



**NEWSLETTER No - 172 – AUTUMN 2022**

[www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk)

### **CHAIR'S COMMENTARY**

Dear Members,

The return to normal life has been interrupted by a profound change with the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Celebration of her life of service and ceremonies to mark her passing were accompanied by the suspension of events and activities as a mark of respect.

The immediate consequence for the Society was the cancellation of plans for 'Heritage Sunday' in the Marketplace on 11 September when we planned to showcase the Society's activities and the changing face of Epsom to our members new and old.



*As flags across our Borough were lowered on the news of the death of HM Queen Elizabeth, books of condolence were made available for everyone to sign at the Town Hall, Bourne Hall and the Wellbeing Centre. An online book of condolence is also available at <https://www.royal.uk>*

As this Newsletter closed for press, the Society planned a display and an opportunity to come and talk to us on 24 September at the Eco Fair organised by Sustainable Epsom & Ewell in St Martin of Tours Church as part of Epsom and Ewell's Green Week.

### Planning Consultations – ECS Responses

Over the summer, the Society responded to two consultations: in July to the **draft Statement of Community Involvement** and in August to the consultation on the **draft Town Centre Masterplan**.

Results from the Town Centre Masterplan consultation will form part of the evidence base for the new draft Local Plan. The new Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Borough's planning services intend to involve the local community in planning issues, including who will be consulted, when involvement should take place and which methods will be used. It will apply to consultations on adopting the new Local Plan and other planning documents, and to planning applications, and the notification of appeals. It contains a useful glossary of planning terms. The updated Statement of Community Involvement is accessible at this link: <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Statement%20of%20Community%20Involvement%20July%202022.pdf>

We are interested to hear how informative and user-friendly you find it.

### Local Plan

As reported in our summer newsletter, the Regulation 18 public consultation is scheduled to start in October.

### In Other Planning News



Following September's government reshuffle, the new Secretary of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities is Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP. He was previously Chief Secretary to the Treasury (15 Sept 2021-6 Sept. 2022) and Minister of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (13 Feb. 2020). As we close for press, Lee Rowley MP for NE Derbyshire was confirmed as the new Housing and Planning Minister.



*The Eco Fair 2022 is aimed at engaging the local community in discussions about how to improve our local environment. Catch up with the news and details here:*

<https://www.sustainableepsomewell.co.uk/events/epsom-and-ewells-green-week-2022>

## Horton Chapel



I was delighted to represent the Society at The Horton's official launch on 22 September. It's a wonderful new arts and events venue for the community. Many of you will have already visited for a live performance, exhibition or workshop,

but if you haven't, you can find out

more about The Horton and how to get to it here:

<https://www.thehortonepsom.org>

This summer there have been visiting Spanish dancers (pictured), live singer-songwriter competitions and life drawing workshops. Take a look and see what's coming up this Autumn. It is also a nice spot to drop in for a coffee!



**Margaret Hollins**

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Since our Summer newsletter, here is an update on a number of applications.

**107-111 East Street (21/01708/FUL):** The refusal of this second application which was for 21 flats - slightly reduced from the previous one for 23 flats - has gone to appeal. Decisions on both are awaited from the Planning Inspectorate which has acknowledged there is a backlog with the appeal process.

**35 Alexandra Road (21/01920/FUL):** The application for development and site replacement with nine flats still awaits a decision.

**Chalk Pit:** No change. The Society received an acknowledgement from the Minister following our letter of 3rd March to the Secretary of State requesting call-in of Surrey County Council's decision to grant retrospective planning permission. It is still uncertain whether the Secretary of State will decide to call-in the decision or let SCC's decision stand without further scrutiny.

**United Reform Church:** We note that the Agent's board for this site now says "Under Offer" but we have no information on any application, or pre-application discussion, about the future use for this site.

**1 Burgh Heath Road (22/00431/FUL):** A second application for change of use of this former care home together with alterations and a two-storey side extension to create six flats follows from the 2021 refused application for a more extensive, and wholly inappropriate development for nine flats. This new proposal is certainly an improvement from before where the fine fir tree would have been lost and the scheme incorporated an unsatisfactory underground car park. We wrote a neutral letter mindful of the Borough's performance of housing delivery. A decision is awaited.

**25 Links Road (22/00660/FUL):** Application refused for demolition of existing garage and erection of a 3-storey house. We wrote objecting to a very poor proposal to squeeze a small and narrow house on land currently occupied by a double garage. The application was entirely out of keeping and incongruous to the street scene and locality (separately, we are pressing for this area to be designated a Conservation Area). The refusal decision cites the unsuitability of the proposals, causing harm within the adjoining area; lack of demonstrating that there would not be detrimental harm to the occupants of No.25; absence of required highway and pedestrian safety; likely loss or damage to a TPO tree.

**81 College Road (22/01028/FUL):** This is an application to erect a house in the rear garden and to front onto and access into Copse Edge Avenue. This is the second application following the refusal of a 2021 application for a similar development. The Council decision for the new application is again refusal on the grounds that it would represent an over-development of the site and an incongruous addition that would fail to integrate with the wider street scene resulting in visual harm to the prevailing character and appearance of the area. It would also have an unacceptable juxtaposition to a TPO tree affecting the root system with likely decline in the future health of the tree.

**39 Manor Green Road (22/00695/FUL):** Application for change of use of gym/yoga studio to residential to create a 1 bedroom dwelling. This proposal has again been lodged, with minor modifications, following the same application in 2020 and the 2021 appeal decision to refuse. We have again written opposing the application setting out concerns about lack of good design and harmonisation with local distinctiveness and being entirely out of keeping with prevailing development typology of house types and size. The amenity space shown would not relate functionally to the living accommodation and in conflict with development policy No.12. The donor property would be left without on-site car parking, adding to the on-street parking pressure. There are similarities with this application to that at 81 College Road in that both are located on corner sites seeking development in the back gardens with accesses to a side road adjoining (albeit Copse Edge Avenue is a Private Road). The proposals are far too cramped and compromised to be acceptable for good planning.

**Land at the rear of 23a/25 Links Road (22/00814/NMA):** Non-Material (this is a technical term of planning law and perhaps rather misleading) amendment to approval of permission given to the application for three houses on this backland site reported in our Summer Newsletter, to reduce the shared access from 5.0m to 4.3m; removal of preserved tree T27; and to implement development in phases. We wrote strongly objecting as did numerous local residents. We cannot understand why these amendments, certainly a retrograde step, applied for so soon after approval, were not considered within the first application. Regrettably, the application was allowed.

**Kingswood House School site:** Although not an application, and we try to see the full detail before commenting, “flyers” have been distributed in the locality about an impending application for redevelopment to reduce this independent school down from its c.200 school places to just 40/60 exclusively for those with special educational needs and build on the site and part of its playing



fields. Apparently, the freeholder is not willing to renew the lease to the school on its present terms and is seeking this redevelopment. Notice was given of a local public meeting to explain the proposals in June at the Cricketers Public House.

A good gathering assembled and waited but the developer did not turn up! So detail remains sketchy but we believe that this application is likely.

Image selected from ‘Horizon Imaging’:  
<https://www.horizonimaging.co.uk/gallery/telescopic-mast-photography-gallery/>

**Michael Arthur**

## CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE



The main challenge over this very hot summer period has been the overturning on Appeal of the Council’s refusal to demolish Langley Vale Farm (pictured) and to construct 20 houses in the Green Belt. One of the Inspector’s main concerns was our Council’s poor record in achieving the Government’s new housing targets. He stated that the Borough had a ‘very poor housing land supply and delivery position’ and he gave this considerable weight in the planning balance. It appears that until we can start delivering new housing in compliance with Government targets, we will find it very hard to protect our Green Belt.

In a similar Green Belt location at our southwestern boundary, we are very concerned at the proposed closure and demolition of the Ashted Park Nursery and the erection of new housing. At present this application is under consideration (see p.6), but hopefully Mole Valley will be in a better position to refuse this application.



Good to see that the Langley Vale Woods car park was completed by Derby Day but regrettably remains closed. Works to the security installations, electric car charging and pay machines are still ongoing. Oh well, maybe we can use it in Autumn rather than summer!

**The main Planning Applications are:**

***Ex Marsden Nursery/Ashtead Park (MO/2022/0474):*** Ashtead Residents Association has strongly objected to this application. ECS has also sent an objection letter whilst our Council have submitted a ‘1 sentence’ letter. Maybe Epsom Council is oblivious to the challenge of this Green Belt intrusion on their doorstep.

***24-28 West Street (22/01294/FUL):***

The Society has submitted two letters of objection for the latest 5/6 storey building for 20 flats. Whilst realising that our Planners would be tending to approve this very much improved scheme, there are still problems relating to the demolition of our town’s heritage, Visual Impact Assessment, public safety, and sustainability.

This key site is located in the Town Centre Conservation Area but also immediately adjacent to The Stamford Green CA. In these images (contained within the Design and Access Statement documents submitted by DAP Architecture Ltd), the proposed block, dubbed ‘The Arrival’ by the architects shows the visual impact from the approach to Epsom via Stamford Hill and from the marketplace.





***The Former Police Station and Ambulance Station Site (22/00923/FUL):*** The ECS has submitted a neutral/supportive letter for this application for a 4/5 storey residential, nursing and dementia care home with a facility for 96 dementia beds (pictured left). The site is adjacent to the Church Street Conservation Area. The scheme is a significant improvement on the previous proposal for a much higher block of retirement flats (pictured below left).



We have raised concerns at the protection of the trees, drainage challenges of a large basement car park and the construction works affecting the residents of The Parade.

***Green Gables, Ashley Road (22/00379/FUL):*** The application has been recommended for approval by the Planning team but the Planning Committee decided on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 to defer a decision on this controversial scheme for 22 student bedrooms, pending a site visit. The site is close to the Worple Road Conservation Area and opposite UCA. The Society submitted a neutral letter, encouraging the provision of new student accommodation but with conditions applied re parking, amenity space, block positioning and multi-tenancy occupation.

***Langley Vale Telecomms Mast (22/01042/T56):*** A successful campaign was held by the residents of Langley Vale to stop the erection of a 15m high mast in a central village area and located immediately adjacent to neighbouring houses. Due to the high number of objections, the Council made an early decision to refuse.

***The Multi Storey Car Park at Epsom Hospital (20/00249/FUL):*** This Appeal is now planned for October 2022. The ECS has applied to attend and speak at the hearing. The proposed location is immediately adjacent to the Woodcote Conservation Area, near to the Chalk Lane Conservation Area and may have adverse impacts for the southern part of the Worple Road Conservation Area bordering Avenue Road. We note that the Guild Living scheme at the back of the hospital has not progressed. The demolition started and then abruptly stopped.

***Hollycroft, Epsom Road, Ewell (21/01254/FLH and 21/01167/FUL):*** We objected to the proposal to build a new dwelling in the rear garden of Hollycroft (21/01254/FLH) and the separate application for conversion works to the Grade 2 listed Hollycroft house. Appeals have been lodged.

**Bob Hollis**

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*Synthetic Grass: its impact on Biodiversity Net Gain, surface water runoff and how it could be dealt with in our future Local Plan.*



The use of synthetic grass is gaining ground in our Borough. The removal of natural coverings replaced with synthetic materials

has two main impacts: biodiversity loss and surface water runoff increases. Whilst on an individual basis the impacts of the change may not be visible, the cumulative effect will have an overall detrimental effect on biodiversity and lead to increases in surface water run-off which can ultimately cause localised flooding. The effects of climate change leading to higher intensity rainfall events and more temperature extremes as seen this summer will conflate these effects.

Under the current Local Plan there is a requirement under Core Strategy 6 that “the Council will ensure that new development avoids the increasing risk of or from flooding”. Similarly under the Environment Act 2021, all planning permissions granted in England (with a few exemptions) will have to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain from November 2023. Biodiversity net gain will need to be measured using Defra’s biodiversity metric and habitats will need to be secured for at least 30 years. These requirements will be easier to accommodate in the provisions of the local plan for large developments.



However, impermeabilization creep and biodiversity loss through changes made at single dwelling level ought to also be considered within the new Local Plan. Perhaps this could be through local measures and policies for areas more prone to surface flooding as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment update<sup>1</sup>, areas that form part of key biodiversity corridors (identified in the EEBC Biodiversity Action Plan), areas in

Conservation areas or perhaps through increased enforcement.

Indeed specific rules apply for householders, wanting to pave over their front gardens. Planning permission is not required if a new or replacement driveway uses permeable or porous surfacing which allows water to drain through such as gravel, permeable concrete block paving or porous asphalt or if the rainwater is directed to a lawn or border to drain



naturally, however, if the surface is greater than 5m<sup>2</sup> or does not consist of permeable paving then planning permission will be required.

However, until we have sight of what is included in the Local Plan, below is a summary of the pros and cons of synthetic grass, some debunking of facts that synthetic grass is maintenance free and suggestions for alternatives.

### **Pros and Cons of Synthetic Grass versus real grass**

	<b>Synthetic “Fake” Grass</b>	<b>Real grass / Alternative natural coverings</b>
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No fertilisers required to keep it looking green.</li> <li>• Can be useful in high traffic areas but alternatives exist (permeable paving, gravel etc).</li> <li>• No mowing but you still need to maintain it regularly!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports soil micro organisms and worms.</li> <li>• Locks in carbon.</li> <li>• Absorbs water ( reduces surface water flooding).</li> <li>• Supports insects (ground nesting bees, beetles, etc)</li> <li>• Cheap to grow.</li> <li>• Beautiful to look at.</li> </ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not support wildlife and suffocates soil micro-organisms.</li> <li>• Consists of polyethylene, polypropylene and polyamide compounds from the plastics industry that have a very high carbon footprint.</li> <li>• Releases microplastics in the environment as it degrades. The EU is looking at banning suspected carcinogenic additives contained in synthetic grass.</li> <li>• Very difficult to recycle.</li> <li>• Can overheat in the sun making it un-useable.</li> <li>• Requires cleaning to rake off leaves, moss, pet waste. Some customers replace mowing with vacuuming!</li> <li>• Design life is limited and expensive to lay properly.</li> <li>• Not aesthetically pleasing!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May require watering during summer if green look desired.</li> <li>• Perceived high maintenance although maintenance can be reduced if you mow less or let it grow longer ( for example as suggested by the <b>NO MOW MAY</b> campaign run by Plantlife).</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Jacobs, 2018, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update, 2018, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. <https://www.epsom-well.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Final%20SFRA%20Update%20June%202018.pdf>

Useful references and further sources of information are available here:

**BBC Radio4 Costing the Earth:** A report investigation the trend for plastic grass and plants and their impacts on the environment <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0009j14>

**RHS Campaign Greening Great Britain** <https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/greening-great-britain>  
Provides ideas and explains why greening our outside spaces is important to reduce air pollution and noise, drought and surface flooding as well as temperatures in particular in urban environments.

**Turf it out is it time to say goodbye to artificial grass?**

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/aug/02/turf-it-out-is-it-time-to-say-goodbye-to-artificial-grass>

**Aur lie Paoli**

## THE DOWNS

Work continues to install new signposts, notice boards, display boards, litter bins and benches. This is part of a  170,000 package of improvements mainly funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, supported by money from the Jockey Club and the Council. The Council's web page (<https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/news/joint-investment-enhance-epsom-walton-downs-all>) indicates that the work was supposed to be completed for the Jubilee weekend in early June, but problems with supplies seem to have slowed down progress and the notice boards/display boards are still blank. Hopefully, all will be revealed soon!

Other improvements continue, including demolition of the unsightly old public conveniences (unfortunately with no planned replacement at the moment) and upgrades to the horse training tracks. A new gallop for hack horses is due to open shortly.

Meanwhile The Derby celebrations went off smoothly, with a fun pre-event evening for local people culminating in the lighting of the Jubilee beacon. Unfortunately the Queen was not able to attend, but the Princess Royal stepped in and there was a parade of previous Derby-winning jockeys. The Princess Royal also officially named the new Langley Vale Wood, developed by the Woodland Trust.



*The Princess Royal met First World War re-enactor from the Tenth Essex Regiment Living History Group, Jamie Quinn and Mac the horse, as part of the opening of Langley Vale Memorial Wood. (Photo: Geoff Caddick/PA Wire)*

Finally, there is still no sign of the new draft Road Traffic Order to cover closure times for access to the top (Seven Furlong) racecourse car park via Old London Road (as reported on in previous newsletters). This should be uncontroversial, as it is supposed to reinstate previous closure hours that were found not to have been properly ratified. At their meeting in June, the Downs Conservators agreed to prioritise an update to the bylaws covering the Downs, so we will be checking to see what changes are proposed in due course.

**Nick Lock**

## MEMBERSHIP and SUBSCRIPTIONS

The majority of our members have paid their Subscriptions for this year. However, there are a few who have not yet paid. If you are one of those, either your Rep will have called when delivering this Newsletter or will have attached a slip to remind you. If you have any queries feel free to check with me.

If you wish to pay online go to our website [www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk) , follow the link 'Join us' and select the PayPal option at the bottom of that page. Select individual (£3) or household (£5) membership as appropriate, or pay a different amount if you wish to make a donation. 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. If you have any queries feel free to contact me.

**Tel: 01372 438361 Email: [membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk)**

**Ishbel Kenward**

## EVENTS

There was a happy turnout of 29 members for Ian West's walk in June, meeting at the Millennium Pond, Woodcote Green, and exploring around Woodcote Corner and Avenue Road and the gates in Madan's Walk – so many facts I did not know. Subsequently Ian and I visited the Royal Automobile Club's Epsom site to explore beneath the main building to see the ice house and an adjacent store room (possibly used to preserve game next to it) and again Ian expanded my knowledge. Many thanks again to Ian.

## VISIT TO NEWMARKET

We are hoping to run a trip, possibly next April, to Newmarket to the National Stud and the National Horseracing Museum.

### National Stud

Depending on the season visitors can expect to see mares with their young foals, yearlings and stallions in the beautiful grounds of the National Stud. The tour would be guided and would include information about the history of the stud and an overview of its work.

### National Horseracing Museum

The National Horseracing Museum <https://www.nhrm.co.uk/> was founded to be a world-class museum celebrating the development of Thoroughbred horseracing and breeding in Great Britain. The museum is situated in the centre of Newmarket in King Charles II's former palace and stable yards. Three charities – the National Horseracing Museum, The British Sporting Art Trust and the Retraining of Racehorses are on the five acre site together with a shop, restaurant and bakery. The museum cares for and displays social history, science and art collections dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century through to the present day. Full details will be provided in the next newsletter.



## SATURDAY 12<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER – QUIZ NIGHT

We are resuming our Annual Social with a Quiz Night on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November – Time 7pm-10pm. Do come along and join the evening and bring your friends and family. The cost of £24 covers drinks and a buffet supper delivered to your table by our long-established Studio Food caterers. Venue is St. Martin of Tours church hall. The event upstairs is accessible by lift if required. You can make up a table of up to six or we can put you in a team. The questions cover all sorts of subjects and prizes will be awarded, but the quiz is designed very much as a social event. There are a few car parking spaces by the church hall, but places can be found nearby and in the town car parks.

### Payment

1. Send a cheque direct to me with the completed form; or 2. Pay direct into our Barclays account (Sort Code: 20-29-90 Account Nr. 20353078) and then you can e-mail me on [social@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:social@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk) with information about the payment and answers to the form below/or send the completed form to me direct. Any questions, feel free to call me on: Tel: 01372-275580

**Sheila Wadsworth and Eleanor Bland**

**Form to: Sheila Wadsworth, 8 Claverton, 52 Woodfield Lane, Ashted, KT21 2BJ**

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### QUIZ NIGHT FORM – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER

NAME/S .....

ADDRESS .....

EPSOM CIVIC SOCIETY MEMBER/S Yes/No .....

CONTACT NO. ....

NO. OF TICKETS ..... TOTAL COST (£24 each).....

Paid by cheque Yes/No      Paid into bank a/c on line and date .....

Any dietary/food allergy requirements? Yes/No

Please list .....

Please send any letters or comments for consideration to: Newsletter Editor: [publicity@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:publicity@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk)  
All of our newsletters are available in colour on our website: [www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk)

Members who do not receive an electronic copy of the newsletter are recommended to visit our website to access the links in this edition and in previous editions of the Society's newsletters, where you will also get the extra benefit of seeing the pictures in colour and may find other items of interest: <https://epsomcivicsociety.org.uk/newsletters/>

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