

# Around 100 attend Epsom unity event after April far-right disorder

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Around 100 people gathered in Rosebery Park for a community event intended to promote unity and reject racism following far-right disorder in Epsom earlier this year.

The free event, held on Saturday 27 June and organised by Stand Up to Racism Epsom & Ewell, brought together families, faith representatives, local campaigners and politicians for music, speeches, food, children's activities and a community art project.

It followed events in April when Epsom attracted attention from far-right activists from outside the area after social-media discussion and misinformation surrounding an alleged rape. The subsequent disorder prompted concern among residents and community groups.

Saturday's gathering included speeches by Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire, Reverend Catherine Hutton of Epsom Methodist Church, Labour councillor Kate Chinn and Green councillor Jonathan Essex. Messages of support were also shared on behalf of Epsom Mosque and the local Sikh community.

Those attending heard live music from Canada Hill, with DJ Amalgamation also performing. Children's face painting, food, stalls and a collaborative art activity were among the attractions.

A "Facts Not Fear" stall aimed to challenge misinformation and far-right narratives. The Epsom and Ewell Climate Network was represented, alongside members of Stand Up to Racism and local Green and Labour Party stalls. Organisers said the Conservative Party had been invited but had not responded.

Deborah Fish, of Stand Up to Racism Epsom & Ewell, said: "The response to our Unity Event showed that Epsom and Ewell rejects racism and division.

"There was a real sense of hope and solidarity in the crowd. People from many different backgrounds came together because they want to live in a welcoming, inclusive community and are determined to stand together against racism and the far right."

Reverend Hutton said Epsom Methodist Church would continue to provide "a space of safety and sanctuary for all".

Ms Maguire told the gathering: "We are here today because we choose to stand for something. We choose to say that racism has no home here. Disinformation has no home here and division has no home here.

"As your Member of Parliament, I will continue to stand up to racism."

Event host and organiser Ammo Sandhawaliala said the turnout showed "Epsom and Ewell's true colours" were "warm, welcoming and united".

He added: "To see around a hundred neighbours come together with their families, their faith communities, their councillors and their MP, sharing food, music and art in our park, was simply joyous."

Stand Up to Racism Epsom & Ewell describes itself as a local group campaigning for inclusion, safety and unity across the borough.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Photo: Reverend Catherine Hutton of Epsom Methodist Church

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