchpad and I'm looking forward to seeing them fly."

Peter Jones CBE said: "My Foundation has been helping to empower young people for over 20 years. With so many challenges facing school leavers, it's more important than ever to provide young people with support to help them fulfill their potential. Charity days allow us to raise vital funds – every pound raised will support the Foundation's work to transform the lives of young people and particularly those at disadvantage, giving them the skills, confidence and opportunities to dream big and build brighter futures."

Samantha Carey, Curriculum Manager for Catering, Business and Travel at Nescot, said: "This was an incredible opportunity for our students, and I'm hugely grateful to the Peter Jones Foundation, as well as the dedicated employers who generously gave their time to support them. Experiences like this not only help students develop their confidence, skills and professionalism, but also provide valuable networking opportunities, enabling them to build connections with industry professionals and gain insight into future career pathways. Seeing our students grow in confidence and realise their potential is incredibly rewarding, and it's exactly why I chose a career in teaching."

Students on the business course can now enter the National Entrepreneur of the Year competition, also run by the Peter Jones Foundation, which allows 16 – 21-year-olds to launch or scale a business.

The Business and Entrepreneurship course hones maths skills, teamwork, communication and critical thinking. It also promotes confidence and resilience as students take on the presentations, networking and promotion.

Nescot offers a range of courses for school leavers and adults, including Motor Vehicle, Animal Care, Hair & Beauty, Computing and IT, Performing Arts, Childcare and Health & Social Care. To find out more about studying at Nescot call 020 8394 3038, visit www.nescot.ac.uk or email adviceteam@nescot.ac.uk

The WalkBottle can be bought on Ebay:https://www.ebay.co.uk/usr/thewalkbottle

NESCOT

Image: Peter Jones, Tom Kerridge and Touker Suleyman show off The Walk Bottle, alongside the student entrepreneurs from Nescot.

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East Surrey not going as green as the Greens want

3 October 2026



East Surrey Council did not pass a motion declaring a climate emergency – including a commitment to decarbonise by 2030 – following a spirited debate over costs and the pace of action.

At a meeting of the full shadow council this week, Councillor Jonathan Essex (Green Party: Redhill East & North Earlswood) put forward a motion that would see the new council commit to ambitious climate targets.

Surrey County Council – which will be abolished next year and replaced with the new West and East Surrey Councils – declared a climate emergency in 2019 amid a wave of local authorities issuing similar statements.

Councillor Essex's motion called on East Surrey to "meet or exceed" the current climate targets and for the council itself to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 – along with a 2050 target for the area as a whole.

It also calls for a cross-party working group to be set up after East Surrey assumes local government power in April 2027, which would review ongoing climate actions against their targets.

Councillor Essex said: "The climate science is now unequivocal. It has stared us in the face all summer. Five heat waves. The hottest UK summer on record."

"We must reclaim hope in the space between a now locked-in brutal future of increasing disasters and the now slim possibility of avoiding something far darker and apocalyptic."

He added that "a step change by governments, local and national" is needed to address the challenge.

But while there was broad acknowledgment of the threats posed by climate change among councillors, a debate ensued over the costs of implementing these targets.

Councillor Andy Burton (Liberal Democrats: Esher, Claygate & Oxshott North) praised Councillor Essex for putting forward an "important motion raising a critical topic".

He said: "I agree, we are in a climate crisis. We now must look at climate resilience and adaptation measures as well as mitigation and net zero targets."

However, he was among the voices raising concerns over the cost of pursuing the targets outlined in the motion.

"As we don't know either the cost of this commitment – or the affordability of it – I don't think we can give this current commitment now," he said.

"However, it is a commitment I would like to be able to give. So I fully support, wholeheartedly, the second limb of this motion [that called for a working group to analyse climate targets]."

His comments were echoed by opposition leader Councillor David Lewis (Conservative: Cobham & Oxshott South), who further pointed to Surrey County Council's progress in meeting emissions targets since the 2019 climate emergency declaration.

Councillor Lewis said: "While we all recognise the risks posed by climate change, we must ensure that the actions we commit to are affordable, achievable and evidence-led."

Other councillors spoke out against the motion to argue it did not go far enough in pursuing action on climate change.

Councillor Claire Malcomson (Liberal Democrats: Dorking Hills) said: "Why simply repeat a declaration? It's weak.

"The creation of East Surrey Council gives us a unique opportunity to start afresh – to do something stronger, to mitigate climate change, adapt to what is already happening and build resilience."

But other members of the council blasted the broad hesitancy to back the motion, with some saying that investment in climate mitigation measures would save money in the long term.

Councillor Jeremy Pursehouse (Independent: Warlingham) said: "We have run out of time, we haven't got it anymore.

"Yes, some things are going to cost a bit more to do it the right way, but experience shows us that those actually save us money in the long run."

The motion's preamble noted the Met Office's provisional report that warned summer 2026 was the hottest on record – during which time vast swathes of England were placed into drought.

Surrey's Climate Change Strategy from 2020 sets out the outgoing council's intention for the county to achieve carbon neutrality in time for the national deadline of 2050.

Councillor Nick Greenfield (Reform UK: Lingfield) commented: "This is a very passionate subject for everybody, and the

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quality of the debate has been great.

“I really do think that unless we have proper costings – and a more concrete proposal – we can’t vote positively today for this motion.”

But wrapping up the debate, Councillor Stephen McKenna (Green Party: Redhill East & North Earlswood) said: “Acting now is cheaper than paying for the consequences later.”

Despite broad statements of support for climate action from councillors, the motion was ultimately defeated, with 40 of the council’s 72 members voting it down.

While some councillors opposing the first part of the text calling for ambitious climate targets were more supportive of the second part backing a working group on the topic, the motion had to be voted on as a whole.

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

Epsom’s Nigel Price celebrates a sold-out home-town jazz night

3 October 2026



Epsom guitarist Nigel Price returned to a sold-out Epsom Jazz Club on Thursday (24 September) with his organ trio, just a week after the same line-up sold out Ronnie Scott’s in London.

For Price, who has lived in Epsom for 48 years, the concert at the Comrades Club in The Parade was a home-town celebration as well as the opening night of the club’s autumn season. He was joined by Ross Stanley on Hammond organ and Joel Barford on drums.

Price has built a national reputation through decades of performing, recording and touring. His career has taken him from the acid jazz band the Filthy Six to the James Taylor Quartet, while his appearances at Ronnie Scott’s number more than 600. His organ trio won a Parliamentary Jazz Award for Best Ensemble in 2010 and a British Jazz Award for Best Small Group in 2016.

The musicians alongside him have substantial careers of their own. Stanley is an acclaimed jazz pianist as well as an organist who has played with artists including Jim Mullen and Jacqui Dankworth. Barford began playing drums at six, joined the National Youth Jazz Orchestra as a teenager and has since toured and recorded with Price’s trio.

Their London appearance took place on Thursday 17 September. A review of the sold-out Ronnie Scott’s concert praised the close understanding between the three musicians, built through extensive touring together. Seven days later, Epsom audiences had the chance to hear Price and his trio on their own doorstep.

Epsom Jazz Club’s next concert is on 22 October, featuring vocalist Riketté Genesis. Venue Comrades Club, The Parade in the centre of Epsom

Lionel Blackman

(A director of Epsom and Ewell Times and founder of the Epsom Jazz Club. The Club operates under the charity Epsom Music – 1197449. The charity’s next event is the Ukraine Music Evening 3rd October Epsom Methodist Church.)

Image – L to R – Nige Price, Joel Barford and Ross Stanley. Credit Steven McCormick Photography

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Epsom Mental Health Week marks 20 years of local charity

3 October 2026

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Epsom Mental Health Week will bring talks, exercise classes, creative activities and opportunities to meet others to venues across the town from Saturday 3 to Sunday 11 October.

The programme celebrates 20 years of Epsom charity Love Me Love My Mind. Working with the White House Wellness and Health Centre and other local organisations, it aims to make conversations about mental health welcoming and accessible to people of different ages and interests.

Events include a free children's art club, men's social walks on Epsom Downs, mindful colouring and tea, yoga and fitness classes, and talks on anxiety, burnout and domestic abuse. St Barnabas Church will host peer support sessions, an advice café and a performance by Epsom Male Voice Choir.

On Wednesday 7 October, Epsom Picturehouse will screen *Aftersun*, followed by a discussion of the film's themes of grief, memory and mental health. **Tickets must be booked** through the Picturehouse website.

The week's main gathering falls on **World Mental Health Day, Saturday 10 October**. A Wellness Day at Metropolis Epsom, 1 Derby Square, will run from 11am to 4pm, bringing together local support organisations and offering taster sessions. A free children's art and craft club will run there from 11am to 3pm.

Activities also take place at the White House Wellness and Health Centre in Waterloo Road, the Rainbow Leisure Centre in East Street and St Barnabas Church in Temple Road. The programme says events are free unless a listing states otherwise. Visitors should check individual booking details and contact the organiser about any accessibility requirements.

A further creative session for children aged seven and over is listed for Wednesday 28 October at Epsom and Ewell Family Centre, Riverview Road, West Ewell. Families can ask about that session on **01372 571178** or at **epsomewellfamilycentre@barnardos.org.uk**.

For the full programme and enquiries about Epsom Mental Health Week, contact Love Me Love My Mind at **info@lovemelovemymind.org.uk** or visit lovemelovemymind.org.uk.

Lionel Blackman

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- Epsom's Love Me Love My Mind week of healing — the 2024 Mental Health Week programme. epsomandewelltimes.com
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Surrey Uni to probe Moon dust for rocket fuel

3 October 2026



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Could magnesium found in Moon dust help future spacecraft travel further into deep space? A new European Space Agency (ESA)-funded project led by the University of Surrey aims to find out.

Researchers at the prestigious Surrey Space Centre are working with UK propulsion company Eos Space Technology Ltd to investigate whether the metal magnesium can be extracted from lunar regolith (the loose rock and dust covering the Moon) and used as a solid propellant for electric propulsion.

Electric propulsion systems can use gases such as xenon and krypton, but they would need to be transported from Earth. Producing propellant from materials already available on the Moon could reduce this reliance and potentially support future deep space exploration and cislunar commercial activity.

However, using metals such as magnesium in conventional Hall-effect thrusters (a type of electric propulsion system that uses electrically charged particles to generate thrust) presents several challenges, including condensation, unstable plasma and erosion of the channel through which the plasma travels.

The nine-month MAGPIE project (MAGnesium Propulsion from In-Situ Extraction on the Moon) aims to tackle these barriers by testing a novel Hall thruster design and assessing, from extraction through to propulsion, whether lunar-sourced magnesium could become a viable propellant for future spacecraft.

Dr Sungwoo Lim, Principal Investigator of MAGPIE, and Senior Lecturer in Space Applications, Exploration and Instrumentation at the Surrey Space Centre, University of Surrey, said:

“The exciting question behind MAGPIE is whether spacecraft could one day use a resource that is already available on the Moon instead of having to carry all of their propellant from Earth.

“We are proposing to melt the regolith and dust to see if it is possible to extract usable magnesium on the Moon’s surface. Using the specialist facilities here at Surrey Space Centre, we will confirm the effect of changes on how thrusters perform and will develop a way of feeding in magnesium.”

The research team will assess how much magnesium could be obtained from different types of lunar regolith, test ways of extracting it and develop a system for feeding the metal into an electric thruster. They will then test how the thruster performs with different propellants and how tolerant it is to impurities in the magnesium.

Dr Szymon Dworski, CEO and Co-Founder at Eos Space, said:

“We will provide the first dataset grounded in actual experimentation which links lunar extraction pathways to a functional thruster architecture. We hope to define the feasibility envelope for metallic-propellant electric propulsion, which will enable future lunar mobility and orbital logistics concepts that do not rely on propellants that are launched from Earth.”

Running from September 2026 to May 2027, the MAGPIE project is backed by £112,795 in funding through the European Space Agency’s Open Space Innovation Platform (OSIP), which supports novel ideas for new space technologies and applications.

Surrey University

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