

Epsom Civic Society

Newsletter

*Shaping the future,
safeguarding the past*



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CHAIR'S COMMENTARY

Dear Members,

As we all prepare for shorter days and longer nights, I hope you will be sustained, at least in part, by good memories of an enjoyable summer. As we move into autumn, there's a new green space for us all to enjoy at The Horton Arts Centre: the Horton Gardens opened on 24 July. The grounds, which have been closed to the public for three decades, have been transformed into a natural landscaped green space.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the successful completion of a much-needed transformation into what will no doubt become much-loved gardens. I was very pleased to be the Society's representative at the official opening, and encourage members to visit. The E9 bus from outside Epsom Station stops right outside. The Horton is open Tuesday to Saturday, more information @thehortonepsom,

<https://thehortonepsom.org>





The Society was well represented at August's VJ Day 80th anniversary service of thanksgiving and remembrance at St Martin of Tours Church (15 August). Following a moving and often deeply personal service, there was a reception in the church hall where I had the opportunity, over tea and cake, to catch up with my predecessor, Harry Corben, who chaired the Civic Society's

committee for nine years from 2007-2016.



Local plan inquiry

Regular readers of our newsletter will be aware that finally, as reported in our last newsletter, the Inquiry into the Borough's draft Local Plan has begun. Following successful completion of Stage 1, the Stage 2 sessions, starting at 9.30 in the Town Hall on the soundness of the Plan are scheduled as follows:

- **Tuesday 30 September 2025**
- **Wednesday 01 October 2025**
- **Thursday 02 October 2025**
- **Friday 03 October 2025**
- **Tuesday 07 October 2025**
- **Wednesday 08 October 2025**
- **Thursday 09 October 2025**
- **Friday 10 October 2025 [Reserve Day (if required)]**

The complete timetable with the topics listed for each morning and afternoon session is available at this link: <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/residents/planning/planning-policy/other-planning-documents/examination/ID-004v3%20Hearing%20programme%20for%20EE.pdf>

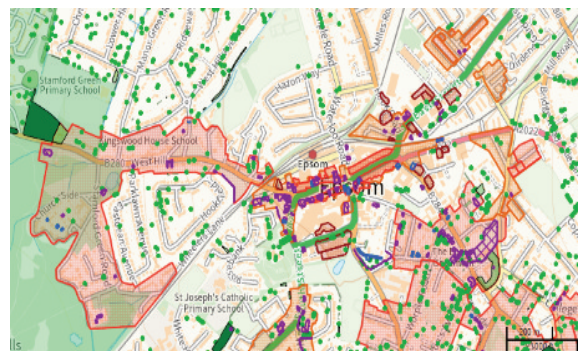
Members of the public may attend as observers but only those who have made representations about the Plan and who have notified the Programme Officer by 8 September that they wish to speak and take part may do so. Full details are available in the Inspector's Guidance Notes, see especially paragraphs 32-41:

<https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/residents/planning/planning-policy/other-planning-documents/examination/ID-002%20E%26E%20%20Guidance%20notesv1.pdf>

Local listing project

We continue to enquire about progress. It's possible that we may know more in November, four years after submission of our nominations.

Last but by no means least, I am delighted to report that Steve Bridger has very kindly agreed to be the Society's newsletter editor, a vital role to maintain effective communication links for the Society. I am equally delighted to report Karen Overington has agreed to join the Society's committee with a view to taking on the role of Hon. Secretary. On behalf of all our members, I extend a warm welcome to both Steve and Karen.



Margaret Hollins

BE PREPARED .. Check your Flood Risk

Why the best preparation for flooding happens on dry days

"Prepare. Act. Survive." is the Environment Agency's simple but stark campaign to help keep people safe from flooding. Over 5 million properties across the country are at risk of flooding – that's more than 20% of homes in the country.

The Environment Agency and Surrey County Council are now providing extra flood warning and information services following an increase in flooding incidents in the UK in recent years.

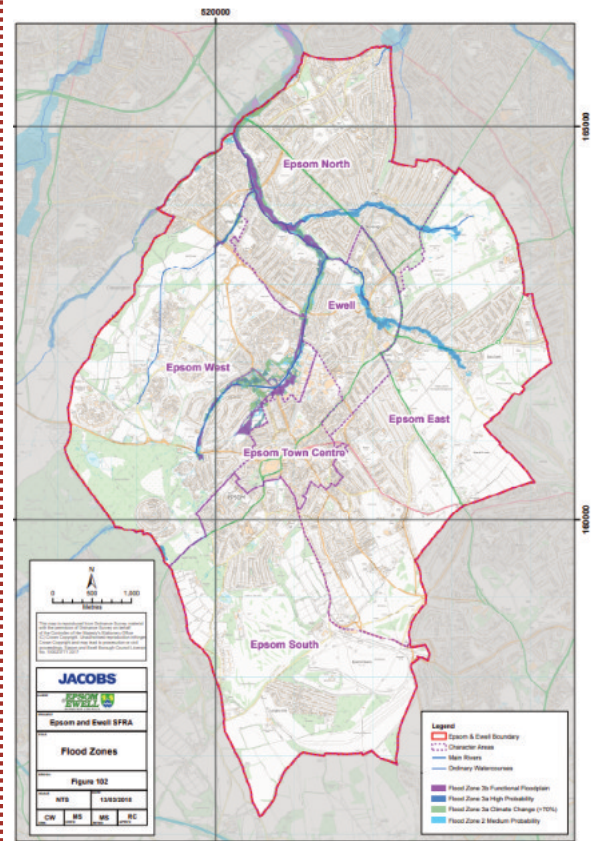
Depending on where you live in the Epsom and Ewell area you may be at risk from surface water flooding, river flooding (fluvial) from the Hogsmill River and its tributaries and groundwater flooding. The topography of the local area allows rapid surface water run-off from the downs to lower lying urban areas following heavy rain leading to surface water or flash flooding. The underlying geology (porous chalk underlying impervious London clay plus bands of porous gravel and sands) create the springs the borough of Epsom and Ewell is famous for which can lead to groundwater flooding after a prolonged spell of wet weather when the ground is saturated.

With flood incidents on the rise, it is crucial to reduce risks. Surrey County Council (SCC) is the lead flood risk management organisation for the Borough of Epsom & Ewell, in particular for surface water and groundwater flooding, as well as for flooding of highways. SCC is urging residents to take proactive steps to prepare for potential flooding.

Flooding can have a severe and lasting impact on lives, often catching many of us unaware and unprepared. To help residents navigate these challenging situations, SCC has compiled essential information and key contacts on their website. Here are some steps you can take:

Check your flood risk

Residents are advised to check their home's long term flood risk for an area in England on the Environment Agency's website by entering your postcode here: <https://www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk>. You can also



Epsom & Ewell flood zones

check by calling the Floodline (24-hour service) on **0345 988 1188**. This will tell you your annual level of risk (very low/low/medium/high) for fluvial and surface water flooding, for now and into the future (to 2069). There is no risk measure for groundwater flooding, but it will tell you whether groundwater flooding is possible at your address or if it is unlikely. There is also the opportunity to sign up to receive flood warnings on: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>.

The latest information on flooding in Surrey can be found on the [Flood Warning Information Service](https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and-warnings/surrey) page (<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and-warnings/surrey>) where you can view a map of flood warnings and alert areas.

Know how to Prepare. Act.Survive

There are simple steps you can take to prepare for flooding which can help keep you and your family safe and save you thousands of pounds in damages and disruption. Learn more about what you can do to plan ahead for flooding (<https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding>) such as making a flood plan and finding local support.



Surrey County Council has a list of useful measures you can take, such as, putting together a flood kit containing essential items and preparing both the inside and outside of your home. It is your responsibility to protect your home in the first instance. There is also advice on what to do during and after a flood here:



<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/flooding>

The **National Flood Forum** is a charity set up to support those affected by flooding. It has a list of available flood protection products on their **Blue Pages** website.

Report flooding during a flood

Flooding events can be devastating, leaving lasting impacts that are both financial and emotional for residents and business owners.

During a flooding incident, you should focus on the safety of yourself and others and stay out of floodwater. Surrey County Council has put together some advice on what to do should an incident occur. If you think there is a threat to life, call 999 and ask for Fire and Rescue.

If water is blocking roads or pavements and causing a danger, call Surrey County Council on 0300 200 1003. If you are calling outside normal business hours, please hold for option 3 (Roads and Transport) followed by option 2 (Highway and Traffic Signal Emergencies).

Find out how you can report different types of floods on SCC's flooding webpage: <https://tellus.surreycc.gov.uk/>

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) may in some circumstances be able to provide sandbags to protect homes (not gardens, garages or outbuildings) in imminent danger of flooding. However, this will be dependent on the council having filled sandbags available, transport and staff to deliver them, and also the type of flooding (sandbags cannot protect against groundwater flooding as experienced in Ewell in recent years).

Other useful contacts

For general advice, call the Environment Agency's 24-hour Floodline on; 0345 988 1188.



For sewage, flooded sewers and sewer cleaning call Thames Water on; 0800 316 9800 or visit www.thameswater.co.uk



Sources:

EEBC E-Borough Insight Issue 123: April 2025

<https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2018/02/16/why-the-best-preparation-for-flooding-happens-on-dry-days/>

by John Curtin, 16 February 2018
Climate change, Flood, Water



CARING FOR OUR TREES...

as well as the built environment

Did you know that, working alongside the Civic Society to protect our cherished local

environment, there is another local group that focusses specifically on trees?

Founded in 1994, the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board (EETAB) is a partnership of environmentally-minded volunteers from the local community who work together to safeguard and promote the value of trees in the borough. Its primary aim is to identify and defend the trees that define our local landscape to ensure that we pass on to future generations a borough that is at least as leafy as the one we have inherited. For many years the Tree Advisory Board has worked in loose collaboration with the Civic Society in recognition of the fact that our aims closely align – indeed EETAB was founded by former Civic Society committee member and visionary tree champion, Mike Ford, [known to Epsom Civic Society members as 'Mr Trees'], who sadly died last year. This is a partnership we intend to build on.

The first step is a regular EETAB slot in this newsletter, and another idea currently being scoped is a jointly funded tree planting project in a high profile location - in part utilising the Civic Society's long-established Tree Fund. Watch this space for more information!

Meanwhile, after the exceptional drought conditions of the summer, and with autumn now upon us, EETAB has just emerged from a busy watering season. Happily the vast majority of the 80+ new street trees planted by Surrey County Council across our Borough last winter have survived their 'make or break' first summer. A huge thank-you to the many local residents who have helped over-stretched EETAB volunteers

give these trees the best possible start.

EETAB is now looking forward to a fruitful 2025/26 planting season and hopes to release the majority of its tree nursery stock – so please do contact us if you need any young trees for a particular project, large or small.

Tree-related planning applications are always of particular interest to EETAB, with some group members focussing diligently on ensuring that important trees aren't needlessly lost or spoilt. Of particular note, at present, is an application to fell a protected veteran Beech tree on Downs Road on the basis of possible root decay.

Unfortunately not even our best landscape trees can always be saved – as safety must always be paramount - but close scrutiny of such applications is essential to ensure our treasured local treescape isn't avoidably compromised. In this instance, if felling is ultimately deemed unavoidable, the Tree Advisory Board is pressing for a significant replacement planting condition. These are just some of the interests of Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board members who plant, nurture and protect the trees in Epsom and Ewell.



We are always looking for new members, no knowledge required, just a desire to make a difference. If you're interested then please do contact us:

epsomandewelltab@gmail.com

www.eetab.org.uk

facebook.com/groups/eetab

Draft Local Plan Timetable

Stage	Revised Local Plan Timetable
Examination in Public (EIP) – Hearings commence	Stage 2: 7 th October – 10 th October 2025
Inspector's final report	March 2026 (subject to change)
Adoption of Local Plan	April 2026 (subject to change)

Visit to 'Durdans'



Members of the Society were again fortunate to be invited for another visit to view the historic and most interesting 'Durdans'. On a beautiful Sunday in September a group of us met at the house and we were warmly welcomed by Johanna Thorneycroft, Andreas von Einsiedel and Ian West. The views across peaceful fields with horses grazing and wonderful trees all around are truly stunning. We were given a guided tour of the main rooms of the house and the grounds and it was easy to imagine the well-known personalities of the era, royal, aristocratic, political and from society, in conversation around the wonderful fireplace after an excellent dinner. We extend our grateful thanks again to Johanna, Andreas and Ian for their knowledge and for giving us their time so willingly.



More information about the history of Durdans and Lord Rosebery can be found via links in the Society's [Spring 2025 Newsletter \(No. 179\)](#) to the '[Epsom & Ewell History Explorer](#)' website and also in the Society's [Autumn 2023 Newsletter \(No. 175\)](#).



Ian West Walk - 29th September

A further walk conducted by Ian West covering the historic houses of South Street (past and present) took place on Sunday September 29, just as this newsletter was going to press. A full report will appear in the next issue.

Simon Alford





PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Café Moka Unit, Ashley Centre west entrance (25/00605/FUL)

Despite intensive Civic Society objections on both planning and heritage/conservation grounds, this second application for the demolition of the characterful turret feature to create a more open exterior café seating area has regrettably been approved by planners.

While conceding that the current five-sided pentagon-shaped structure of the existing building “contributes to a sense of place within the townscape” and that its replacement with a rectangular single-storey extension to the Ashley Centre “located adjacent to the historical centre of Epsom, and near Listed Buildings, notably The Assembly Rooms, may not be fully welcomed” (there were five objections), officers concluded the “sense of place within the main courtyard is not adversely affected.”

The Civic Society begged to differ, arguing that the Ashley Centre’s original design – arrived at after exhaustive public

consultation in the late 1970s – was highly acclaimed for the appropriateness of its “Surrey vernacular architectural style” and local heritage references. These included the Centre’s similarly turreted east entrance in the High Street - which was sadly ‘modernised’ with fake stone cladding last year, despite earlier Civic Society representations that those alterations were detrimental to the respected original architecture. The Society continues to believe that the total loss of the turret feature in the West Square that has now been approved is another retrograde step, and that the bland and characterless “Tesco-type” replacement architecture will do nothing to enhance the Town Centre townscape.



Farm View, Langley Bottom Farm, Langley Vale Road (25/00846/OUT)

An outline application (with all matters reserved except access) for up to 110 dwellings on open land to the south-west of Langley Vale village. This is a highly controversial scheme because it proposes a major housing development within the Green Belt on what the applicant claims is now 'Grey Belt'. The Society has objected on the grounds that the site is high performing Green Belt land and that it was specifically excluded in the recent Local Plan submission which thoroughly reviewed which Green Belt sites could be released for development. There has been considerable opposition to the



proposal which is considered to have a significant adverse impact on the attractive downland setting to Langley Vale village, road safety, the operation of the local race horse training industry and result in future residents there being dependent on the use of the private car given the lack of nearby services and poor public transport. It is understood that the application will be determined at the November meeting of the Planning Committee.

Woodcote Grove, Ashley Road (25/00912/REM)

An application has been submitted to vary the approved plans for the development of 98 apartments/dwellings on the former Atkins site at Woodcote Grove accessed off Ashley Road. This application has arisen following enforcement proceedings instigated by the Council for works not being completed in accordance with the approved plans. The application seeks to now regularise the design changes that have been implemented. These changes include amendments to the previously approved lift

arrangements, provision of an additional 8 parking spaces, changes to the bike store, bin store, play park, reduced areas of soft landscaping, changes to hard landscaping. The Society is aware of a high level of resident dissatisfaction with the proposals because they are seen as a diminution of the quality of the originally permitted scheme. The Society shares these concerns especially relating to the lack of disabled access to the basement car park and the reduction in soft landscaping. Effective enforcement action should be pursued to ensure these two important elements of the originally permitted scheme are actually implemented and not changed for apparent cost-saving purposes.



63 Dorking Road (former White Horse Pub) (25/01020/FUL) new application

We reported in the last newsletter that an application for the change of use to become a convenience store (Sainsburys Local) was refused in May 2025. In September, virtually the same application has been resubmitted. We support this application as it would put back into use a closed listed pub building for which there is now no demand. A new retail convenience store



would be well received in this location saving trips into town.

A factor which does need to be considered carefully and may require some re-alignment and layout is that of traffic entering and exiting, particularly right hand turning in and out. This is a busy location with the hospital entrance and exit with its frequent backing up; the bus stops and lay-over bays; the pedestrian crossing; the high pedestrian footfall particularly to / from Rosebery School. Much has to mesh in to harmonize together."

Appeals

81 College Road

Over the past three years there have been three applications for a new house development to be built in the rear garden and having a frontage and entrance on to the adjoining road of Copse Edge Avenue. Each has been refused including one at a previous appeal. The Society in each application

has lodged objections about the proposals. The most recent (earlier in 2025) refusal has been appealed against to the Planning Inspectorate. Reply has now been received about the second appeal, which is also dismissed. Following a site visit the Inspector in the decision letter noted that part of the original garden at its far end along with the original garage had been sold off to form an additional property. The present proposal was to construct a further new property between No 81 (the donor house) and the more recently formed house at the end of the garden. In dismissing the appeal the Inspector concluded the the application when built would present an incongruous and cramped development significantly detracting from the predominant pattern of development in the local area giving rise to harm to the character and appearance. It would also leave the donor house with a very small rear garden being out of keeping with the locality."

Michael Arthur

Printed newsletter links

If you are reading the printed version of the newsletter and you see underlined text like this, it usually denotes the presence in the electronic version of a "hyperlink", which is a zone you can click on on your screen when reading the electronic version of the newsletter and be taken to the corresponding place anywhere in the document or the world wide web. Usually the underlined text you see is a substitute for a long string of gobbledegook which the computer likes but is not very nice for humans.



If you see an email address (as at the bottom of this article) e.g. webmaster@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk then by selecting this you will open your email client with the email address in the correct place. All that has to be done is insert your

subject matter and in the main section write your comments etc. and send. This enables an easy way to send an email to the recipient.

Obviously these don't work on the printed page. But if you want to follow these links and have a computer or mobile phone, you can still do so by opening a browser (a program to connect you to the internet such as Edge, Chrome, Firefox or Safari) and typing epsomcivicsociety.org.uk in the "search" box, which will take you to the home page of the Society's website.

Once there, from the menu at the top, click on "Newsletters" and then on the heading for the latest newsletter (or any of the previous ones from the last few years which are further down the page). This will display that edition in a new window on your computer or phone.

In this version on your screen, all the hyperlinks will work and take you to the source documents, websites or web pages the author wanted you to be able to see and read.

If you have any questions or want further information or help getting to see the electronic versions, please email:

webmaster@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk
to get in touch

The 'Furniss' building - what next and where we are....

In 2021 the Epsom Civic Society was asked to put forward nominations for Local Listing in the Borough of Epsom & Ewell and this included the Furniss building:



Local significance:

rarity; architectural or artistic value;

historic association;

landmark status. 24 West Street with its Dutch gable, roundels and nailhead decoration, was recommended for inclusion in an extension to the West Street boundary in the Town Centre conservation area appraisal (2009, p29). This locally historic and unique block (numbers 24-28) was erected in the 1880s by William Thomas Furniss (a local builder, corn, and coal merchant). The Dutch-style building was inspired by Furniss's previous emigration to Yonkers, New York. When he returned from America in 1870, he brought with him the technique to design and construct in the New York Dutch Style a completely concrete building.Built as a combined dwelling, works and shop, it was the first reinforced concrete building in Epsom. It is possibly one of only two surviving examples in England. The façade onto Station Approach is a very significant feature of Epsom and as such should be retained and protected. It is a much-loved building that is part of Epsom's heritage, a gateway building at the entrance to an historic market town.

Unfortunately the building was not added to the list and the owner decided that redevelopment of the site was necessary due to its poor state.

The following are the planning applications that have been put forward for this triangular plot of ground.



Apr 2004

Detached 4 storey office block and parking area

Application Withdrawn

Nov 2004

Proposed detached office building with three floors of accommodation over ground floor parking area. **Permitted**

Sep 2018

Outline planning permission for the demolition of the existing building and construction of a new 5 storey building containing ground floor commercial/retail (A1, A2 and B1 uses) and 14 residential units (C3 Use) on upper levels with all matters reserved apart from Access and Layout"



Non-determination

Aug 2019

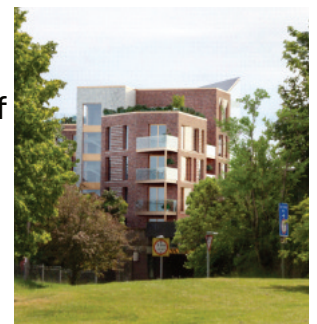
Demolition of existing building and construction of a new part 7 and part 8 storey building containing ground floor commercial/retail (E use class) and 25 residential units (C3 Use) on upper levels and associated development



Application Refused

Jul 2022

Demolition of existing building and construction of a new part 5 and part 6 storey building containing 20 residential units and associated development



Application Permitted

The building has now unfortunately been demolished with a great loss to Epsom. The timetable for the new building is approximately just over 12 months to build.



MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

A very few of our members have not yet paid the year. 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 are unsure as to whether or not you have paid feel free to check with me.

If you wish to pay online, you can make a bank transfer giving your surname and postcode as reference - Epsom Civic Society, Sort code 20 29 90, Account No 20353078 Alternatively you can use PayPal by going to our website 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.



ROAD REPS

Our Road Reps and Distributors are essential to the Society and we are grateful to all 65 of them. I am especially grateful to Sue Doughty who has been the Distribution Organiser very efficiently for 12 years. At the moment we have two areas not covered. The first one is 12 households around Chalk Lane. The second one is 14 households around Chantry Hurst. For various good reasons none of the members in these areas are able to do this. Therefore, I am looking for two volunteers, perhaps living nearby but don't have to be, who would be prepared to take on this task for the Society. This entails delivering 4 Newsletters a year and collecting annual subscriptions. If you think that you might be able to help in this way, please give me a ring for more information.

Ishbel Kenward – Membership Secretary

01372 438361 email membership@epsomcivicsociety.org.uk

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

Chair: **Margaret Hollins**

Vice Chairman: **Vacancy**

Hon Secretary: **Karen Overington**

Hon Treasurer: **Nick Lock**

Other Committee members:

- **Simon Alford** (Heritage)
- **Michael Arthur** (Planning)
- **Eleanor Bland** (Minutes, Events)
- **Mark Bristow** (Webmaster)
- **Ishbel Kenward** (Membership)
- **Jan Lanigan** (Events)
- **John Mumford** (Planning)
- **Aur lie Paoli** (Climate change and sustainability)

Hon Archivist: **Vacancy**

Hon Photographic Archivist: **David Rowe**

Newsletter Editor: **Steve Bridger**

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Hon Auditor: **Brian Atkinson**



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