# **New Family Centre grows out of Nursery**

For nearly 25 years **Epsom Methodist Nursery** has been providing early years childcare in the heart of Epsom – just two minutes from the town centre. Now the Nursery is entering an exciting new chapter in its history. As well as continuing to offer early years education for two to five year-olds the Nursery will become a **Family Centre**.

Following consultation with parents the Family Centre is planning to offer a broad range of activities and support including:

A bumps and babies group for new parents providing ante-natal and post-natal support.

Support groups for parents and carers of toddlers and young children.

Courses and classes covering areas such as potty training, coping with challenging behaviours and family budgeting.

Support for speech and language development.

An affordable after-school club.

Already the Family Centre is running two stay-and-play groups for parents and young children and in April it is offering a free 'Ready Steady Cook on a Budget' course. With the cost of living rising, the FREE four-week course aims to support parents to provide easy, wholesome and healthy meals for the whole family whilst sticking to a budget.

The course will cover menu planning on a budget, planning the weekly shopping list, hands on experiences of creating easy recipes and top tips for saving money and time. The move to becoming a Family Centre has been made possible by a grant award from the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS). CFS has arranged for the Netherby Trust and the Epsom and Ewell Community Fund to provide £12,450 which will match a contribution from Epsom Methodist Church. This money will help fund both the employment of a Family Centre Manager for the next year alongside the various activities that are planned.

Commenting on the grant award Cara Golding, the manager of Epsom Methodist Church Nursery, said:

"We are delighted to have secured this funding from the Community Foundation for Surrey. Our work with families at Epsom Methodist Nursery has shown us how committed parents are to their children and families and how keen they are to pick up ideas that will help them with the everyday and sometimes complex challenges that parenting can bring. Local agencies and public services are under pressure and services have been cut back. So the more we can do to provide practical help to parents and give children the best start in life the better. That is our mission."

For further details on the 'Ready Steady Cooking on a Budget' course see

https://www.instagram.com/emcfamilies?igsh=bnNpYnFzNzhzaHp4&utm source=qr

## Business that connects by insulating

The **Wickes Community Programme** has donated insulation products to the value of £1000 to help struggling families in the local community. This initiative is run by the Epsom based charity, **Good Company**, which also operates a network of local food banks. Since launching the Epsom & Ewell Energy Support Scheme in October 2022, Good Company has helped more than 300 families and over a thousand people in the local area.

The primary aim of the programme is to offer support to families struggling to pay energy bills by helping them make their homes more energy efficient and offering advice on how to reduce their energy use in other ways.

**Tom Sefton**, the Poverty Lead at Good Company, said: "The products donated by Wickes included secondary glazing film, various draught excluders and heat reflective radiator foil. These were handed out at group workshops that we have been running in Epsom, Leatherhead, and Tadworth for food bank clients and other local families most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. We wanted to show people that making small changes like this can significantly reduce your energy usage."

Feedback from participants has been extremely positive, including one client who said: "I found the workshop very helpful and really enjoyed talking to the other participants, sharing tips on how to save energy. The takeaway tips are also very informative. Thank you so much for your kindness and for giving me really useful information about the cost of energy and how to reduce usage and keep warm and safe this winter – which, like many people, has been scaring the life out of me."

Tom went on to say: "Other clients have told us they are wearing the hooded blankets we provided to stay warm and are using an air fryer instead of their oven to save energy, as well as fitting draught excluders and radiator foil to heat their homes more

efficiently."

Chris Grayling MP Epsom and Ewell said: "Last year we ran an appeal in conjunction with Citizens Advice Epsom and Good Company and raised over £40,000 to support our local community. These funds were used to provide short-term help with energy bills and to offer energy-saving advice. We were delighted when Wickes agreed to support us with these products through the Wickes Community Programme. It's at times like these we need to work together with businesses like Wickes to make a difference."

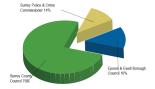
Wickes Store Manager in Epsom, **Ben O'Leary** said: "Supporting our local community is really important to Wickes, especially during the current cost of living crisis. For any families interested in how they too can make their homes more energy efficient there's some great advice on the Wickes website."

The Wickes Community Programme is open to all local community groups and charities seeking help for improvement projects.

## 15th February 2024

COUNCIL FINANCES

#### No budging on Council budget



#### 14 February 2024

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council met for two hours Tuesday 13th February to debate the proposed budget and Council tax increase for 2024/2025. Councillors received a 288 page report containing ... READ MORE

LOCAL HISTORY

## **Spitfire downed Messerschmitt over Epsom**



14 February 2024

What connects Epsom's Market Square statue of Emily Davison and the Spitfire that shot down a German Messerschmitt over the Town in World War 2? "WW2 People's War" is an ... READ MORE

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

## 2 years on Epsom to gather in solidarity with Ukraine



13 February 2024

The Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN) and Surrey Stands with Ukraine (SSWU) are calling upon the community to join them in a special gathering on Saturday February 24th at ... READ MORE

**BUSINESS COMMUNITY NEWS** 

## 30 years' smile stamped on local Post Offices



12 February 2024

Postmistress Nidhi Prashar has reached her 30 years' milestone of serving Post Office customers in Surrey. Three decades ago, Nidhi and her husband, Anil, bought Oxted Post Office and for ... READ MORE

HOUSING NEWS

## Epsom 3rd in a 2024 "Best Places to Live"



#### 12 February 2024

In the latest edition of national estate agents "Garrington's Best Places to Live" index for 2024, Epsom has clinched the third spot after an assessment of rankings in a range ... READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

## Salts defeated in presence of legend



11 February 2024

AFC Croydon Athletic 5-2 Epsom & EwellFC. Combined Counties League - Premier Division. Saturday 10th February. Despite scoring seven times in matches against AFC Croydon Athletic this season, we only ... READ MORE

**CRIME NEWS** 

## **Murder investigation in Epsom**



9 February 2024

A murder investigation has been launched following the death of a man at a residential address in Epsom on Wednesday (7 February). Officers were called to Eleanor Avenue at 9pm ... READ MORE

**BUSINESS NEWS** 

### Another news in store for Epsom!



9 February 2024

Following Primark's announcement it is opening in Epsom we have a further welcome boost to the local economy, B&M are thrilled to announce the launch of its brand-new store in Epsom, Surrey. ... READ MORE

CRIME POLICING

### Epsom PC is tough on crime and the causes of crime



9 February 2024

Police Constable Bethan Evans-Jones has been working to reduce shoplifting in Epsom & Ewell including working with one prolific individual who has recently been convicted of 24 counts of theft. ... READ MORE

**EDUCATION NEWS** 

#### **Epsom MP cuts ribbon of new nursery**



9 February 2024

Children at a new nursery welcomed MP Chris Grayling who cut the ribbon to officially open the new provision at an Epsom school. The Vale Primary School now offers a ... READ MORE

**BUSINESS NEWS** 

#### Primark to open in Epsom



9 February 2024

Primark will occupy 44,000 sq ft in the former House of Fraser space in the Ashley Centre, Epsom, utilising two floors and sitting adjacent to the scheme's central square near ... READ MORE

# 30 years' smile stamped on local Post Offices

Postmistress **Nidhi Prashar** has reached her 30 years' milestone of serving Post Office customers in Surrey. Three decades ago, Nidhi and her husband, Anil, bought Oxted Post Office and for most of that time Nidhi has served that community. Now Anil runs that branch since Nidhi became Postmistress for **Epsom** in July 2017.

Postmistress, Nidhi Prasahar, said: "I loved serving the people of Oxted, but there was suddenly an opportunity to take on a bigger, busier, branch as well at Epsom, so Anil now runs Oxted branch. First Epsom was temporarily based at Epsom & Ewell Town Hall to restore service to the town, then I opened my permanent branch and card and gift shop in the High Street in February 2018.

"I get on really well with my customers in Epsom too. Thankfully I'd just got settled before Covid struck, but that was strange as many businesses in the high street were closed, so those customers were not around. However, other people who would normally have been commuting to elsewhere, were suddenly working from home and visiting my Post Office, so there were lots of different customers to get to know. People were grateful that Anil and I were able to keep both Oxted and Epsom branches open."

Last year Nidhi was filmed at Epsom branch as part of an episode of Stacey Solomon's Sort Your Life out programme. A local family had their home de-cluttered and they came across lots of different foreign currencies, which was then converted into useful sterling at her Post Office. Many of her customers immediately recognised her from the programme.

Nidhi, said: "I love being a postmistress. It's the people that you meet that make it so great. There aren't many jobs where you have this great interaction with people. People come in regularly and you build up a relationship. Customers become like

extended family.

"In Oxted there are no banks left and we meet the banking needs of the community – so it's non-stop banking customers. In Epsom there are lots of banks and building societies, but we are open longer hours than all of them, so for some customers they find it more convenient to come here."

At Oxted and Epsom customers also have the choice of DPD and Evri services in addition to Royal Mail and Parcelforce mail services.

Post Office Area Manager, **Richard Wilder**, presented Nidhi with a 30 Years' Long Service Award. He said: "I want to thank Nidhi for being a first class Postmistress in Surrey for 30 years. Nidhi and Anil provide great customer service and they really care about the people that they serve in Oxted and Epsom. Both branches look great too with the retail alongside."

The Post Office.

## Another news in store for Epsom!

Following **Primark**'s announcement it is opening in **Epsom** we have a further welcome boost to the local economy, B&M are thrilled to announce the launch of its brand-new store in Epsom, Surrey. The launch of the new store will create 60 jobs for local people.

The discount retailer has taken possession of a previous Wilko store which provides a space of 26,548sqft. which will undergo a comprehensive internal and external refurbishment programme before officially opening its doors at 8am on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

Customers can expect to find a wide variety of branded groceries for the best possible price including a range of food, drink and pet food. There will also be a fantastic selection of quality health and beauty products, homeware, electricals, DIY essentials, toys, games, gifts and plenty more to explore.

The store manager from B&M said: "We're feeling extremely positive about the creation of more jobs for local people, and we hope customers are going to be delighted with their new store."

"We are all really excited to get the doors open and welcome new customers through the door."

Related reports:

Primark to open in Epsom

5 Shops that could replace House of Fraser in the Ashley Centre

# Epsom PC is tough on crime and the causes of crime

Police Constable **Bethan Evans-Jones** has been working to reduce shoplifting in **Epsom & Ewell** including working with one prolific individual who has recently been convicted of 24 counts of theft. Thanks to her interventions, he is also being supported to break out of the cycle of crime.

Bethan joined Surrey Police in 2022 via Police Now's National Graduate Leadership Programme, which recruits, trains and develops talented graduates to excel as neighbourhood officers across England and Wales. Previously training to be a solicitor and working in her local MP's office before deciding to become a police officer, Bethan speaks to us about her role on the frontline and her passion for supporting vulnerable people in the community.

Last summer, Bethan investigated a series of repeated thefts that targeted a petrol station in the borough of Epsom & Ewell.

Bethan began to visit the petrol station as part of her regular patrol route, and developed strong relationships with the staff, to ensure she would be directly alerted to any incidents while in the area.

She was subsequently able to intercept and arrest the offender as he attempted to shoplift alcohol. Thanks to the evidence she gathered during her investigation, he was convicted of 24 counts of theft at a local magistrates' court. He was given a Community

#### 20th November 2025 Weekly

ISSN 2753-2771

Protection Warning prohibiting him from entering any local businesses without the means to pay. He is also required to undertake drug rehabilitation and to pay compensation for his offences.

Police Constable Bethan Evans-Jones said: "I'm pleased to have been able to support staff at the local petrol station, who have the right to feel safe in their place of work.

"It is also important to me that the offender is supported to break out of the cycle of crime he had fallen into and receive the help he needs. He is well known within the community and, despite the crimes he committed, the shop staff spoke kindly of him – so it was important to all of us that he receive help.

"I referred him to local partner agencies, and he was able to get help from a charity that supports those with drug addictions and was also assigned a social support worker. He recognised that these were the first steps to 'getting better' and we believe that this will be an important step to prevent him from re-offending.

"Drugs and drug misuse has become a particular area of interest for me, because of the often-vulnerable nature of the offender themselves, as well as the need for victim support. This is the kind of thing that neighbourhood police officers can really support with, through strong partnership working with local charities and organisations, as well as compassion and a real understanding of what the vulnerable members of society experience. Getting to know people in the neighbourhood and being on patrol is what ultimately enabled me to apprehend this individual.

"That's one of the reasons I decided to join the force via Police Now's neighbourhood programme, where I knew I could embed myself in the local community and build relationships to make a difference. The programme also offers other development opportunities and I have successfully secured a four-week secondment with the Home Office to work on county lines policy. This will be a great opportunity to develop my skills further and bring key knowledge back to my neighbourhood, to better support residents across Epsom and Ewell."

West Surrey Intelligence Manager, **Inspector Alan Knight**, said: "Bethan is a very competent and capable police officer. She has the principles of community policing at the heart of all the work she undertakes, and this is reflected in what she has achieved.

"By tackling the core issue of the matter and diverting offenders from the vicious circle of reoffending to fund an addiction, Bethan has not only supported her community by preventing future criminality but is inspiring neighbourhoods that feel safe. I hope that the results in this case will provide reassurance to victims of crime that we are focused on pursuing those responsible.

"Bethan's work has shown that working with communities and victims of crime promotes the partnership sharing of intelligence and information which is so vital when combating all levels of criminality."

# **Epsom MP cuts ribbon of new nursery**

Children at a new nursery welcomed MP **Chris Grayling** who cut the ribbon to officially open the new provision at an Epsom school.

The **Vale Primary School** now offers a curriculum for two to 11-year-olds and its nursery already has 23 children on the roll with more joining in the spring.

Mr Grayling, MP for Epsom and Ewell, joined **Julian Drinkall**, CEO at GLF Schools, in cutting the ribbon to officially open the nursery on Wednesday 7 February.

"I was delighted to be invited to attend the official opening," said Mr Grayling. "The additional nursery places will support the government's expansion of childcare support to working parents and offer the local community free, funded 15 and 30 hour early years places for two, three and four-year olds. It is clearly going to be a really happy nursery," he added.

The school is a member of the GLF Schools Multi-Academy Trust which has a strategy to promote school readiness by ensuring as many as possible of its primary schools can cater for children aged from two to 11 with a school-run nursery on site.

**Sarah Leyland** and **Cathy Browne**, co-heads at The Vale, said they were both very proud of the hard work and community collaboration which has seen the creation of 'such a positive environment for our young children.'

To add to the celebration aspect of the event, a specially made cake depicting the school logo and an array of cupcakes were made by a former parent of the school.

"I am delighted for our community and the parents and carers with us today that GLF can offer this new nursery provision. GLF's

nursery strategy emphasises the importance of ensuring our youngest children have access to high quality early education and being ready to start school," said Mr Drinkall.

"It was clear today that our new nursery at The Vale Primary School is quickly becoming an integral part of the local community and provides local families with the opportunity to access a new and exciting two-11 curriculum."

The nursery will be holding an open morning on Wednesday, March 6 and Friday, March 8 and visits can be booked at the school on 01372 273639 or via info@thevaleprimary.org

The Vale Primary School website also has details on how nursery funding is changing and how parents can apply for funded places for 15 hours childcare for two-year-olds. More details on www.thevaleprimary.org

## Primark to open in Epsom

**Primark** will occupy 44,000 sq ft in the former House of Fraser space in the Ashley Centre, Epsom, utilising two floors and sitting adjacent to the scheme's central square near retailers such as JD. Forming the destination's anchor tenant, the new store will feature Primark's full offer, incorporating menswear, womenswear and childrenswear, as well as accessories, beauty, home, and lifestyle. The store is expected to create around 100 jobs for the local community and is set to open in early 2025.

Louisa Butters, Head of Retail Asset Management UK at CBRE IM, commented: "Primark's signing is a milestone moment for the Ashley Centre. The opening will mark the final stage of our two-year repositioning project that underpins our long-term strategy for the revitalisation of the Ashley Centre, ensuring that it continues to serve the needs of the community in every way possible. We are looking forward to welcoming Primark early next year, and delivering an optimised and enhanced experience and environment for our visitors."

Philippa Nibbs, Director of Sales UK, London and the South East at Primark, also said: "As we continue to invest in the UK high street, we are delighted to announce our new store in Epsom that will open next year. We look forward to becoming a part of this community and playing a central role in the refurbished Ashley Centre."

Primark in Epsom will join Newbury, Berkshire, as the next locations confirmed for Primark in 2025. This follows the recent news that Primark will be investing more than £100m in its UK stores this year, as it celebrates 50 years of Primark on the Great British High Street. Local shoppers in Epsom and the surrounding areas looking to get their Primark fix in the meantime will be able to visit the nearby Sutton, Kingston or Woking stores.

In 2023, the Ashley Centre welcomed a raft of new openings such as JD, Deichmann, and GAIL's Bakery, forming a key part of the centre's leasing strategy to evolve its retail and F&B offer. The centre's £7 million refurbishment will also work in tandem, seeing the reconstruction of the East entrance and enhancements to the interior, creating a refreshed and modern look.

Related Reports:

5 Shops that could replace House of Fraser in the Ashley Centre

# 8th February 2024

**EDUCATION LOCAL HISTORY NEWS** 

## Ada of Surrey inspires big AI project



#### 7 February 2024

Drawing inspiration from Ada Lovelace, who resided in Surrey, a computing pioneer and translator who overcame societal barriers in the 19th century, the "ADA network" based at Surrey University aims to ... READ MORE

**COUNCIL SPORTS** 

## LibDems call "Love All" for local tennis



#### 7 February 2024

With charges pending for using Epsom and Ewell Borough Council tennis courts the local LibDems ask for free sport for low income players. In a bid to bolster recreational opportunities ... READ MORE

**BUSINESS HEALTH** 

### **Dementia nurses coming closer to Epsom**



#### 7 February 2024

Dementia UK, the specialist dementia nursing charity, in partnership with Leeds Building Society, is launching free face-to-face 'Closer to Home' clinics to provide life-changing support to families living with dementia ... READ MORE

NEWS WESTMINSTER

## **Surrey's Tory MPs exiting the County**



#### 6 February 2024

Kwasi Kwarteng the Conservative MP for Spelthorne has just joined four other of his Party's Surrey colleagues in announcing he will not stand at the upcoming General Election. Surrey has ... READ MORE

COUNCIL HEALTH

#### Surrey boost for mental health includes Epsom



6 February 2024

Surrey County Council has announced a significant investment of £3.6 million from the Mental Health Investment Fund (MHIF) into 13 innovative, community-focused projects. This allocation follows a previous grant of ... READ MORE

**RUGBY SPORTS** 

#### **Epsom dig deep to beat Gravesend**



5 February 2024

Sutton & Epsom RFC 21 Gravesend 19. Saturday 3rd February. It has reached the business end of the campaign and for all clubs a studious look at the table and the  $\dots$  READ MORE

**EDUCATION NEWS** 

## Robot puts study at home pupil in the classroom



5 February 2024

One pupil at a Surrey primary school has been utilising virtual technology to help her keep-up with learning by sending a robot into class. The robot is controlled by the ... READ MORE

NEWS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

### M25 diversion cost me £12.50 ULEZ charge



5 February 2024

Driven to despair and a £12.50 charge, Dorset pensioner complains to Transport for London for inadequate signs before the ULEZ charging A243 at the Hook Junction with the A3. She ... READ MORE

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

### **Epsom youth show a taste for cooking**



5 February 2024

On Saturday, 3rd February, three candidates from Epsom participated in the District Young Chef Competition held at Merton College for Rotary Young Chef, along with approximately 14 others from areas ... READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

#### Twice led, thrice beaten....





#### 5 February 2024

Sheerwater 4-3 Epsom & Ewell FC. Combined Counties League - Premier Division. Saturday 3rd February. One of the most concerning afternoons in recent club history took place on Saturday as ... READ MORE

COUNCIL HOUSING PLANNING

## Red, blue and orange go Green in belt protest



#### 4 February 2024

Epsom High Street Saturday 3rd February witnessed political parties unite against housing development on the Borough's Green Belt. The Labour Party, Conservative Party, Liberal Democrat Party, Gina Miller's True and ... READ MORE

COUNCIL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

### "Audit and Scrutiny" under scrutiny



#### 4 February 2024

Every day the Epsom and Ewell Times brings you a fresh chess puzzle to solve. Harder to solve than any chess puzzle run so far is what, if anything, at ... READ MORE

COMMUNITY LOCAL HISTORY

### Petition to reclaim Horton Cemetery from property speculator



3 February 2024

The trustees of the Epsom charity The Friends of Horton Cemetery have appealed to the public to sign an online petition on change.org that calls for Europe's largest asylum cemetery ... READ MORE

**BUSINESS NEWS** 

### Thames Water's reputation going down the drain



3 February 2024

Thames Water's spending on infrastructure is "woefully inadequate", its behaviour a "disgrace", and direct lines of communications to MPs "unhelpful" - a meeting into the "largest ever" water outages in ... READ MORE

**EDUCATION NEWS** 

## **NESCOT Saturday academies for the young**



#### 2 February 2024

Got a young person passionate about animals, cookery, e-sports, film making or another hands-on potential career? Our next Saturday Academy starts 24 Feb 2024 – book now!The next set of Saturday academies ... READ MORE

## Dementia nurses coming closer to Epsom

Dementia UK, the specialist dementia nursing charity, in partnership with Leeds Building Society, is launching free face-to-face 'Closer to Home' clinics to provide life-changing support to families living with dementia in **Epsom**.

The clinics will be held in the **Epsom branch** of Leeds Building Society, bringing emotional and practical support closer to families with dementia through the charity's specialist dementia nurses, known as Admiral Nurses. Dementia UK's Closer to Home clinics will run on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of February and the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

The face-to-face clinic will offer a safe, comfortable, and private space for families to discuss any aspect of dementia and receive the specialist support of Admiral Nurses. Between June 2021 and December 2023, over 4,000 families have been helped through Dementia UK's 'Closer to Home' clinics, and the charity has partnered with Leeds Building Society to offer in-person support across the United Kingdom since 2022.

Nationwide research conducted by Dementia UK into the impact of dementia revealed that nearly half (47%) of people in the South East of England have been affected by dementia, and 51% of people in the region are worried about how a diagnosis would affect their relationships with family and friends. Only 16% of people in the South East have heard of Dementia UK's specialist Admiral Nurses.

In April 2020, Dementia UK and Leeds Building Society announced a four-year partnership to raise £700,000 to help over 2,500 families with dementia across the UK. As part of this partnership, the innovative 'Closer to Home' project was also launched in June 2021, to improve access to dementia care and support.

The partnership's initial target of £500,000 has now been exceeded. Thanks to this, Dementia UK has been able to develop and deliver virtual appointments with specialist dementia nurses for an even larger number of families and individuals.

#### 20th November 2025 Weekly



ISSN 2753-2771

#### Hannah Gardner, Admiral Nurse at Dementia UK, said:

"We're proud to bring our Closer to Home project to Epsom to offer specialist face-to-face clinics in the area. We know the difficulties that families in Epsom and the surrounding area often experience. We know that dementia doesn't just affect the person with the diagnosis: families, friends, and carers are also impacted.

"Dementia is a huge and growing health crisis – someone in the UK develops dementia every three minutes. This means it's more important than ever for us to reach families and offer one on one support from our dementia specialist Admiral Nurses. From worries about memory problems to understanding a dementia diagnosis and how the condition progresses, we will be providing practical and emotional advice on caring for someone who lives with this progressive condition, along with giving advice on financial and legal issues."

#### Richard Fearon, CEO of Leeds Building Society, said:

"Dementia UK was voted as our charity partner by our members and colleagues, and we are thrilled to have raised over £700,000 for them, exceeding the £500,000 fundraising target we set ourselves at the start of this partnership."

Dementia UK's Closer to Home clinics will take place in Epsom on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of February and the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

To book a confidential and in-person appointment with an Admiral Nurse, visit dementiauk.org/closer-to-home dementiauk.org