



NEWSLETTER No - 173 – WINTER / SPRING 2023

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CHAIR'S COMMENTARY

Dear Members,

The Year Ahead



Writing this first commentary of 2023, I would like first of all to wish everyone a very happy New Year.

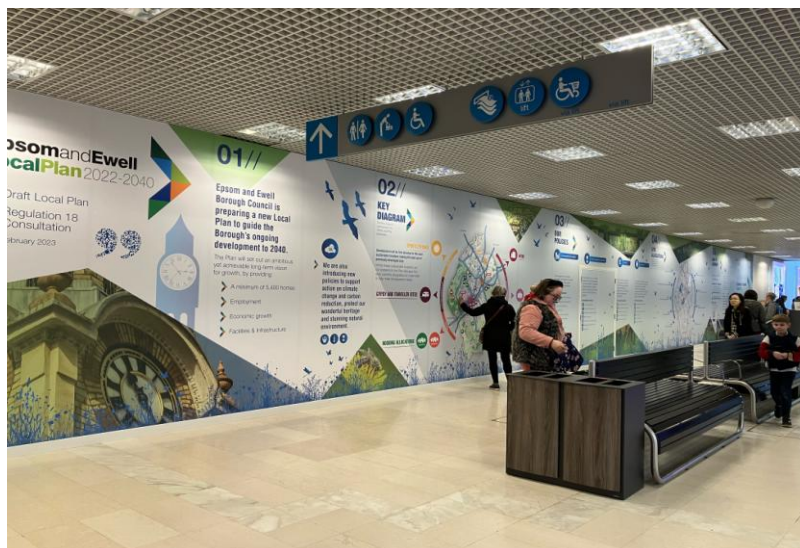
This time of transition following the turn of the year has prompted me to reflect on endings and embrace new beginnings. 2023 sees the departure of two of the Society's committee stalwarts: **Sheila Wadsworth**, our Events Secretary, is stepping down after a truly creative and heroic stint in the role. Sheila's tireless commitment to the Society over many years and her meticulous attention to detail in organising a variety of visits, walks, buffet suppers and other gatherings has been a major component in what the Society has been able to offer its members. In this role, Sheila has made a terrific contribution to the social 'glue' that keeps us together and keeps the Society going. Congratulations to Sheila on a job well done. I'm doubly delighted that not only was Sheila able to join us for a celebration dinner in January

but also that she intends to retain her membership of the Society.

Angela Clifford joined the committee in 1999, taking on the essential role of Minutes Secretary. The Society has been fortunate in also being the beneficiary of Angela's extensive knowledge and love of local history and the natural environment coupled with her commitment to promoting civic pride and her insights into current local issues. After relinquishing her Minutes Secretary brief, Angela agreed to be the Society's Historical Researcher. These formal titles fail to do full justice to Angela's contribution to the Society over the past 24 years: she has been steadfast in her support of the Society's events for members and has always encouraged her fellow committee members to think critically, write clearly, and adopt constructive solutions. Huge thanks, Angela. We will miss you.

This time of new beginnings marks the arrival of three new committee members, Eleanor Bland, Jan Lanigan and Linda Bristow, who collectively will take on events planning for the Society. I and my fellow committee members are very pleased to welcome them on board.

Draft Local Plan is Published!



Details of the Draft Local Plan are on display in the Ashley Centre (Photo: Margaret Hollins)

After our Autumn 2022 newsletter (No.172) went to press, the Council's Licensing and Planning Policy Committee approved a revised Local Development Scheme with a revised timetable for consultation and adoption of a new Local Plan, replacing the October 2022 public consultation start date with 1 February 2023. The draft Local Plan was duly published on 1 February. The Regulation 18 public consultation runs for six weeks and concludes on 19 March 2023. More information is available on the Council's website at these links:

<https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/news/consultation-on-epsom-ewell%E2%80%99s-draft-local-plan-going-live-february-2023>

<https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/local-plan>

The consultation's home page is here:

https://epsom-ewell.inconsult.uk/draftlocalplan2022_2040/consultationHome

The home page contains the consultation and supporting documents, including the draft Local Plan and Policies Map, an introductory video, a Made Easy Guide (check out the 'Myth Busters') and FAQs sheets. You can sign up for notifications about the consultation and submit your responses (log-in or registration required).

The Society's message to members and non-members alike is to get involved and have your say on the proposed policies and site allocations in the draft plan. The Society's committee will be putting together our detailed response to the draft plan in the coming weeks. Here are some key takeaways from an initial read-through:

- New homes: housing requirement set at a minimum of 5,400 for the life of the plan (2022 – 2040), approximately 300pa (about 5,000 fewer than the 'standard method' output) (Policy S1)
- Provision has been made for at least 5,869 new homes (i.e. 327 per annum)
- The scale of change required to boost housing supply is 'very significant'
- This is the beginning of a new period of growth for the Borough
- 'Scenario 4' is the preferred scenario (Sustainability Appraisal interim report, non-technical summary, p9 explains)

➤ **Four strategic site allocations for development within Epsom Town Centre:**

- Site SA1 – Hook Road Car Park and SGN Site between 2-7 storeys
- Site SA2 – Town Hall, Hope Lodge and Epsom Clinic between 2-4 storeys
- Site SA3 – Depot Road and Upper High Street between 2-4 storeys
- Site SA4 – Ashley Centre and Global House between 5-8 storeys

➤ **There will be changes to the Green Belt boundary:** five Green Belt sites are proposed to be ‘removed (in planning speak “inset”) from the Green Belt’ as part of its ‘controlled realignment’ and allocated for housing:

- Land at West Park Hospital (SA5)
- Horton Farm (SA6)
- Land at Chantilly Way (SA7)
- Land adjoining Ewell East Station (SA8 – building heights up to 6 storeys)
- Hook Road Arena (SA9)



Layout of the ‘strategic site allocations’ for development with nine sites earmarked for development in Epsom (Photo: Margaret Hollins)

➤ **Kiln Lane and Longmead Industrial Estates remain most appropriate for employment uses (Policy S11) with these two sites supporting 160 businesses and 1,900 jobs**

➤ **No detailed policy on building heights:** references to increased densities (minimum of 80 dwellings per hectare in the town centre, 60 dph (min) for principal movement corridors and transport hubs beyond Epsom Town Centre boundary, and 40dph (min) in the ‘remaining urban area’, Policy S3). Currently 40dph is the *maximum* not minimum for the Borough (Policy DM11 Development Management Policies Document 2015)

➤ **Big changes in prospect around Ewell East Station**

➤ **Relocation of playing pitches to Hook Road Arena**

➤ **At least 18 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers**

➤ **Other urban sites may be available for development (Appendix 2).**



The draft Local Plan is not solely about housing. It also focuses on supporting businesses, creating jobs, infrastructure improvements, environmental protection, protecting the historic environment, leisure development, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Another (Regulation 19) public consultation is scheduled for February 2024 before the council submits the draft plan to the Secretary of State

for approval, involving a public examination by a Planning Inspector. The new Local Plan has a final adoption date of May 2025 (nearly 7 years after the original estimated adoption date referred to in the Society's Winter 2016 newsletter (No 150) available on the Society's website).

Key milestones for the Local Plan are:

- **February - March 2023 – Draft Local Plan public consultation (Regulation 18)**
- **February - March 2024 – Submission Draft Local Plan Public Consultation (Regulation 19)**
- **June 2024 – Submission to the Secretary of State**
- **Spring 2025 – Estimated date of Adoption**

A reminder why the draft Local Plan is important:

- It's the key strategic document underpinning massive transformational change facing the Borough, especially in determining how many new homes by 2040, where to build them and who they should be for.
- All existing key policies are under review.
- The adopted Local Plan is out-of-date and leaves the Borough vulnerable to speculative development.

In broad terms, the Society's view is that:

- Local Plan policies must reflect community priorities in shaping the future of the Borough, retaining the Borough's attractiveness as a place to live, work and learn while growing sustainably.
- Appropriate, well-designed, environmentally responsible development should be supported reflecting the impact of the built environment on residents' wellbeing.
- Inappropriate development undermining the Borough's character must be resisted.
- A strong community voice is needed to do this.
- As many people as possible in the Borough should get involved with this



Epsom Civic Society's Bob Hollis (above left) and John Mumford (below right) explain what the Plan means to local people visiting the Ashley Centre on 18 February.

consultation and with the one next year – your views can help shape local plan policies through to 2040 and influence the outcomes on key planning applications.



In Other Planning Policy News

Central government's evolving planning law and policy reform proposals provide a particular challenge as regards managing both the draft Local Plan content and the timetable for its adoption. On 5 December 2022 there was a press release from Secretary of State Michael Gove and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and

Communities: Communities put at heart of planning system as government strengthens Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-put-at-heart-of-planning-system-as-government-strengthens-levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill>

On the same date, Michael Gove sent a letter to MPs and local authorities, setting out the changes he will be making to the planning system, and restating that housing need figures for local plan making are an advisory starting point, rather than being mandatory. It is a decision for local authorities, working with their communities, to decide how many homes can actually be built, taking account of local constraints such as Green Belt, or the character of an area (this has always been the case). You can read about the actual changes proposed in the letter here:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e7e22fea84d1844d8d7b678/t/638fccee6252d371fbd999ef/1670368494559/DLUHC_letter_to_LPAs_221205_1670333467.pdf

The Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament (6 December) regarding the changes, Update on the Levelling Up Bill, is at this link:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2022-12-06/hcws415>

As part of the government's reform package, a consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is running from 22 December – 2 March. Policies in Local Plans must be in general conformity with the NPPF, so changes following the consultation may have a knock-on effect on emerging Local Plans. More information about this consultation is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy>

The Society intends to submit a response to this consultation.

For now at least, the consultation on the Borough's draft Local Plan is proceeding on the basis of current national planning policy, given the uncertain date for any confirmed policy changes and that any corresponding legislative changes are unlikely before 2024 at the earliest. There's a lot going on. Do get involved and have your say.

Since our last newsletter, we have had two more Housing Ministers: Lee Rowley who lasted seven weeks was replaced by Lucy Frazer who held the brief for three months before being replaced by Rachel Maclean. Ms Maclean is the 15th Housing Minister since 2010.

Final Words

Epsom Civic Society sends its deepest sympathy and condolences to all staff and students at Epsom College following the shocking events involving Head Teacher Emma Pattison and her family.

Margaret Hollins

PLANNING APPLICATIONS



John Mumford (left), Michael Arthur (centre) and Bob Hollis out and about reviewing planning applications.

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

31-37 East Street (22/01518/FUL): This application is for demolition of the whole building of Majestic Wine Warehouse and former Office World; construction of a self-storage facility and flexible office above. The design over 5 floors is considered acceptable as is of a brick facade and sits appropriately with the new adjoining buildings. This is much superior to the normal "shed" construction for self-storage developments, the applicant Company being Yellow Box. We wrote to the planning officer that landscaping is very important contextually in East Street as it is bereft of "greenness". It is important that the existing semi-mature trees to the site frontage including a large evergreen tree adjacent to the

neighbouring site is preserved and protected during construction. Our main concern is that this development does not prejudice the development of the Utilities site, as the site sits within the 2010 Plan 'E' proposals and carried forward to the draft Local Plan Reg.18 consultation as site SA1 with the comment that: "It is expected that a planning application will be submitted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the main site in the early part of the plan period with development likely to start by 2029". Therefore this application could be premature with regards to the wider redevelopment.

107-111 East Street (21/01708/FUL): This is the site of two detached properties on the corner of Kiln Lane and East Street with two applications for demolition and replacement with 4-storey block of flats, the first application for 23 flats and then a second (only marginally smaller) for 21 flats. There have been various estate agent boards over time, some dilapidated, advertising the sale and purchase of the site. The situation since the last newsletter is that there has been the second dismissal of appeal, now for the lesser 21 flat scheme. The reasons for refusal were bulk, mass, lack of car parking provision and an unsatisfactory access. The developer now seems to have given up on the whole site as there is a current application for 111 (the bungalow) for its demolition and replacement with a new two-story building with rooms in the roof to provide 6 flats.

Kingswood House School site (22/01653/FUL): An application (by the freeholder) lodged for demolition of an existing building, re-provision of an existing building, relocation of the multi-use games area



(MUGA) sports pitch, and construction of new access and parking facilities for a special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school. The Society has objected to this application on several fronts. The closure of the existing school and construction of a SEND school on part of the site is not favoured. Additionally, this site is one of the Borough's most distinctive locations and sits within the Stamford Green Conservation Area. We are concerned about the loss of

a thriving school which is an Asset of Community Value with an immense demand for places but we believe that there is minimal demand for the proposed social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) school at this particular location. Our Chair has written to the chair of governors seeking to support their

effort to resist the proposed development of the grounds. There are 442 comments (objections) to this planning application.

35 Alexandra Road (21/01920/FUL): We previously reported that this application for redevelopment by demolition of a fine Edwardian house and replacement with 9 flats was awaiting decision. Before last Christmas the application was withdrawn and the house sold and a family moved in. This is good news as the proposals were at odds with the character of the area. We continue to press for this locality to be considered for a new conservation area status.



United Reform Church in Church Street (pictured): No information forthcoming, but we suspect that there are pre-application discussions underway for the site redevelopment. Such discussions are confidential between the developer and the Council. This town centre location could support new housing. We have to wait and see.

The Chalk Pit: Before Christmas, the Secretary of State decided not to call-in Surrey's planning committee decision to grant approval for creation of a recycling facility (generally heavy building materials) rather than a transfer station. The location is within the Green Belt and the proposal will be an intensification of the existing use. There have been many problems about this process which the operator has been carrying on without legal permission. In addition to heavy lorry movements to and from the site, there is a large trommel crushing materials which create much dust and noise with any mitigating measures such as screening and covering to contain being inadequate. Local residents are extremely concerned about this application. Given that Surrey considered the application 8/9 months ago, emerging guidelines and likely the new Local Plan present a new light and there is pressure for Surrey to undertake a reappraisal.

39 Manor Green Road (22/00695/FUL): This site has been featuring for several years in our reports about the owner's requests to obtain permission to change use of a rear garden building from gym/yoga studio to create a one-bedroom dwelling fronting Hamilton Close. There have been several applications for this and refusal at appeal. This latest application has been refused and an appeal against that decision has been lodged. In our opinion the proposals are far too cramped and objectionable and does not provide good planning at this location.

Land at Rear of 122/124 Hook Road (22/00959/FUL): Erection of two storey 2 bedroom detached house with ancillary car parking. The donor property (No. 124) applied for a highway entrance from Hook Road so that the front garden could be used for car parking with its rear car park land fenced off to form a new plot. This was applied for in separate applications rather than a whole which we feel would have been more orderly. The highway crossing was refused for having deficient sightlines and compromised tree implications to fine lime trees - in our opinion worthy of preservation where the adjoining row next door at No.126 trees are listed. The proposals for the house at the rear have many unsatisfactory aspects, namely an extremely long and tortuous, rear of houses, driveway exiting and entering on Hook Road near the busy Pound Lane junction and crossing lights; closeness to residential accommodation at the approved conversion of former commercial buildings of Aviary Court (in Miles Road); threat of removal, despite being shown as retained, of a row of coniferous evergreen trees on the site and abutting the footpath to Blenheim Road. This part of Hook Road possesses a minimal extent of greenery in an otherwise stark, long, highly trafficked approach road to the town. Curiously, at the current time, the application has been taken down from the website as invalid. We made representation against the application when the online Council planning portal was open for comment.

Michael Arthur and John Mumford

CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

We are all looking forward to Spring and an end to the cold days. The bluebells and daffodils are starting to appear on Epsom Common and in our lovely Conservation Areas. Our next challenge will be how the beauty of our heritage and conservation areas will be maintained within the proposed Local Plan. During the consultation period we need to review the Council's proposals and make sure that our Borough remains green and a delightful place to live.

The main Planning Applications include the following:

Appeals

The Multi Storey Car Park at Epsom Hospital

(20/00249/FUL): This Appeal was held in October 2022 and it was the Planning Inspectorate's decision to reverse the Planning Committee's decision to refuse the scheme. It will be interesting to see how the total permitted 631 car parking spaces comprising 527 spaces and reconfiguration of surface parking to provide 104 car parking spaces fit within the new Local Plan which proposes a sustainable transport network that should involve measures to reduce the number of individual private car journeys and increase use of public and community transport! The Society objected strongly to the extremely poor design, height above the adjacent



Stripe Consulting's artist's impression of its new proposed four-storey car park. The company claims the car park will cater for 'predicted parking demand at the hospital'.

hospital and the detrimental effect to the adjacent Conservation Area. We also remain concerned that the partly demolished Guild Living site at the back of the hospital, which was approved upon appeal, remains an eyesore and there appears to be no information available about the site and its condition.

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

1 Burgh Heath Road (22/00431/FUL): An Appeal has been lodged for this second application to change the use of this former care home and erect a two-storey side extension and convert the main building to create six flats. The ECS objected to the proposal and the Council refused the application. Now an Appeal has been lodged and a further application (22/01786/FUL) has been made for the conversion of the Care Home building into multiple use units. The Society has not written to object and the Council has yet to make a decision.

Ongoing Planning Applications

Ex Marsden Nursery/Ashted Park (MO/2022/0474): No decision has yet been made on this scheme for the closure of this lovely nursery and the erection of 26 houses. There is a severe delay on a decision for this controversial Green Belt scheme.

24-28 West Street (22/01294/FUL): The Epsom Civic Society has submitted a further letter of objection for the latest application for a 5/6 storey building for 20 flats. This key site is located in the Town Centre

Conservation Area and also immediately adjacent to the Stamford Green CA. A Surrey Highways report is particularly unfavourable about the proposal.

Green Gables, Ashley Road (pictured) (22/00379/FUL): This scheme for 22 student bedrooms sited close to the Worple Road CA and opposite the University for the Creative Arts accommodation has been refused at committee against the Planning Officer's recommendation to approve and now may go for appeal. 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.

The former Police Station and Ambulance Station Site (22/00923/FUL): The Society has submitted a neutral/supportive letter for this application for a new residential, nursing and dementia care home (4/5 block with 96 dementia beds). A decision is now well overdue but we note that the site, which is adjacent to the Church Street Conservation Area, is located in Site Allocation 2 (SA2) of the proposed Local Plan: Town Hall, Hope Lodge and Epsom Clinic. This could explain the current delay.

56 High Street (22/01624/FUL): A new café has been proposed and is now open in this parade of shops where Fat Face was previously located. The café is located on the ground floor with staff and storage areas on the 1st floor.

157 High Street (22/01335/FUL): This application is for the conversion of the 1st floor above Epsom Hardware into a flat. The works included the change of the external flat roof into a balcony for the dwelling. The Society notes that the balcony would be adjacent to the Ashley Centre access road and the external seating area for Wetherspoons. A decision is awaited.

79/81 East Street (22/01953): This proposal is for the demolition of the existing pub and offices at 79-81 East Street and the erection of a 5/6 storey residential building providing for 31 new flats. The Society supports the supply of the new flats but has written to object to the height of the block which in our opinion is 5m too high when compared to the heights of the other flats and offices in this area of East Street.

Plant a Tree



Surrey County Council is aiming to plant 1.2m new trees by 2030. This is an amazing plan and equates to one tree for every Surrey resident. The ECS encourages our members to apply for new trees to be planted on their external verges and grassed areas. It will cost you £25 for admin and survey to be carried out for a 50m pavement length. The survey will check for verge width, driving/walking obstructions, grass cutting, overhead obstructions etc. More than one tree could be planted in your verge. Please check that your neighbours are in agreement with your application. This is the right time of the year to apply, as the trees need to be ordered and planted later in the year. Apply via the SCC website (Plant Trees on the Highway).

Can we suggest that you contact Howard Gregory or Kevin Greening from our amazing Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board (EETAB) to discuss type of tree and suitability of the ground, shade, growth canopy etc. (epsomandewelltab@gmail.com). This is your tree! And as part of the ownership deal you will be required to water it and get involved in short term maintenance during its formative years.

Bob Hollis

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Who's *driving* policy? Economic and environmental benefits of more egalitarian local transport policies



Last month saw the approval (on appeal) of a six-storey car park for Epsom hospital (see page 8). “A new sizeable and somewhat bold structure [...] with an honest design”, according to the designer. To the credit of our local council, the car park was refused planning permission but the developer appealed. EEBC took the correct decision in rejecting the planning application. However, there are many other areas within our borough and at county level where local transport behaviour and practice is inconsistent with not only the provision of efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with low environmental impact, but also with SCC’s Net Zero and Council climate objectives. Two examples are discussed below.

A year-round issue is along Ashley Road on Sundays - where cars are allowed to park on either side of the road, blocking the footpath, cycle path and preventing two-way circulation of cars on the remaining carriageway. Most cars park along the road to shop and visit the town centre whilst avoiding car parking fees.

A simple and cheap solution would be changing authorised parking time notices (through an application to SCC). This would bring revenue, allow cyclists to use the cycle paths in particular on Sundays when families may wish to visit Rosebery park and allow pedestrians of all abilities to access the town centre on a safe and practicable footpath.

The second example concerns the so-called ‘benefits’ of free parking. The council ~~also~~ subsidises an annual free car parking offer in December to attract shoppers despite numerous studies showing that footfall to a high street increases with provision of “active” travel, safe streets and a pleasant environment rather than an extensive road and parking network. A detailed Transport for London Study¹ provides economic evidence that “healthy high streets” i.e. those that have widened footpaths, ample and easy pedestrian crossings and cycle access and associated infrastructure see economic benefits. In such town centres, the study finds that:

- Footfall increases - the number of people standing, waiting and sitting nearly doubled and people walking in the streets increased by 93%
- People spent more time in the street, with a 216% increase in activity such as going into a shop, stopping at a café or sitting on a bench
- Retail rental values increased by 7.5%, suggesting that local businesses are thriving in the area
- More retail space was filled by businesses, as there was a 17% decline in retail vacancy

¹Walking and Cycling economic benefits pack <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2018/november/getting-more-people-walking-and-cycling-could-help-save-our-high-streets>

- Office rental values increased by 4%, showing that improving streets is good for many types of business

The very short-term benefits of free car parking were discussed in depth in a recent ‘You and Yours’ Radio 4 programme² which again pointed to the long-term benefits of improved car-free public realm spaces in attracting and maintaining footfall and spend in town centres as well as associated carbon emission and pollution reductions. Free car parking is also at odds with all council and county objectives to encourage “active travel” and public transport.



Increasing the number of safe cycle routes is one element of the Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Plan. Pictured here is a filter lane for cyclists.

Excessive car use has often unaccounted costs associated with dis-benefits to health, wellbeing (air pollution and noise), the wider environment as well as the costs associated with maintenance of roads.

Subsidised free parking is contrary to Epsom and Ewell’s current Climate Action Plan and Surrey’s Climate Change Strategy Strategic Priorities (SP):

- Climate Action Plan³, Year 1 (2020) - Theme 3 - Transport improvements and switch to lower polluting vehicles includes the following objectives: measure 16 - “Encourage more sustainable transport options for visiting the Town Centre”; measure 17 - “Increase the number of safe cycle routes through the borough”; measure 18 - “Encourage fewer cars per household”; measure 19 – “Encourage more cycle racks/covers”.
- Climate Action Plan, Year 2 (2021) - Theme 3 - Transport improvements and switch to lower polluting vehicles includes a new objective: measure 10 - “Increase walking as an alternative to car use.”, with an outcome of encouraging residents to walk, through a range of initiatives and events.
- SP1⁴: Prioritise investment in place-based development that creates well-connected communities close to high quality places, spaces and services to reduce the number and length of car journeys for all residents.

2 You and Yours What’s changing on your high street? (6th December 2022)

https://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/nsc/Documents%20Library/BRE/89087-BRE_solar-carpark-guide-v2_bre114153_lowres.pdf

³ EEBC Climate Action Plan <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents//Climate%20Change%20Action%20Plan%20Final.pdf>

⁴ Surrey’s Climate Change Strategy https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/225615/Surreys-Climate-Change-Strategy-2020.pdf

- SP2 Invest in initiatives and infrastructure to increase the uptake of walking, cycling and public transport alongside schemes to reduce reliance on the car e.g. ULEZ, pedestrianisation and car-free zones.

Instead of council-subsidised free parking, maintaining parking fees could be used to generate funds for example:

- A percentage of parking revenue directed to improving cycle and walking provision within our borough e.g: funding for cycle racks at all shop parades within the borough where none exist (Pound Lane, along the parade of shops on Waterloo Road, the Horton parade of shops near Pelman Way and in many parks) or the development of Local Cycling and Infrastructure Plans.
- Special December/Christmas appeal whereby a proportion of parking revenue or a voluntary additional donation e.g. 50p per visit is donated to support local groups such as Epsom and Ewell Food Bank, or to provide funding for insulating council homes or other green initiatives.
- Funding of reduced fares for users of public transport using re-direction of revenue from car park fees in the form of a refund when bus or rail tickets are returned for dates within a certain period.
- Generation of revenue to invest in solar infrastructure⁵ within car parks. This could in turn generate income in the future.



Roadside parking in Epsom is a year-round problem due to excessive parking fees.

Bearing in mind the financial restrictions and burdens facing our Council, it seems at odds that the Council chooses to favour one particular group of residents at the expense of others when there appear to be alternatives and even opportunities to generate some funds to meet some of the objectives set by the Council in terms of “green investment”. Let’s hope that the forthcoming Local Plan may look into some of these measures so that everyone can make use of Epsom’s town centre, allowing people who need cars easy access but also those who use public transport as well as pedestrians and cyclists.

Aurélié Paoli

THE DOWNS

The Downs Consultative Committee met before Christmas for the first time since January 2022. Draft minutes of the meeting can be found on the Council's website (at <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Mid=1433&x=1>). The main subject of discussion was progress with installing new notice/display boards, signposts, litter bins and benches as part of the European-funded

⁵ https://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/nsc/Documents%20Library/BRE/89087-BRE_solar-carpark-guide-v2_bre114153_lowres.pdf

project to improve information and signage on Epsom & Walton Downs. Most of the new infrastructure has been in place for some months, but there was a hold-up with supply of the Information inserts for the notice boards and lecterns: these should have now been received and installation is scheduled to be completed in January. The meeting also discussed the operation of the new hack canter track, which appears to be popular with riders, and access for members of the Model Aircraft Club.

Separately, we have heard that the original documentation covering the closure of Old London Road to the top (seven furlong) car park has been found to be complete, so there will be no need for a further consultation to reinstate overnight closure. The new infrastructure installation includes automated counting equipment at where Old London Road crosses the racecourse, so it will be possible to monitor the level of traffic using the road.



The Woodland Trust's Langley Vale wood continues to be popular with walkers, but the new car park has not yet opened: a condition of its planning permission was having electric vehicle charging stations, and the required separate power supply for these has still not been installed. Hopefully it will be up and running soon!

Nick Lock

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

We have a very good membership of approx. 1650 but we would like to grow and get back to the 1800 or so that we had before Covid-19. We want our Borough to continue to be the place that we all enjoy living and working in. If you have family, friends or neighbours who want the same thing then do suggest that they join the Society either by going to our website - www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk - or contacting me.

If you were not in when your Road Representative called to collect Subscriptions, he / she will have left a small envelope with his / her name and address for you to arrange payment in a way that suits you. If paying by cheque, please make the cheque payable to 'Epsom Civic Society'. If you choose to pay online, go to the website www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk/membership, click on 'Join us' and select the PayPal option at the bottom of the page which is also for renewal. 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.

Tel: 01372 438361 Email: membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

Ishbel Kenward

ASHLEY ROAD DEEP LEVEL AIR RAID SHELTER



*The Ashley Road Air Raid Shelter main entrance
(Photo: Angela Lawes)*

I had heard about the existence of WWII shelters in Epsom when I was still at school but they had remained something of a mystery.

I was therefore delighted when I was able to sign up for a tour of the Ashley Road Deep Shelter in December 2022. Our guide told us that there had also been shelters in Rosebery Park, Clayhill Green and under the golf course on the Downs but these had all been sealed off after the war. The entrance is on the west side of Ashley Road past the Atkins entrance.

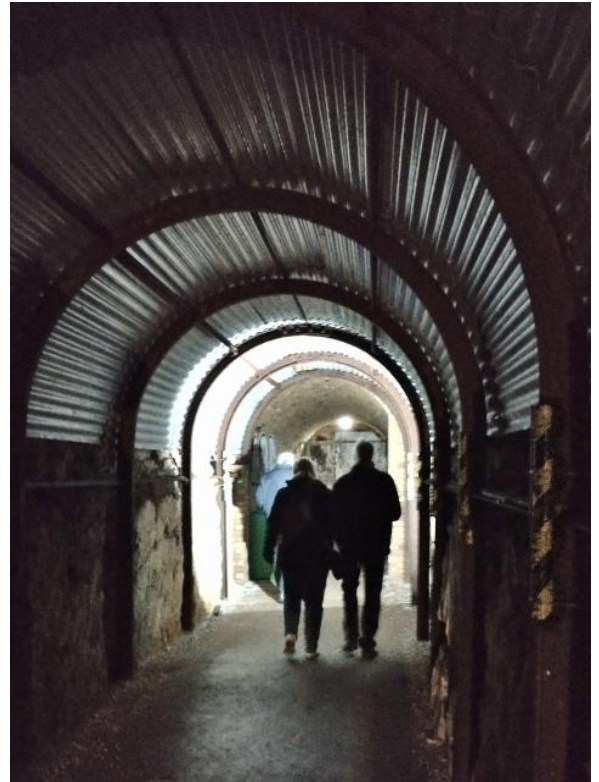
The origins aren't clear. It is thought that it was begun in 1937 by Lady Sybil Grant, daughter of Lord Rosebery who lived at The Durdans but it is not known whether it was to be a personal shelter or a mausoleum or something else. There is no evidence but the ramp down to the entrance would make sense if it

were to have been a mausoleum.

It was requisitioned in 1941 as an air raid shelter to be used by the local residents. It was extended several times. The original part is brick lined but further back the tunnels are covered in a corrugated covered metal frame and at the far end the solid chalk is exposed with metal frames preventing chalk falling into the tunnel. At its deepest it is sixty feet below ground.

Over the years the fixtures and fittings have been removed and all that remain are the tunnels which were hand built in a rectangular grid. However, during the war it could house 1500 hundred people. There was a first aid post, a canteen, toilet facilities with running water and a community area where those who had lost possessions and paperwork in the bombing would be helped. Along the tunnels there would have been bunk beds. Although there would have been electric light it would have been very damp down there.

We were surprised to hear how many bombs fell on Epsom during the war, particularly the V1s and V2s. The Germans had caused considerable damage in London but part of the propaganda put out by the British was that the bombs had overshot London and fallen to the north of the city. This resulted in the Germans correcting what they thought was an error by more bombs landing south of the city and into Surrey.



The 'medium quality' tunnel (Photo: Angela Lawes)

The shelter is now used by an airsoft war games company but tours are organised during the year by Hidden History Tours (<https://hiddenhistorytours.uk/upcoming-tours-1>). **The next one is on 23rd March.**

More information can also be found on the Epsom and Ewell History Explorer website - <https://eehe.org.uk/?p=29574>

If any members of Epsom Civic Society have memories of the shelters being used or their relatives talked about their experiences, we would love to hear from you.

Sue Doughty

EVENTS

VISIT TO NEWMARKET – TUESDAY 16TH MAY



A day trip to Newmarket has been organized and will commence with a guided tour of the National Stud. We will then have a buffet lunch at a local Newmarket hotel and then onto the National Horse Racing Museum, which was founded to be a world-class museum celebrating the development of thoroughbred horseracing and breeding in Great Britain.

There is much to see at the museum including their social history, science and art collections dating from the 17th Century to the present day.

Three Charities – the Horseracing Museum, The Sporting Art Trust and the Retraining of Racehorses – are on the five acre site as well as a shop, restaurant and bakery. Members will be free to visit those areas on site which are of particular interest to them. <https://www.nhrm.co.uk>

The cost is £55 per person including coach travel, driver's trip, entry to the National Stud and the Museum and lunch at the hotel.

For payment: Deposit on booking £25 with the balance of £30 by the **14th April 2023** or we are happy to accept full payment on booking.

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 No: 20353078)

You can e-mail me on social@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk with information about the payment and answers to the form below/or send the completed form to me direct. Alternatively just call me on 01372 722558 or email: social@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SUNDAY 9TH JULY: Ian West will lead a walk up to the Durdans in Chalk Lane. Please assemble at 2pm at the junction between Chalk Lane/Madens Walk and Woodcote Road. The walk will probably last about an hour. As a historian he will delight you with local facts you never knew. Everyone is welcome.

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER: Visit to The Mill at Sonning to see the Sunday matinee of High Society (those members who went to Top Hat will remember how good it was).

Eleanor Bland

Form to: Eleanor Bland, 15 Sheraton Drive, Epsom KT19 8JL

TRIP TO NEWMARKET – TUESDAY 16th MAY 2023

NAME/S

.....

ADDRESS

.....

PHONE NUMBER

EPSOM CIVIC SOCIETY MEMBER/S : YES/NO

EMERGENCY CONTACT NO:

NO. OF TICKETS **TOTAL COST £55 each (£25 deposit)**

Paid by Cheque Yes / No

Paid into bank a/c on time and date (Reference: Newmarket)

Any dietary/food requirements? Yes/No

Please list

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