



**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL  
LOCAL COMMITTEE EPSOM & EWELL  
8 March 2010**

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**Question 1 - Mr Mike Ford, Chairman, Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board**

**Re: East Street Rejuvenation**

This Committee is concerned at the lack of trees in East Street, Epsom and wants to set up a long-term project to investigate the possibility of street tree planting. The A24 [East Street] is a main arterial road into Epsom town centre and therefore gives travellers and visitors their first impression of the town. After the Windmill Lane area, the pleasing mix of housing, trees and shrubbery gives way to a more stark built environment, which we feel needs improvement.

The offices and business premises built over the last 40 years did not have adequate space allowed for decent tree planting. Regrettably the buildings were not set back to allow for sensible soft landscaping. With very little frontage, any trees that were planted were not able to mature, and over the years most have been removed, basically because they were too near to the buildings. This means that the only place where trees might successfully be planted is in the wide pavement areas.

This is not the first time that we have looked into this situation. Some 12 years ago, large planters were placed in East Street and a tree duly planted in each one. Of the 11 trees originally planted, however, only two remain. For various reasons, they did not thrive in this environment and definitely did not make the impact they would have done had the trees been planted in the ground.

The planters were, at the time, a compromise – but they did not work and now, frankly look rather tatty, and neglected. The only hindrance we can see to planting trees direct into the ground in what are unusually wide pavements would be, of course, the existence of underground services.

Our point at this stage is to have a comprehensive investigation into the position of all underground services in East Street. The way forward would be for a road engineer, equipped with all the necessary drawings and equipment, to pinpoint their exact location – thereby hopefully identifying a number of sites where street trees could be sited.

We appreciate this will not happen overnight, not least for budgetary reasons, and that a sequence of procedures and applications will have to be followed – but feel that this is the time to set the project in motion.

Also we would stress that we are not looking for a uniform avenue of trees, as clearly this would be an impossibility. Even a few decent trees, however sited in the most strategic positions where the absence of services allows, would make such a difference to the approach of our town centre.

We feel this would be a worthwhile project, which could engage the residents of Epsom and Ewell [indeed we even have fledgling ideas for a community appeal which we believe could help offset the cost].

There is no doubt in our minds that a 'greening' of this important arterial road into Epsom would significantly improve what is currently a weak point in our Town's visual environment. Clearly the attractiveness of the town centre and its major approaches have an important bearing on the impression given to visitors and shoppers alike, so we would argue that the benefits that could accrue from this project would extend beyond the simple 'greening' of one road. It is clearly important to Epsom that its business and shopping environment is made as attractive and appealing to users as possible, and we believe that East Street – given its importance as an entry point to the town is arguably the single most significant area where a comparatively small investment could make a very tangible difference.

Mr Simon Alford and myself will attend the forthcoming meeting on March 8 and will be willing to make a short statement.

**Officer Response:**

Tree planting along East Street is something the County Council are pleased to consider if external funding can be made available and officers have prepared guidance notes setting out what must be considered, and what must be provided in order for a tree to be planted in the footway and be allowed to flourish. The guidance notes are appended to this answer. No sum is presently held by the County Council in respect of Section 106 monies, which identifies tree planting in East Street as part of the funding agreement.

**Question 2 Cllr Pamela Bradley**

**Re: Footpath leading to St Clements School, Ewell**

I am concerned about the small footpath, which leads to St. Clements School. There are roots coming through the tarmac, which will probably worsen and cause danger to pedestrians. The path starts just before the Nursing Home (Priory Court) and leads directly to the school. In the front of the school there is also parking right up to the gateway, which obstructs lorries wishing to go into the school. What are the chances of having a double yellow line on the left side of the roadway as one enters Fennells Mead. There is a partial one there at present, which is often abused. One of the residents called the police when their car was blocked in.

**Officer Response:**

The footpath to the side of Priory Court Nursing home, leading to St Clements School, is not an adopted highway and does not have right of way status. This infers the path is private and concerns relating to the condition of the path should be addressed to the owners.

New parking restrictions are planned for Fennells Mead as part of the phase 4 parking amendments. The amendments were agreed by the Local Committee on 1 February and implementation is planned for March 2010. The measures comprise single yellow lines and plates prohibiting parking Mon-Fri 8.30 am - 6.30 pm. They extend, on the east side, from the existing double yellow lines to the school entrance and, on the west side, around the radius outside the school entrance and around the radius immediately beyond the entrance to the garages.

## GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PLANTING TREES ON THE HIGHWAY

### Cost

The cost depends entirely on the job specification from start to finish. Trees planted in hard surface are inherently more expensive due to the engineering work involved in breaking out, aborted and reinstated trial holes, pit edging and supply fill and disposal of excavation. The species specified would also affect costs and whether the specimen is to be a sapling or semi mature. In the case of a sapling the dimensions of the pit required will be 1.0x1.0x1.0m. If a root balled tree (semi mature) is used the pit should be a minimum 2x the root ball diameter; 3x if replacement soil is found to be necessary. As a starting point allow £500 to £750 /tree although this could be more depending on specification.

### Considerations

- A complete search of underground utilities followed by trial pit excavation to assess ground conditions.
- Scope for planting pit size available and adapt as ground conditions require, subject to free drainage (1m x1m x 1m depth usual minimum)

### Supply of :-

- top soil backfill
- mulch
- planting stakes
- tree guards/grill/grates/pit surface treatment
- irrigation system
- support system (above or below ground)
- tree stock supplier (Barcham Trees recommended)

### Selection of Species to consider

- Location purpose and function of tree from a street architecture point of view regarding its mature size and form.
- Affect of tree on adjacent built structure/shading/encroachment by branches/ honeydew drift on structure/underground services drains etc/subsidence risk/ sight lines to commercial advertising, building names etc.
- Affect of built structure on tree/ reflected heat / access for maintenance / building servicing functions/ localised winter salt application near entrances access and servicing by vehicles including emergency services and customers loading goods, entering or leaving.
- Impact on highway users/ fallen leaves/fruit /berries /seeds/bark fragments/dead twigs/branches/ basal growth and anything else
- Amenity contribution of tree /leaves colour (summer and autumn) shape, form, texture, size /bark /flowers/ crown structure in winter/ size and future maintenance.

### Highway related issues

- proximity of adjoining buildings
- proximity of passing traffic
- footway width to be left available for pedestrians
- use of grilles or protective railings to be pedestrian friendly
- proximity of buried utilities
- surface treatment of pit (eg gravel topping)
- sight lines
- interference with street lighting
- interference with street signs
- interference with traffic signals
- interference with CCTV
- additional street cleansing requirements