



Epsom Common Association

Est. 1974 Patron:- The Worshipful The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell

www.epsomcommon.org.uk

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2018

Dear Member,
Epsom & Ewell Local Plan and the Common

At the behest of central government, local authorities, including Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, are reviewing their local plans to establish how more housing can be included. The council estimated a need for 418 homes per year, the government suggested 579. Recent rates of construction have been less than either figure. Last autumn the Council held a public consultation, so the committee responded on behalf of the ECA, with a copy to Chris Grayling MP. We confined our comments to effects on the Common.

Happily it seems unlikely that the Common is directly threatened. It is all registered common land and a Local Nature Reserve, much is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and nearly all the rest is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. In addition it is Green Belt and although that protection is being questioned, a council assessment of Green Belt in Epsom concluded that the Common was performing well. In summary, the council describes the various protections as constraints "that would prevent development from taking place". We encouraged the Council to resist any pressure to circumvent this protection.

However there is an indirect threat. It is recognised that nature cannot thrive in small reserves. To quote a 2011 government White Paper: "We should be thinking not of isolated spots of green on a map of England but of a thriving green network linking wildlife sites with farmland, forestry and urban parks and gardens..." The health of the Common depends on adjacent land, such as the former hospital sites, providing wildlife corridors from other undeveloped areas, such as Horton Country Park. These areas also provide recreational opportunities, preventing excessive pressure on the Common. We reminded the Council of the need to avoid excessive development on land in the vicinity of the Common, as well as their legal responsibility as the owner of an SSSI to not only manage, but enhance.

Much information about the review can be found at:

<https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-issues-and-options-consultation>

We understand there may be further public consultation this year; you may wish to make your views known about the Common and the difficult issues for the borough as a whole.

Dave King (Chairperson)

43rd Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 18th April 2018 at 8:00pm

Christ Church Hall, Christ Church Road, Epsom

Going the Whole 'Hog'

Doors open at 7:45pm

A talk about the Hedgehog by Emily Wilson from the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES)

The formal part of the evening will be held after the guest speaker's talk, with reports by the Chairperson and Treasurer, and the election of the Committee for 2018/2021. Our long standing Treasurer Marilyn Day is standing down and we would welcome nominations for the post of Treasurer. The other officers and committee are willing to stand again. Nominations for any of the officer posts, or for the committee, seconded by a current member, should be submitted in writing to the Chairperson fourteen days before the AGM.

We are expecting the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell and our MP Chris Grayling to attend as our special guests.

Refreshments available after the formalities

Proposed addition to the Constitution: Clause 12 - Dissolution

- (1) If the members resolve to dissolve the Association the Committee will remain in office and be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Association in accordance with this clause.
- (2) The Committee must collect all the assets of the Association and must pay or make provision for all the liabilities of the Association.
- (3) The Committee must apply any remaining property or money:
 - (a) directly for the objects;
 - (b) by transfer to any charities or organisations for purposes the same as or similar to the Association;
- (4) The members may pass a resolution before or at the same time as the resolution to dissolve the Association specifying the manner in which the Committee are to apply the remaining property or assets of the Association and the Committee must comply with the resolution if it is consistent with paragraphs (a) and (b) in sub-clause (3) above.
- (5) In no circumstances shall the net assets of the Association be paid to or distributed among the members of the Association.

Epsom Common Association

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Council Representative Steve Bridger **E:**SBridger@Epsom-Ewell.gov.uk **Membership Secretary** Martin Gandy **M:**07796-362923 **E:**membership@epsomcommon.org.uk

Committee members (in addition to above) Bruce Critchley, Conor Morrow (LMCMP), Stewart Cocker (E&EBC), Roger Newman, Steve Nevard and Eileen Taylor



This year marks the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the Epsom Well and the start of the Spa Era in Epsom. In 1618 after a summer of drought a local cowherd Henry Wicker discovered what he at first thought was a good supply of fresh water from a spring on the Common. However his cows refused to drink it. This sparked local curiosity and the source of the strange taste, magnesium sulphate, was found to have a number of health benefits. By 1621 the area around the spring was enclosed and became known as The Wells quickly leading to the development of Epsom as a major spa town with large numbers of people coming from far and wide to take the water. The committee are considering how the Association could celebrate the anniversary.

400th Anniversary

At the time of going to press I am not able to announce any firm plans so please check the website over the coming months. The MGS04 arts group will be marking the anniversary with an event on Sunday July 8th outside the Assembly Rooms. Our long standing Treasurer Marilyn Day is standing down from the committee this year. On behalf of the members and the committee I would like to thank her for all the work she has put in keeping our finances so well managed over many years. We do therefore need to find a new Treasurer and we would be very pleased to hear from any of our members willing to contribute to the ongoing success of the Association. Financial experience is not essential but familiarity with Excel spreadsheets will be useful.

Our AGM and spring talk will be held on Wednesday April 18th and features a talk about the Hedgehog. This is particularly relevant to us as our MP Chris Grayling is the Parliamentary Species Champion for the Hedgehog, which following a rapid decline in numbers is now an endangered species.

At the AGM we will seek approval to add a clause to the Association's constitution to specify what happens to the assets if the Association is wound up. The proposed text is shown in a separate section. We have no intention of dissolving the Association; the clause is required by some funding bodies.

The programme of nature walks will be held again this year on Sundays after last year's success. This will be Tony Quinn's last year leading the early morning bird walk and I would like to thank Tony for sharing his knowledge with us over very many years.

Subscriptions are now due, (£3 for local and email members and £5 for postal members) and as some members have enquired about paying by standing order we have produced a standing order bank form and the road reps will have a supply of these when they deliver this newsletter. Our account details are sort code: 30-93-08, account number 00276113. If you do set up a standing order I would appreciate it if you could let me know via the email address membership@epsomcommon.org.uk so we can update the road reps lists.

I look forward to meeting you at the AGM. **Martin Gandy (Membership Secretary)**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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Please note, all walks start from the Stew Pond Car Park unless otherwise stated and last for approximately two hours.

Wear suitable footwear and clothing, and if possible bring a pair of binoculars.

Sunday 6th May – 7:30am start – Early Morning Bird Walk

Join local bird expert Tony Quinn for a walk across the Common to see and hear a variety of bird species both resident and summer visitors.

Sunday 1st July – 2:00pm start – Butterfly Stroll

The annual search for the elusive Purple Emperor butterfly will be led by Alison Gilry. Join her to find, identify and record other butterflies, moths and invertebrates that inhabit our Common.

Sunday 8th July – 2:00pm start – Wild Flower Wander

Peter Wakeham will lead this popular walk to find and identify many of the more interesting wild flowers and other botanical delights to be found on the Common.

Sunday 22nd July – 2:00pm start – Bush Cricket Hop

Steve Nevard will be leading a walk to detect and hopefully see some of the varied species of Grasshoppers, Bush Crickets and other Insects that thrive on our Common. Duration of Walk approx. 2.5hrs.



We've been continuing with our work from previous years at Wells Rise, Horton Heath and Bramble Walk. Our late spring tasks on the common are at Rye Meadow and the Hazel Coupe. At Rye Meadow, we'll be cutting back some scrub and opening up tracks through the gorse to provide some grassy glades and shelter for the cattle when they arrive later in the year. At the Hazel Coupe, we'll be in the final year of our eight year cycle of works, tending to the existing plants, coppicing some of

the older hazels and possibly adding a few more to the hundred or so we've already planted there. Our long term aim is provide a habitat for breeding butterflies, and hopefully the odd dormouse.

April – Sunday 15th and Monday 16th - Rye Meadow – meet at the Wells Road entrance notice board at 9.30am daily.

The work site is about a ten minute walk away.

May – Sunday 20th and Monday 21st - Hazel Coupe – meet at the notice board at the Stew Pond car park at 9.30am daily.

During the summer months of June, July and August, we'll be continuing with bracken pulling every Tuesday evening at 7.00pm on selected sites in order to prevent the bracken from overwhelming heathers, wild flowers and grasses.

Horton Heath: June 5th, June 26th, July 24th, August 14th and 28th.

Railway Meadow: June 12th, July 10th and July 31st.

Hazel Coupe: June 19th, July 17th, August 7th and 21st.