

Street Trees – a Breakthrough



Street tree in Tadworth

Getting permission to plant street trees could just be getting easier. Surrey County Council have appointed environmental officers to work alongside the Highways Department to find and approve planting spots on road verges. Several Tree Warden groups have had great difficulties recently with verge planting applications turned down, often with no reason provided. Now, many of these sites in Tadworth and Walton, Ashted, Bookham and Epsom and Ewell have been surveyed again. Epsom and Ewell has been selected for a pilot project. 438 sites for possible tree planting have been identified, though not all of them will be finally approved. In the case of Tadworth, Connick Tree Care, an Arboricultural company has been appointed to look at sites rejected in the past, and if they are found to be suitable, trees will go in. Surrey Council will provide those trees, and they will be planted by Connick.

This change of direction by Surrey has come about after several meetings between Surrey Tree Warden Committee members and Councillor Matt Furniss, Cabinet member for Transport and Infrastructure. The Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Board has also been campaigning for a change of heart on what were seen as unnecessarily restrictive planting conditions. They had a meeting with Carolyn Mackenzie, who is Surrey's Director of the Environment. The pilot scheme is the result.

Stumped

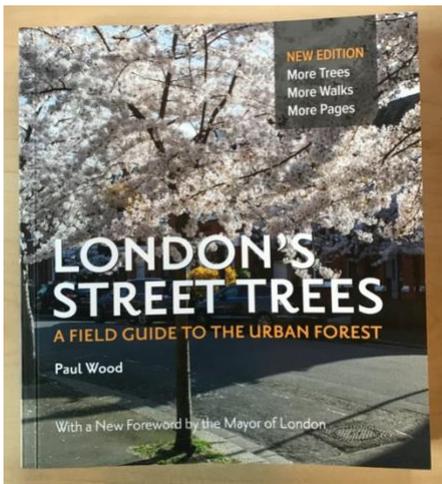


Epsom and Ewell have faced a particular problem over the years with new tree planting. The Borough has many housing estates built in the 1930s and many trees planted then have come to the end of their natural lives. Many gaps have formed, and dead or dying trees have been left as unsightly stumps, rather than being ground out by the Council. Now an interactive Google map has been created by the Tree Advisory Board so these stumps can be located, and it's hoped, replaced with new trees. See a stump, report it.



Funding Galore for Tree Planting

Everyone wants to plant trees. Governments around the world, our own included, have seized on tree planting as one easy way to do something about the climate emergency. It was on that note that Jon Stokes from the Tree Council opened the **Surrey Tree Warden AGM** in Tadworth in October. He said there are now huge opportunities, and even more importantly funding, for tree and hedge planting projects. Central government money has been made available to local councils through the **Treescaping Fund**. Surrey alone has committed to planting 1.2 million trees by 2030. Money for smaller scale projects, including hedges, is also available through the Tree Council www.treecouncil.org.uk For Tree Wardens this presents a huge opportunity, and the job on the ground is to identify the places where trees can be planted however small, or hedges renewed, and then make the case for funding.



The guest speaker at the AGM was Paul Wood, expert and author of *London Street Trees*. London used to be known primarily for the London Plane, and indeed in 1920, a writer complained that was all that London had. No longer. Over 200 hundred tree varieties can now be found. Paul Wood praised the Borough of Hackney for its wide choice of street trees. The Peanut Butter tree anyone? This is the beautiful *Clerodendron* whose crushed leaves really do smell of peanut butter. He told the story of Ada Salter, campaigner, environmentalist and Mayor of Bermondsey in the 1920s who set up a Beautification Society to plant trees in the poorest and most deprived streets of London. Her legacy still lives. London streets have Champion trees too: Islington has two Champion elms. It was a fascinating talk at a time when planting more street trees has never been more relevant.

The day ended with a guided walk to see some of the thriving street trees planted over the past few years by the Tadworth and Walton Tree Wardens.

News in Brief

The **Elmbridge Tree Wardens** have a new centre in Walton-on-Thames off Rydens Road. They helped Elmbridge Council plant 500 whips on a site by the Xcel Leisure Centre during National Tree Week. Women from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Group came to help. There are plans for smaller plantings in 2022, so get in touch if you are interested in helping out:

On Facebook at [@elmbridgetreewardens](https://www.facebook.com/elmbridgetreewardens),
Or email elmbridge@surreytreewardens.org.uk



Treescaping Fund: A call went out from Surrey County Council to Surrey Tree Wardens to help community groups plant trees. Surrey Council have made thousands of trees available to Borough and Parish Councils through the Treescaping Fund, mentioned above. But many parishes lacked the expertise to plant correctly. Several tree wardens volunteered their time to help and advise.

Surrey Heath Tree Wardens have a hedge planting day coming up on 30 March - all volunteers welcome. It's at Frimley Green Recreation Ground from 10.00. For more information contact Jerry Brownlee: vicechair.shtw@gmail.com



Warwick Hutchinson, a **Stoke d'Abernon Tree Warden**, has helped restore a forgotten War Memorial. The two Cherry trees shown above framing the 'Old Plough' pub in Stoke d'Abernon were part of a registered War Memorial, set up in 1946 to commemorate 16 fallen heroes of WW2. The Cherry trees were recently felled by Elmbridge Council. But thanks to funding granted by the Council, the memorial has now been restored.

It is not a Memorial in the usual form – the remaining trees ARE now the Memorial. The Stoke d'Abernon Residents Association and the Tree Wardens took the initiative. Three Cherries remained along with three Liquidambar; five new trees were planted creating a Memorial Grove.



Warwick Hutchinson was pleased to be planting again. He too has been frustrated with Surrey's verge planting guidelines, as virtually all local roads in his area have narrow grass verges. This was a great opportunity to plant trees again, he said.

Online Training for Tree Wardens

No excuses! Tree Warden training courses are now available to all registered members in the Surrey Network. There are eight online modules in all, prepared by The Tree Council, and delivered on Zoom. The first, How to Be a Tree Warden, was held at the end of January. The second on Tree Biology comes very soon on Friday 25 February and the third on Tree Health on Friday 25 March. Both events begin at 7pm. To register if you haven't already, contact Patricia Brookwick, secretary@surreytreewardens.org.uk

The training is free for all registered Tree Wardens. The aim is to run all the modules this year, and then, for those who missed them, run them again. There will be no need to take your own notes. A learning guide will be sent out to everyone who attends a session. A very important module will be Trees and the Law, and this will be delivered, not by Zoom but in a real meeting, at the end of May - date and place to be announced shortly. The final four modules will be Tree Planting, Managing and Caring for Trees, Tree Health, and Organising Events and Projects.

The Tree Council want all Tree Wardens, new and old, to do the first Induction module, How to be a Tree Warden. It contains much useful information and ideas.

Change at the Top

The Surrey Tree Warden Network has a new chairman. **Steve McCormick**, from Epsom and Ewell, was elected at the AGM last October. He takes over from **Trefor Hogg**. Trefor must be thanked for the excellent work he has done in opening discussions with Surrey Council about the difficulties over street tree planting. In his Chairman's report he looked forward to a new "partnership relationship" with the Council as it moves to fulfil its commitment to plant over a million trees in the near future.

Dendrophobia in Stormy Times

It's too early to say what overall damage recent wild weather will have done to our trees. Storm Arwen in November brought down millions in the East of Scotland and Northern England.

Of recent storms in the South East, Spelthorne Tree Warden Sally Pemberton made this comment:

“With all those trees falling during Storm Eunice, there is sure to be a resurgence of dendrophobia with more healthy ‘dangerous’ trees being cut down. This is something councils could avoid by keeping ivy under control and pollarding street trees.”

Get Your Camera Clicking

Would you like to see one of your photos published to raise funds for the Network? We have had Christmas cards. Now the Network needs your help to expand the range to include a general greetings card using the most striking tree photos we can find. Get clicking, and send any images to Rod Thorn: info@surreytreewardens.org.uk
He will put them together on an online folder and the best will be selected.

CONTACT US

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SurreyTreeWardens>

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(Please send the Newsletter Editor any stories or event details)