

Epsom Civic Society

Newsletter

*Shaping the future,
safeguarding the past*


Shoutout for Street Art

Local Plan Update


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Planning News and Applications

Memberships and Subscriptions

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CHAIR'S COMMENTARY

Dear Members,

This is the fifth version of what has become the Society's Spring 2025 newsletter. Why the delay and why so much reworking, you may well ask. In short, the Society's committee has only recently emerged from what may, in planning terms, best be described as an 'everything, everywhere, all at once' experience, concluding with the submission of our response to the Regulation 19 public consultation on the draft Local Plan which closed on 5 February. Our pathway to this point is fully explained in the 'PLANNING REFORMS AND THE LOCAL PLAN' section

Simon Alford

Following the Society's appeal for new committee members in our previous edition, I am delighted to welcome Simon Alford to the committee. A lifelong Borough resident, Simon has been an active member of Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board (EETAB) for 18 years and continues to champion the vital role of trees - particularly street trees - in promoting urban quality and delivering vital environmental benefits in this time of climate change. The Society has well-established links with EETAB, and we have been very pleased to donate to EETAB's tree fund thanks to the generosity of our members. Simon's wider interests include heritage and

below (tl; dr: there's been a lot going on). This edition prioritises planning policy. We will catch up fully with the planning applications and appeals we are monitoring in our next edition and put updates on our website. My fellow committee members and I never underestimate the value of members' support: with all of you, our voice is stronger. We thank you for your patience and understanding regarding this 'one-off' late delivery in the hope and anticipation that your support and encouragement will continue. We all look forward to the resumption of normal service for future editions.



the built environment, and his extensive local knowledge in these areas is especially valuable for the Society.

On joining the committee, Simon writes: "For decades I've been following with interest the excellent work conducted by the Civic Society in preserving the best of our built heritage and defending the leafy character of our Borough - and I'm pleased to now be able to contribute directly to that worthy endeavour."

Please do consider joining Simon on our committee. Lively and active people from all backgrounds are welcome and experience in planning, architecture or traffic management, though desirable, is not essential. Motivated members with expertise in, for example, local history, heritage, communications and publishing, information technology, working with schools and colleges, setting up and delivering community projects, and a general interest in the Borough will

enable the Society to progress its range of activities, consistent with our constitution. General experience in organisation and management would be a helpful foundation for the Hon. Secretary's role in ensuring the overall smooth running of the Society in its operation, activities, and communications. If you have any queries about meetings or anything, please get in touch with me (chair@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk) or any committee member who will be glad to help.

'Party in the Park' on 21st September

Many thanks to my fellow committee colleagues and to Society members who helped with organising and staffing our stand in Rosebery Park for September's celebration of Epsom Rotary Club's 100th year of local volunteer work. The event was well supported and was a great opportunity to welcome new members, catch up with old friends and meet Helen Maguire, our new MP.

Mike Ford

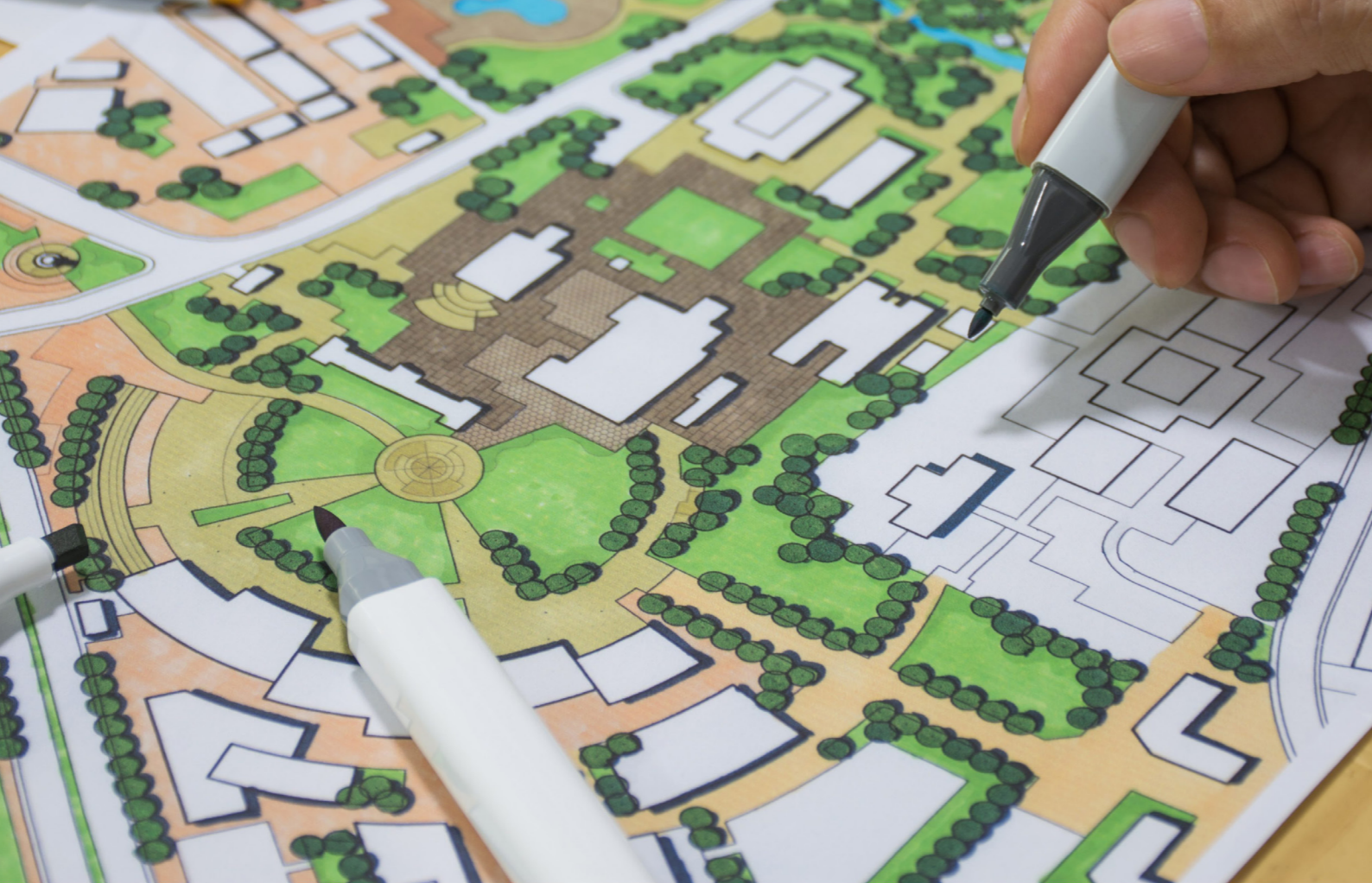
Many members will be aware of the death last June of Mike Ford, founder of Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board. The Society sends its deepest condolences to Mike's family and friends. Our thanks to Kevin Greening for his tribute which celebrates Mike's life and legacy.



Shoutout for Street Art

We love a bit of street art and are delighted to see the latest bold murals along the pedestrian pathway to the railway station at the rear of the High Street shops and the library, and along the underpass between Miles Road and Stones Road. They join well-established works in the Upper High Street, under the railway bridge and by Pure Gym. There's more new street art in Stoneleigh which we've yet to visit. Congratulations to everyone involved in these community arts projects, including Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, street artists Positive Arts, local charity We Power On and GLF students. More information about these projects [here](#).





PLANNING REFORMS AND THE LOCAL PLAN

Overtaken by Events – responding to the government’s NPPF consultation

We had intended to publish an autumn update for members on the Society’s Regulation 18 consultation response (March 2023) (primarily on census data and proposed housing numbers) ahead of the formal Regulation 19 public consultation on the draft Local Plan. Our intention was, however, overtaken by the **new government’s public consultation**, launched at the end of July, **on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and to the wider planning system**. Consultation closed on 24 September and the government analysed over **10,000 responses**, including (we hope) **the Society’s**. The **updated NPPF** was published on 12 December. A tracked changes version is [here](#). The latest amended version (7 February 2025) is [here](#).

The government’s changes have significant implications locally especially for timescales and transition time for adoption of a new Local Plan, the number of new homes needed per year, Green Belt policy, local character and density of development. **Our reasons for not supporting the government’s new Standard Method for assessing housing need included:**

- the resulting new target for EEBC of 889 homes pa (569 previously) which is going to be very challenging

to meet without significant and irretrievable damage to the character of the Borough and the Green Belt leading to the Borough being at significant risk of being subsumed into London’s urban sprawl

- delivery of such increased numbers will require massive development in the **Green Belt, which continues to perform strongly** against Green Belt criteria: “the area of designated Metropolitan Green Belt land within Epsom and Ewell is, on the whole, highly performing.” (Green Belt Study (2017), [Epsom and Ewell Green Belt Technical Note 2023](#)).
- risk of **proliferation of tower blocks in the pursuit of increased housing targets with consequent adverse impact on Epsom’s Town Centre Conservation Area, which remains on Historic England’s Risk Register** ([see Epsom and Ewell Times 9/1/25](#)).
- risk of significant harm to the heritage, character and identity of the Borough’s 21 Conservation Areas through over-development
- EEBC Annual Monitoring Report 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024** demonstrates that housing completions for Epsom and Ewell mandated by the government’s former standard methodology for calculating housing

need have not been achievable (impossible to achieve) in recent years (despite meeting local Core Strategy (2007) minimum targets)

- the limited value of reliance on a single standard method for assessing housing need (whether old or new) which lacks flexibility to respond to the protection of local heritage, character and identity.

We suggested that Local Plans should look more widely at:

- where to build (including identifying ‘Grey Belt’)
- building heights and densities - though still setting a maximum height
- getting developers for all sizes of developments (not just those building 10 homes or more) to contribute to infrastructure required and affordable homes needs
- bringing more existing empty and underused properties back into use as part of how targets can be met ([see Big Issue article 21/11/23 on empty homes](#)).

The Society continues to support policy changes that enable housing developments locally (and in comparable neighbouring boroughs) that meet the needs of less well-off residents (and would-be residents) in terms of affordability as well as meeting EEBC goals re sustainability, tenure, and character – and that enable these types of new build to be reflected in the content of the Local Plan.

Draft Local Plan: from Regulation 19 Consultation to Regulation 22 Submission

Prompted by the new NPPF’s transitional arrangements and deadlines, the council’s revised **Local Development Scheme** published on 13 December **brought forward the Regulation 19 public consultation to December** with submission of the draft Local Plan thereafter to the Planning Inspectorate in March (from May). Key dates here:

Stage	Revised Local Plan Timetable
Regulation 19 - Public consultation - publication of draft Local Plan	December 2024 (formerly January) – February 2025
Regulation 22 – Submission of document (the draft LP) to Planning Inspectorate	March (formerly May) 2025
Examination in Public (EIP) – hearings commence	July 2025
Inspector’s final report	March 2026
Adoption of Local Plan	April 2026

The Reg 19 consultation was launched on 20 December and closed on 5 February.

There was much to digest from the draft Local Plan and its accompanying Policies Map. Two key headlines:

- the draft Local Plan delivers only 48% of the Borough’s housing need over the plan period (2022-2024) even with the release of Green Belt sites to accommodate delivery of additional dwellings. [The new homes requirement was set in the Plan as a minimum of 4,700 with a total supply of 4,916 over the life of the plan, as against the Borough’s housing need of 10,242 identified by the government’s (former) Standard Method.]
- three Green Belt sites have been allocated to accommodate housing (and other) need: land at Chantilly Way (Site SA33), Hook Road Arena (Site SA34) and land at Horton Farm (SA35), plus land at West Park Hospital (Sites SA31 and 32) previously developed in the Green Belt.

The substantial shortfall in new homes provision requires presentation of robust evidence and argument to the Planning Inspector that **local constraints provide a strong reason for restricting** the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area in order to protect areas or assets of particular importance.

The Society’s response to the draft Local Plan

Despite our reservations about the draft Plan on matters outlined above and on various other points, including omission of an external minimum space standard and lack of a tall buildings policy, the Society’s committee considered that the consequence of having no plan was infinitely more threatening to the built environment and to the Green Belt, since the Borough remains vulnerable to speculative development in the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, leading to inappropriate development within the Borough’s urban areas and putting even more Green Belt sites at risk. The Society’s letter to LPPC Councillors and our press release are [here](#).

Details of the Society’s response to the Regulation 19 consultation will be available on our website. In summary, we called for a timetable for the production of a Borough-wide Design Code and area-by-area Design Guides, these documents being essential in our view to support an otherwise weak policy on design (S11), of itself insufficiently robust to withstand applications for unacceptably tall towers such as are happening elsewhere in Surrey and in some outer London boroughs. The Design Guide for Stoneleigh and Auriol’s draft Neighbourhood Plan (see below) is a good start. We also submitted



PLANNING APPLICATIONS

comments on Local Green Spaces, groundwater flooding, heritage protection, gypsies' and travellers' pitches, and certain site allocations as well as the lack of a minimum external space standard, mentioned above.

Submitting the draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate

The draft Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on **10 March 2025**. The appointed Planning Inspector will determine whether the Plan is sound and suitable for adoption. If the Plan is found unsound, then it will be 'back to the drawing board' with an increased housing target of 889 homes a year (up from 569) over the Plan period.

Even if the draft Plan is found sound, as the housing requirement in the plan to be adopted meets less than 80% of local housing need, our current understanding is that the local planning authority **will be expected to begin work on a new plan**, under the revised plan-making system provided for under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (as soon as the relevant provisions are brought into force in 2025), in order to address the shortfall in housing need (NPPF para 236).

What happens next

In addition to Council's website and its social media platforms, please check the Society's website and X (Twitter) and Bluesky accounts for updates. It seems inevitable that Officers will have to commence work on providing for a much greater level of housing supply which will inevitably involve more Green Belt land release (subject to what happens with local government reform, mentioned below).

Additional context for our new members

Adoption of the draft Local Plan is 8 years behind the original timetable which envisaged adoption by July 2018. Our newsletters, all accessible [here](#), have chronicled the draft Plan's progress and setbacks since our 150th edition (Winter 2016). We are now on our 179th.

We hope that this account conveys to all our readers who have got this far the challenges presented to the Society over the past months by the sequencing and timing of these major national and local planning events, not least

to a committee that needs more members to operate as effectively as we would wish. We were pleased to be able to respond to (yet another) government consultation on planning reform and to the Council's Regulation 19 public consultation. Doing this took considerable time. The launch of the Reg 19 consultation just before the Christmas period, done for understandable reasons, was nevertheless unhelpful not only as necessitating further postponement of the newsletter publication date but also as regards limiting the time realistically available to us to formulate our consultation response and ruled out the feasibility of our hosting an open meeting. Prior to the consultation launch, we were in correspondence with councillors in connection with progressing the Plan, and with Epsom and Ewell Times to publicise our views to a wider audience. We have not been idle, but a significant delay to this edition of the newsletter has been an unfortunate, albeit necessary, side effect of so much significant planning activity for the Borough.

One more thing ...local government reform

To this planning backdrop must be added the prospect of local government reform as part of the government's devolution agenda. Local elections in Surrey have been delayed by a year to May 2026 and we await more information as to how the Borough's Local Plan (as and when adopted) will fit into a realignment of authorities in Surrey.

In other planning news

Congratulations to members of Stoneleigh and Auriol Neighbourhood Plan Forum who published their **draft Neighbourhood Plan (2024-2039)** for consultation between 9 September and 27 October, a significant milestone en route to adoption. When adopted the draft Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the Borough's statutory development plan, alongside the Borough's Local Plan and will be used in the determination of planning applications in the Stoneleigh and Auriol Neighbourhood Forum Area. The Society was particularly impressed with the accompanying **Stoneleigh and Auriol Design Guidance and Codes** (July 2022). We look forward to Design Guidance and Codes being rolled out across the Borough.

Margaret Hollins

Decided

Communications Hub outside 73 High Street (24/00209/ADV), has been **refused on appeal** being considered as incongruous in a Conservation Area. However, there have been **five further recent applications** (by a different operator) for similar "hubs" containing a defibrillator, phone and moving digital display advertisements. The locations are on pavements outside 17 High Street, Hudson House opposite the Station, Epsom Gateway in Ashley Avenue, 2-6 Church Street and 68 High Street Ewell Village. ECS objected to these proposals, defibrillators are available in shops, street phones are obsolete with mobile phones universally carried and moving illuminated advertising not appropriate in town centres within or close to Conservation Areas. Furthermore, the proposals are at variance with the agreed updated Masterplan to seek decluttering of street furniture. All five applications have been **refused**.

6a Bucknills Close (23/00577/FUL) - application for six new houses accessed via a long narrow drive from White Horse Drive has been **refused on appeal** as the driveway is considered too long and too narrow for the development as well as serving the existing houses and commercial use. A second application **(24/00107/FUL)** for one house less has also been appealed. The outcome is awaited and we cannot foresee the reduction of one house via the same drive varying the decision.

52 The Parade, Epsom (24/00057/FLH) - the **appeal** against the refusal of a roof conversion including a side dormer and first floor rear extension to a locally listed building in the Church Street Conservation Area has been dismissed.

81 College Road (24/00360/FUL) - **refusal** for the third time of an additional house in the rear garden.

Cottage at St Ebbas Farm Hook Road (24/00420/FUL) - **permission granted** to demolish and rebuild a new single storey but on a larger footprint in the Green Belt.

12 Burgh Heath Road (24/00487/FLH) - granted **approval** for an annexe in the rear garden despite ECS sending a letter of objection.

Langley Bottom Farm (24/00568/FUL) - **permission refused** to build a 4-bed dwelling alongside the farm track road in the position where a small, long-demolished cottage once stood. The proposal would have a significant effect on the openness of the Green Belt site surrounding Langley Vale.

Green Gables (24/00849/FUL) - for redevelopment with three houses, approved. The appeal (24/00041/REF) decision against refusal of four houses (23/00968/FUL) is awaited.

23 Beaconsfield Place (24/00564/FUL) - extension to existing house and a new house to the side - approved. ECS made two representations which have not been considered as being substantive. The report about the applications runs to 29 pages, very thorough. The approval has many conditions attached, some of which may be difficult to overcome. The application is classified as self-build. I remain sceptical about the practicability and buildability of this project.

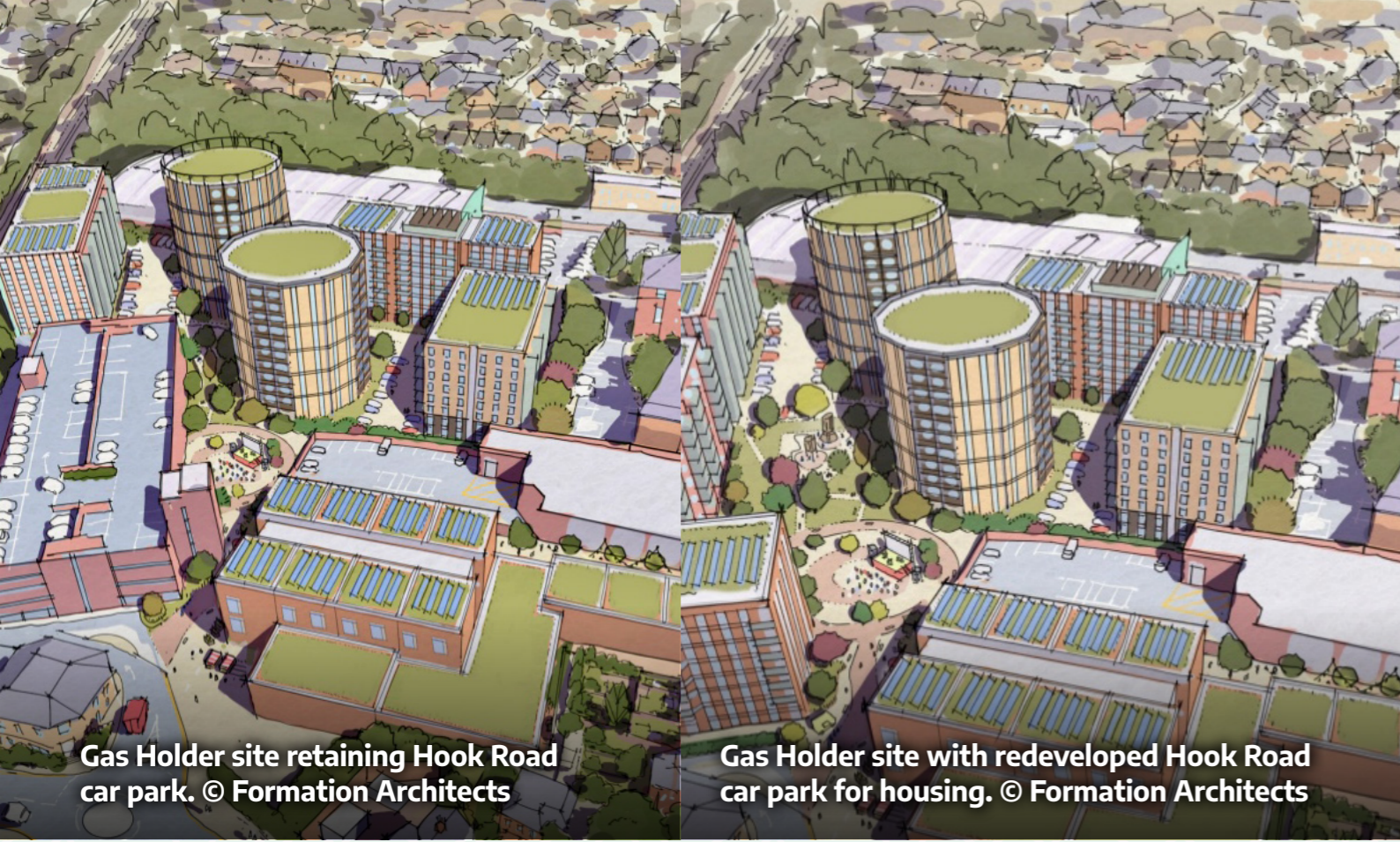
Epsom Hospital and former Guild Living site fronting Woodcote Green Road. The demolition and clearance of the former staff accommodation was completed a few months ago with the expectation of temporary use for parking pending the approved project commencing. However, negotiations about that use have stalled and we are told it will not go ahead. Also, the multi-storey car park approved for the hospital site is subject to a redesign and re-think. In the meantime, there is severe parking stress at the hospital causing frequent delays at peak times of entry with its effect of traffic backing into Dorking Road.

Police and Ambulance site, Church Street, Epsom (22/0093/FUL) - **approval** notice issued this being over one year since approval at planning committee. Obviously there have been ends to tie up since the committee agreed to proceed, but it does exemplify the common media grouse that planning is taking too long, although in this case those against the scheme have had a one year grace.

New applications

Land and buildings at former Gas Holder Station East Street (24/01107/FUL)

This application for redevelopment is to provide a total of 456 homes built in residential blocks of between 8 and 12 storeys, a new performing arts education facility, hard and soft landscaping and modest car parking (68 total spaces). These proposals follow on from the public consultation and exhibitions held in July to which ECS responded. However, the application was submitted soon after close of public comments about the exhibitions, raising questions if any note was taken of what the public had said.



Gas Holder site retaining Hook Road car park. © Formation Architects

Gas Holder site with redeveloped Hook Road car park for housing. © Formation Architects

After carefully considering all aspects about the proposals ECS has written (published on our website) a detailed letter in response to the planning application welcoming the site coming forward having been long overdue for development, but in our view the application as it stands, is not right and cannot be supported.

ECS considers that the site with its high-rise buildings is too intensive resulting in unsatisfactory day light standards, overlooking, and being too close with insufficient space between some of the buildings. Tall buildings will not fit well when viewed from various places within and close to the three nearby conservation areas.

We consider that a much better eventual way forward for the utilities site as a whole would be one that incorporates the other two sites - the multi-storey car park in Hook Road and the Majestic Wine warehouse/ Office World former site (now demolished). The latter does have planning approval granted on appeal for an office and storage use (Yellow Box) and is in separate ownership from the site now applied for, but that use remains questionable. The site would be better for housing. Combining a wider site area would result in a better design scheme.

71 Rosebery Road. (24/00992/FUL) This site is a post war bungalow on a modest site. Application is to demolish and replace with three terraced houses set to the rear in a 3-storey design with tandem car parking in front. ECS objected that the layout is too cramped and

over-intensive which fails to be compliant with good design requirements. With the site rising to the rear the proposals have a higher ground floor level datum in comparison with adjoining houses which will give rise to overlooking to the rear of No.73 coupled with its loss of light. Furthermore, a preserved cypress tree close to the site boundary would be threatened by building near to its roots. The application was called-in to the planning committee for determination and it was **approved** at their November meeting.

Cedar Lodge Stables Headley Road (24/01223/FUL)

ECS objected to this application to convert six stable blocks to residential flatted accommodation for occupancy by those working in the equine industry. Notwithstanding the need for affordable housing, there is the important Development Management policy No.26 to support and promote the racehorse training industry to the south of the Borough and within the Green Belt. This policy is also backed up by the NPPF and the Core Strategy which should be carried forward into the new emerging Local Plan. The Jockey Club has commented on the proposals saying there is not much point in converting stabling to housing for stable lads/lasses if as a result there is no space for horses! Mole Valley planning officer has also objected (the site abuts the boundary) that the proposal would adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt. The application has been **refused**.

Michael Arthur

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The urgent need to consider and implement resiliency in the built environment.

Recent events worldwide have shown how ill-prepared we are in the face of extreme weather events caused by climate change in the form of floods, droughts, heat and wildfires. Whilst in Epsom and Ewell we may be protected from the worst of these events, prolonged heat stress, drought and localised severe surface water flooding are likely to become more frequent, of higher intensity and duration.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2022 defines resilience as “the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation of essential basic structures and functions.”

There are many options and strategies that cities and communities can pursue to adapt to current and future climate impacts, which can make it difficult to set priorities and determine actions to take. It’s fundamental to consider resilience, adaptation, and mitigation in our built environment. Furthermore, as some climate change is already locked in given existing emissions, adaptation is now essential to protect the lives and livelihoods of urban residents in particularly those in poor quality housing, elderly populations or people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, there is no “one-size-fits all” approach to adaptation and identifying the right steps to take can be daunting. Both the World Green Building Council¹ and the C40’s report on Focused adaptation² provide some useful recommendations which include.

- Undertaking assessments of localised opportunities and the areas of vulnerability (e.g. natural capital/green spaces and key infrastructure such as, road networks, pumping stations, hospitals etc)
- Conducting detailed assessments of ecological health-identifying measures to increase resilience.
- Collaborating with local groups to share knowledge and implement solutions
- Putting in place early warning systems
- Adopting strategies and frameworks that focus on community scale planning

The table below taken from C40’s report presents some suitable adaptation measures that have a high return and low cost for both extreme heat and local flooding risks. These include street tree planting, creation of urban parks and improvements to permeability including sustainable drainage, de-paving and creation of rain gardens. These measures are low tech, relatively low cost and are suitable and applicable to many contexts within Epsom and Ewell.

Type	Category / Hazard	Action	Benefit (5=high, 1=low)	Cost (5=easy, 1=hard)	Infrastructure (5=easy, 1=hard)	Stakeholder complexity (5=easy, 1=hard)
Hazard-specific resilience	Extreme heat	Street trees (climate-resilient species prioritized in heat risk areas)	4	5	4	4
Hazard-specific resilience	Extreme heat	Urban parks	5	3	3	3
Hazard-specific resilience	Extreme heat	Maximum residential temperature ordinances	1	5	5	2
Hazard-specific resilience	Inland flooding	River-catchment management (eg, river basin plans, infiltrating and retaining water in upcatchment, renaturalizing the river, creating a buffer protection for the rivers)	5	3	5	2
Hazard-specific resilience	Inland flooding	Green solutions for water permeability and flood protection - Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) (eg, floodplains and green riverbanks, bioswales, rain gardens, depaving)	5	2	3	3

Examples of recently completed rain garden planters in Croydon and rain gardens in Esther Road London demonstrate how tree and vegetation planting combined with sustainable drainage features can provide resiliency during flooding and heat wave events. These schemes are able to reduce localized flooding and heat island effects. They also provide aesthetic and biodiversity benefits through carefully selected planting of shrubs and trees.



The solutions already exist, we know what is required and most adaptation with high returns in term of benefits to people and increasing system resilience are proven.

Will the local plans, model design codes and enforcement step up to the challenges ahead?

Aurélie Paoli

¹ World Green Building Council Climate Change Resilience in the built Environment- principles for adapting to a changing climate
² C40: Focused adaptation: A strategic approach to climate adaptation in cities.

THE DOWNS

There was a meeting of the Epsom & Walton Downs Consultative Committee on 14 October, which was attended by Margaret Hollins on behalf of the Society. A full video of the meeting can be found on [YouTube](#) and the agenda plus meeting materials are [here](#).

Items of general (as opposed to horse-riding) interest that were covered at the meeting included:

- the long-running saga of the 'new' noticeboards, where some progress was claimed. Despite having been in position for over 3 years, at present the only material on the boards is some sticky-back plastic copies of the byelaws and a selection of fly posters. At the meeting a draft of the material to be presented on the 'new' noticeboards was shared - so hopefully we will see the boards properly in use sometime before summer...



- the Society's previously raised concerns about the various spoil heaps of material dumped when the various training tracks were re-laid, particularly those in the Seven Furlong/Top car park, behind the Derby start, and at the top of the hill from Ebbisham Lane. Once again, we were promised that these would be removed, but no timescale was given. We wait in hope! In the case of the larger piles in the car park, more material was brought in for the refurbishment of the lower training track (at the bottom of Six Mile Hill) that took place in November but not all of this was used and there is also now a huge new pile of material that was removed from the training track as part of the refurbishment. In addition, significant damage has been caused by heavy machinery driving over grass near to the refurbished track, leaving a half-mile long trail of mud. The contractors have long gone, so we will be making strong representations at the next Consultative Committee meeting in March for the damage to be made good and the for all the spoil heaps to be removed. We don't want to see Epsom Downs used as a dumping ground for track waste that should be disposed of properly, particularly as the spoil heaps in the car park seem to encourage illegal fly-tipping.
- the state of the Old London Road from the Downskeeper's Hut to the Seven Furlong car park. This is the responsibility of Surrey CC, and some repairs of potholes were made in September. However, a number of the largest potholes were left untouched, and are getting bigger as winter weather causes further erosion.

We will need to keep reporting these to SCC using the fixmystreet service. There have been repairs to potholes at the lower end of Ebbisham Lane as a result of injury to a horse there, even though the road is largely unmade-up at that point so there are more holes than tarmac.

- a plan is for the ice cream van that plies its trade on the verge near where Old London Road crosses the racecourse to move, for safety reasons, to operating within the Downskeeper's car park. A trial is also planned for a catering van to operate in the Viewpoint car park overlooking the golf course towards central London.
- a general discussion about dogs that are out of control, particularly near to horses. The byelaws require dogs to be 'under proper control' at all times, and it was acknowledged that the vast majority of dog owners respect this requirement. There have however been a few incidents of dogs chasing or biting horses, which can be very dangerous - not just for the horses and their riders, but for the dogs themselves as a kick from a frightened horse could easily be fatal. More steps will be taken to communicate with owners, including to remind them that even small dogs are subject to the Dangerous Dogs Act if they cause a risk to anyone else.

On the horse training front, work continues on and around the new stable blocks at South Hatch. The old blocks have now been demolished to make way for new flats which are now under construction. Some of these are intended for workers in the horseracing industry. Disappointingly, there have been a number of applications for retrospective planning permission before the main stable block was even finished, and the building's appearance of height is being exacerbated by the slope of the ground, which has meant creating a level platform for it to sit on. The Society is following up requirements for proper hedging along Rifle Butts Alley rather than simply dumping piles of brushwood.

At Downs House stables, near the racecourse start, it is reported that Stewards' Cup-winning trainer George Baker is planning to move in his 50 horses that are currently based in Chiddingfold. This would be a significant boost to the number of horses using the Epsom training facilities. For more information, see the Epsom & Ewell Times article of 31 October [here](#).

In the Woodland Trust's Langley Vale wood, an improved path has been laid from the car park to the orchard area and playground, via the 'Regiment of Trees' sculptures. This provides level access for wheelchairs and buggies.

The extensive refurbishment of the Tattenham Corner pub is now largely complete and it is now open.

Nick Lock

EVENTS

Visit to 'Durdans'

Thanks to Ian West the members of the Society had a very interesting visit to 'Durdans'. We were welcomed by the owner, Johanna Thornycroft, and were then divided into two groups. One led by Ian West and the other by Johanna herself.

Johanna's husband Andreas had inherited 'Durdans' after the death of the previous owner. (It turned out that many of those attending had known the previous owner who seems to have been quite a character). Lord Rosebery (1847-1929) was a previous owner.

We started by seeing the stables where four previous Derby winners had been stabled and then Johanna was kind enough to show us part of the house and some of the original features. The current house was built on the site after the destruction by fire of the previous building.

My group then joined Ian West and we were taken



Mike Ford, at right, with current and past Chairs of the Tree Advisory Board Howard Gregory (left) and Kevin Greening (centre).

MIKE FORD – A TRIBUTE

In June last year Mike Ford, founder of the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board 30 years ago and Epsom's truest Tree Champion, sadly passed away following a short illness.

Mike moved to Epsom in February 1981, and he worked as a skilled carpenter for over 50 years retiring in 2009. He is survived by his wife, Lesley, and their son Darren and daughter Emma.

For many years, Mike dedicated himself to planting, nurturing, and caring for countless trees within our borough and beyond.

It was thanks to Mike's knowledge of trees that the Rosebery Park Tree Trail was created (available on the Friends of Rosebery Park website). His philosophy was, "We don't plant trees to enjoy in our lifetime; we plant for future generations to enjoy."

Last year the 'Mike Ford Copse' was planted in Alexander Recreation Ground with Mike there to witness it.

Mike's legacy and dedication to tree husbandry are evident across the borough, reflected through the results of the numerous projects he undertook over the twenty-

down to the vaults under the house. The Society was very fortunate as we were the first to be allowed into the vaults since they were discovered during recent renovations to the house. We were most grateful to Andreas for installing temporary electric lights to enable us to see! The vaults were most impressive and are thought originally to be used for storing vegetables. In more recent years they have been used to store wine.

Johanna was a very good guide and extremely knowledgeable and the Society is most grateful to Ian West, Johanna and Andreas for making this visit possible and to Johanna and Andreas for opening their home to us for a most enjoyable visit.

Thanks to Roger Morgan, one of our members, for the following 'Epsom & Ewell History Explorer' links on the history of Durdans [here](#) and [here](#) and about Lord Rosebery [here](#) and [here](#). More information is in the Society's [Autumn 2023 newsletter, No. 175](#).

Eleanor Bland

five years he managed the group.

He will be remembered for this inspiring work, and sorely missed; we all owe him a great deal.

Kevin Greening, by invitation

Mill at Sonning 2025

If any members are interested in going to the Sonning production at Christmas 2025, could they please give me an idea as soon as possible, and before Easter. I will need to book in early to make sure of getting enough seats and I need to know, after the last visit, if there is enough interest to organise another trip. Please ring me on 01372 722558 to express interest. Please also get in touch with me if you are interested in a trip to Albury Vineyard and Silent Pool Gin Distillery.

Eleanor Bland

ECS Road Representatives Social

Although lacking a full complement of Committee members we are very fortunate to have Sue Doughty as our Newsletter Distribution Organiser, 5 Distributors and 66 Road Representatives who deliver your Newsletters [unless you have them by email] and collect subscriptions. To show our appreciation we arrange a social event each year, except when Covid got in the way. This is the opportunity for Road Reps to meet the Committee and each other to exchange ideas. It's always a fun event and last year we experimented with a new venue, Epsom Sports Club, and a new format, 'Afternoon Tea and Cake'. We were fortunate to have a sunny day and the Representatives who were able to attend had an enjoyable afternoon judging by the amount of chatting.

Ishbel Kenward

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

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'. You can now pay online by Bank Transfer or PayPal as detailed on the brown envelope. Select individual (£3) or household (£5) membership as appropriate, or pay a different amount if you wish to make a donation.



Ishbel Kenward – Membership Secretary

01372 438361 email:

membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

The following members agreed to stand for the positions described:

Chair: **Margaret Hollins**

Vice Chair: **Vacancy**

Hon Secretary: **Vacancy**

Hon Treasurer: **Nick Lock**

Other Committee members:

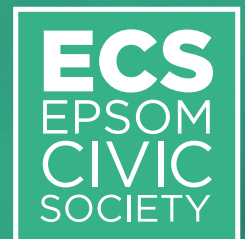
- **Michael Arthur** (Planning)
- **Eleanor Bland** (Minutes, Events)
- **Linda Bristow** (Events)
- **Mark Bristow** (Webmaster)
- **Ishbel Kenward** (Membership)
- **Jan Lanigan** (Events)
- **John Mumford** (Planning)
- **Aurélie Paoli** (Climate change)

Hon Archivist: **Philip Clifford**

Hon Photographic Archivist: **David Rowe**

Newsletter Editor:

Hon Auditor: **Brian Atkinson**



All of our newsletters are available in colour on our website: www.epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

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