

# Epsom Civic Society

shaping the future, safeguarding the past

**NEWSLETTER No - 160 - SUMMER 2019**

## **CHAIR'S COMMENTARY**

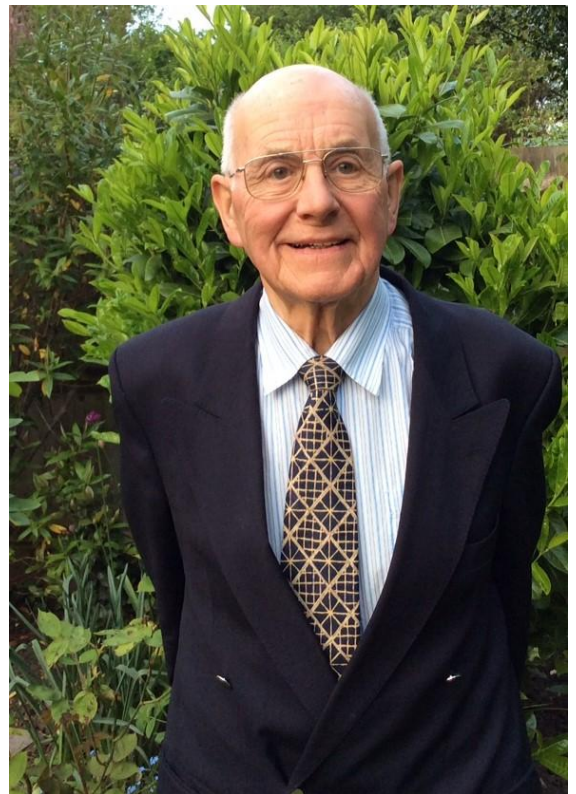
### **Joy Furness**

It is with sadness that I report to members the death of Joy Furness in April 2019. Joy was a long-serving member of the Society's committee, both as Events Secretary from 2003 – 2012, and Outings Secretary from 2006 – 2010. Joy's enthusiasm and support for the Society continued after she relinquished her committee roles, attending Annual General Meetings regularly up until 2017. Joy was particularly welcoming and encouraging to me when I joined the Society in 2011. She is much missed and fondly remembered. On behalf of the Society, I extend our sincere condolences to her family and friends.

### **Michael Arthur**

I am delighted to report to members that Michael Arthur MBE joined the Society's committee in May to take up the Planning portfolio alongside Bob Hollis, who continues to lead on Conservation and Heritage. Members will know that Michael has over 50 years' dedicated and distinguished service as a Borough councillor, with extensive committee membership, covering, among others, Licensing and Planning Policy, and Planning. He stepped down as a councillor after May's local elections and brings his wide local knowledge and professional experience to the Society. In addition to his role as a Management Institute and Honorary councillor, Michael is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Building and a Fellow of the Chartered Freeman of the Borough (awarded 2016). My fellow committee members and I take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to him.

On joining the committee, Michael writes: "After leaving the Council, which has been a substantial part of my life for 52 years, joining the committee of Epsom Civic Society will be an opportunity to maintain a link with the Borough particularly regarding planning policies and planning applications aspects. I will enjoy examining planning applications and committee reports from the sidelines. The Society has an excellent record of sound and sensible responses in planning issues. I hope my contribution will help to continue that theme into the future".



## Annual General Meeting

The Society's AGM took place on Thursday 25 April in Christ Church Hall. My thanks to all those who attended. It was very encouraging that the hall was so full, and I was very pleased to be able to talk with many of you and listen to your ideas and suggestions.



Our guest speaker, Ruth Ormella MRTPI, Head of Planning, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, delivered an engaging and wide-ranging talk. While Ruth's talk was not as advertised, due to the impending local elections and corresponding restrictions on communications from Council officers during the pre-election period (also known as 'purdah'), she nonetheless provided all of us with much to reflect on, not least the qualities and professional commitments of planners and their key roles in place-making. Her examples from Cornwall, Portsmouth, Germany and her home country, Australia, enriched our understanding and appreciation of what planners and planning can achieve in making a positive difference to people's lives. Equally enlightening and encouraging were Ruth's thoughts on community engagement in planning, and her support for that engagement in the Local Plan process. This a core interest for everyone in the Society. The evening provided a welcome opportunity for us to get to know one another and for Ruth to gain a greater sense of the Society's focus and range of activities. Our thanks to Ruth for taking time out of her busy schedule to talk to us.



## Local Plan

A reminder to members of the current timetable for production and adoption of the new Local Plan according to the latest Local Plan Programme (June 2018):

- Preparation and Production of the Masterplan for Epsom & Ewell: June 2018 – June 2019
- Preparation of the Epsom & Ewell Duty to Co-operate Engagement Plan: September – October 2019
- Pre-Submission Public Consultation: October – November 2019
- Date of Submission to Secretary of State: December 2019

- Pre-Examination Meeting: January/ February 2020
- Public Hearing: March/ April 2020
- Estimated Date for Adoption: June 2020

We will keep members updated on Local Plan progress through our usual communication channels. We are not intending to hold a meeting about the plan until the process is further along. We anticipate meeting the Council's strategic planning team about the Transformational Masterplan as the next step, at a date to be agreed.

Members can get involved directly with progress on the Local Plan by emailing their details to: [LDF@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:LDF@epsom-ewell.gov.uk)

## **Future 40**

On 2 April I attended the **Future 40 Engagement Event** for feedback on emerging themes, and to discuss ideas. Public responses to the first survey revealed a number of key strengths and key concerns for Epsom, together with emerging themes that are being followed up in the **Stage 2 survey**. The ultimate aim is to develop a long-term vision for the future of Epsom and Ewell that will underpin the Local Plan. More information on the findings and the link to the second survey is available at [www.future40.org](http://www.future40.org) Members are encouraged to make their voices heard!

## **The Society and Civic Voice**

On 7 May I joined the Civic Voice team and colleagues from other civic societies to attend a **Parliamentary meeting: 'Building Better Review: the community perspective'**. Kit Malthouse, the Housing Minister, was there. It was an excellent opportunity to ensure that communities were heard in the Government's latest review into delivering the new homes the country needs.

By way of background, the Government's **Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission** seeks to improve the quality of new housing design in England. Its primary aims are:

1. To promote better design and style of homes, villages, towns and high streets, to reflect what communities want, building on the knowledge and tradition of what they know works for their area.
2. To explore how new settlements can be developed with greater community consent.
3. To make the planning system work in support of better design and style, not against it.

More details are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

The Housing Minister acknowledged at the meeting that communities' natural resistance to change comes from bad experience: people feel like 'victims' of the planning system and it then becomes confrontational, with, as he put it, "QCs at dawn". Interestingly, he identified the Neighbourhood Plan as a prime tool for communities, something that has yet to be taken up locally. He also, unsurprisingly, advocated a generous land supply, a scarce resource in Epsom where there are limited developable sites and a 42% Green Belt designation. This will necessitate exploration of other options, such as greater density on development sites. The Minister is supportive of design codes, and in seeking to meet increasing housing targets, also seeks to create the Conservation Areas of the future.

Civic Voice's key messages for the Minister from research to date are that Civic Voice is not a NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) movement; modern design can be beautiful; genuine early and meaningful engagement with communities is vital; and Civic Voice members want to move from confrontation to collaboration in planning.

Craig McWilliam, CEO Grosvenor Britain and Ireland set out constructive ideas and approaches towards collaborative planning from a developer's perspective, and Professor Matthew Carmona, Chair of Place Alliance UK presented the latest findings on the local political perspective on housing design, in essence that councillors believe local authorities should reject more poorly designed housing developments.

More information and links can be found at our Twitter feed: @EpsomCivicSoc

With so much new housing development planned over the next 20 years and more, it is vital that we secure the very best design that is sympathetic to context, and that communities have the opportunity to engage early in the planning process to share their views and local knowledge to influence positive development outcomes. If members would like to share their views please email me at [chairman@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:chairman@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk)

### **Road Reps Social**

I look forward to meeting as many as possible of our invaluable road representatives, and others who do that extra bit for the Society on 11 June at this perennially enjoyable event in Christ Church Hall.

**Margaret Hollins**

### **Call for New Committee Members**

To ensure that the Society continues to thrive, we need more committee members. We would love to hear from you if you are able to join as a Minutes Secretary and we also seek a Secretary for the Society. Anyone with a legal or company secretary background would be ideal in this role.

We would also seek occasional support for our Newsletter and publicity activities and welcome any web or publishing design expertise. Please don't hold back from volunteering! If you would like to know more about what we do, please email me at: [chairman@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:chairman@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk). You can also check out our website: [www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk)

Thank you.

Margaret Hollins

### **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

*South Hatch, Burgh Heath Road:* The application to rebuild the stables with enabling development of commercial housing on the Green Belt, submitted last August, is still outstanding but there is much recent correspondence online. The number of items on the planning website now stands at 196! Amendments to the location and size of the housing blocks result in the reduction of the number of apartments from 47 to 46. We have confirmed our view that we would support improved stables but oppose the development of commercial housing on this Green Belt land. This land falls within the green belt parcel bounded by Burgh Heath Road, Beech Road, Rifle Butts Alley and Epsom Golf Course. The Green Belt Study described it as residential with stables, grassland, pasture and paddocks but the large majority as open



land and concluded that it is not suitable for release from the Green Belt; the landscape and visual sensitivities are high and it is an important part of the gap between the urban edge of Epsom to the north and Great Burgh to the south. The Society opposes any enabling development in the Green Belt. Let's hope another financial solution can be found.

*Epsom Square (formerly Derby Square):* The boundaries of the Square with the East Street buildings are shielded by wooden trellises with planting intended to be a "Green Wall", but their poor maintenance has left a very unfortunate appearance. There have been many complaints. We have drawn attention to conditions in the planning permission of 2016 requiring compliance with a landscaping management plan and have asked for this to be enforced.

*Former Police Station, Church Street:* The amended design for the redevelopment of the police station site, which I reported last time, has now been approved although our comments about car parking have not been pursued. It is good to know that, with Lidl, two substantial schemes in the Upper High Street, Depot Road and Church Street Development Brief are at last likely to proceed.



*23A-33 Links Road:* You will remember that a few years ago a controversial application to build on land behind these houses was refused. An appeal was dismissed but the Inspector saw no objection to development in principle and was inclined to accept contemporary house design if it related in some way to local features. These remarks and the current government pressure for more housing make it difficult to oppose a new scheme for the development of the land. We have written with criticism of the design and materials of the four houses now proposed and to express our strong preference for the land to be kept open and maintained for the benefit of local residents. We have also said that we believe that the demand for more housing sites should not be allowed to override important environmental safeguards.

*Planning applications approved:* Permission has also now been approved for the building of 21 self-contained flats on the site of Kings Arms PH, 144 East Street, the redevelopment of 117 East Street, and for flats on the site of 8 Andrews Close. These applications were reported in recent Newsletters.

*Fencing in Avenue Road:* Last year we supported local residents in drawing attention to roadside fencing in Avenue Road which seriously disrupted the street scene by its height and colour. An enforcement notice was served and appealed. The appeal has now been dismissed and further action is awaited.

**Alan Baker**

## **CONSERVATION and HERITAGE**

This has been a period for reviewing our delightful Conservation Areas. There are 21 designated Conservation Areas within the Borough. They greatly enhance the beauty of our locality. Many have additional planning controls in the form of an Article 4 Direction relating to minor developments affecting the frontage of a building.

### *36 The Parade - Application 19/00224/FLH*

We objected to the proposal to build a two-storey side extension to this lovely cottage in the Parade. This is a locally listed building within the Church Street Conservation Area. However, the Council has permitted this application. We will monitor this project and check to see if there is any infringement to the approved scheme.

### *The Durdans Stables - Clunch Wall Repairs - Application 19/00369/LBA*

We fully support the proposal for restoring this historically significant clunch wall. This is a local landmark and one of the few examples of clunch in England. However, previous repair attempts have been poor and we have suggested an initial mock-up area be provided ahead of full works in order to see that the works fully meet the required and agreed specification. This wall is located in the Chalk Lane Conservation Area.



### *22 Church Street (Beaumont) Rear Extension Block – Application 19/00384/FUL*

Whilst supporting this application for a further two-storey block in the rear garden, we are concerned at the intrusion into this garden area and the possible impact this further development will have on the lovely Church Street Conservation Area. This could lead to an overdevelopment on this plot.

**Bob Hollis**

### **THE DOWNS - The Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators meeting 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

This was the last meeting of the current Board before the Council Elections in May. It was reported that there is still no response from the Horse Race Betting Levy Board regarding the new Sand Track for Hacks. Simon Dow, who speaks for the Racehorse Trainers, also reported that the new bye laws regarding control of dogs before 12 noon daily had been most effective. Unfortunately, he also reported to the Board that cyclists and the increasing number of public visitors have significantly increased health and safety concerns for trainers. Many visitors are seemingly unaware that the trainers have a legal right to train horses on the Downs without interference. A formal risk assessment will now be undertaken in order for appropriate measures to be considered. Sadly this may mean more notice boards at various access points across Epsom Downs.

In recent years, some new non-racing activities have now been permitted. One unusual one is the Annual EDMAC (Epsom Downs Model Aircraft Club) Cloud Tramp flying event. The Cloud Tramp aeroplane was originally designed by American Charles H. Grant and launched in 1954 in an effort to attract both young and old to the model flying hobby. Ideal as a beginner's model, the Cloud Tramp has a 22" wingspan, is rubber powered and has a simple construction with plenty of scope for modification, customisation and



decoration. Every year, on an agreed date and time, all over the world, hundreds of Cloud Tramps take to the air as part of a mass launch. This year, the event takes place on Epsom Downs on 3<sup>rd</sup> August at 5 p.m.

**Angela Clifford**

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Thank you to those members who have paid this year's subscription and especially to those who have generously given donations. A reminder for those who have not yet paid - £2 per individual / £3 per household is due. If you have not yet paid and you were out when he/she called, your Road Rep. should have put a note on this Newsletter giving a reminder of his/her address. Please save them an extra trip by taking your subscription to them. If unsure whether you have paid or not please contact your Road Rep or myself directly.

Alternatively, as set out in the last Newsletter, you can now pay online by following the link 'Join us' on our website [www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk/membership](http://www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk/membership). Please include your surname, post code and house number so that we can identify you as having paid. When you select the yellow 'Pay Now' button, you will be taken to the PayPal website. If you have a PayPal account, you can sign in; if not, you can make the payment by credit or debit card without signing in. Over the next few months we plan to continue updating the website so that new members can join online, and to enable different types of payment to be made. Please keep visiting the website to check for news!

## **NATIONAL TRUST FREE PASSES**

Civic Voice, of which Epsom Civic Society is a founder member, has in the past received these passes to forward to their members. I have recently been in touch with the Civic Voice Office and, although they are 'in conversation' with the National Trust about this benefit, currently no passes have been forthcoming. Be assured that, if they do arrive, I will let you all know.

**Ishbel Kenward** - Membership Secretary (01372 728570) email [membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk)

## **EVENTS**

### **OUR DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY AND NATIONAL CIVIC DAY – 22 JUNE**

We are planning to celebrate the Society's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. It also coincides with National Civic Day. There will be displays of the activities over the last 60 years from 1959. We plan to provide a book for members and visitors to record their recollections of Epsom.

Annually, Ian West, historian and archaeologist, takes members around secret corners of Epsom and Ewell and he has agreed to lead two visits, the first at 10.30 a.m. around the Church Street area and the second at 2.30 p.m. via the station and around the Clock Tower and market. These walks should last about one hour. We shall have to limit the numbers to 25 on the day for each tour. Please just turn up, tell your friends and families. Everyone is most welcome. If any ECS member is available on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we should welcome extra help to set up the stall and gazebo. Any length of time you can spare would be welcomed. Please either contact any committee member or ring 01372 273517. And where shall we meet? EPSOM "DERBY" SQUARE -10.00 to 4.00 p.m. SATURDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> June. See you there.

## EPSOM COMMON ASSOCIATION DAY – SUNDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY

We will also be at the Epsom Common Association Day on Sunday 21st July on the field beside The Cricketers. Hope to see you there.

### DINNER THEATRE AT THE MILL AT SONNING

Many members have requested another visit to The Mill at Sonning for the Dinner Theatre. It is arranged for Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December. There is a Christmas lunch followed by a performance of ‘*Singin’ in the Rain*’. The cost is £68.00 per person and this covers a two-course lunch, tea/coffee, the performance, one programme, coach and driver’s tip. The ‘Hardings’ coach collection points are:

- Epsom Downs at 10.20 a.m.
- The Methodist Church, Epsom at 10.30 a.m.
- The Street, Ashted at 10.40 a.m.

The estimated departure time from Sonning is 5.15 p.m.

Booking for non-members is from Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September.

Please forward your booking to Sheila Wadsworth at the new address below with your cheque and include a stamped addressed envelope.

**Sheila Wadsworth**

Epsom Civic Society Membership Enquiries  
Tel: 01372 728570

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Newsletter: Please send your letters or comments for consideration to:  
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Epsom KT18 7BD  
[carol.t.reed@gmail.com](mailto:carol.t.reed@gmail.com)

## APPLICATION FOR THE DINNER THEATRE – THE MILL AT SONNING

### SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER

Name/s .....

Address.....

Tel. No.....

No of tickets @ £68 pp.....Total cost.....

Any dietary requirements? Yes/No Please list.....

Please return this form with your cheque made out to “Epsom Civic Society” and a stamped self-addressed envelope to **Sheila Wadsworth, 8 Claverton, 52 Woodfield Lane, Ashted KT21 2BJ** (01372 273517)