EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

12th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

What an erudite lot we are.

31 August 2022



Surrey libraries are the second most visited in the country according to the latest UK Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) data, with the figures showing the libraries attracted over 550,000 visits last year.

CIPFA surveyed residents as part of the findings, with questions ranging from the overall customer experience, satisfaction with the quality of book stock, and the role libraries play in combating loneliness and isolation.

97% of respondents said they received good or very good standard of care when visiting Surrey's libraries, whilst 83% felt the choice of books on offer was either good or very good (with a further 93% happy with the physical condition of the books).

The results also reinforced the important role libraries play in their communities, with 62% of those surveyed who felt lonely saying libraries help to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.



The findings from the CIPFA survey reflect the broadening appeal of Surrey's libraries and emphasise that modern libraries provide more to residents than just books. They have become a place for performances, workshops and exhibition spaces and offer a myriad of services including free digital access for those without access to a computer.

Below are some examples of what libraries have been providing over and above their core service offerings:

- A year-long partnership with Farnham Maltings has resulted in libraries being a space for some exciting creative events to be staged, exhibited and performed, extending the reach and accessibility of cultural experiences.
- Ensuring that no one is left behind libraries have been the backbone of delivering Surrey's Period Dignity campaign with period products available to be collected for free or donated at all 52 libraries.
- Libraries are there for all people in the community and have been welcoming families from the Ukraine ensuring books in Ukrainian and Russian are available on their shelves. Young Ukrainians have been able to take part in this year's Summer Reading Challenge thanks to translated materials provided in Ukrainian and Russian.
- This summer during the Jubilee weekend there were 85 Jubilee events and 46 Big Lunches hosted in Surrey libraries as an opportunity for communities to come together and celebrate – to ensure everyone had an opportunity join up and join in with their community.

Sue Wills MBE Assistant Director Art, Culture, Heritage and Libraries said "This is just the tip of the iceberg! We've come a long way in terms of the diversity of services that libraries can offer. This is an exciting period of transformation for our much-loved Surrey Libraries where spaces are re-imagined to deliver a place where social, educational, economic, and cultural activities can be made accessible to all in the community, often free of charge. It's not the physical building that changes it's what's happening inside at the heart of the building that changes."

To find out about all the different events taking place in Surrey Libraries follow on Twitter and Facebook or visit the Surrey Libraries web pages. Libraries – Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)

Results are from the Surrey County Council CIPFA plus survey, 2022

The Borough's libraries are:

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Epsom Library

6 Epsom Square, Epsom · 03456009009

Ewell Court Library

Ewell Court House Lakehurst Road, Epsom · 03002001001

Stoneleigh Community Library

1 Stoneleigh Broadway, Epsom · 03002001001

Bourne Hall Library

Spring Street, Ewell 020 8393 9571

Council pledge to support victims

31 August 2022



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council signs the Anti-Social Behaviour Pledge.

Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Mayor of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has signed an Anti-Social Behaviour Pledge which commits the council to supporting victims of anti-social behaviour.



The pledge is a set of principles put forward by the victims' charity ASB Help. ASB Help have previously assisted the Community Safety Partnership on complex community trigger applications.

A community trigger can be activated if an incident has been reported three or more times within a six month period and not received a satisfactory response. This gives the victim the right to demand that agencies deal with persistent anti-social behaviour.

The pledge's aims are as follows:

- Promote awareness – Actively encourage the use of the community trigger to residents and partner agencies
- Legality – Confirm an organisation is legally compliant and embracing the spirit of the community trigger
- Ensure accessibility – Publicise the community trigger so the most vulnerable know what it is and how to invoke it
- Develop the process – Embrace the full potential of the community trigger by continually reviewing and learning from best practice
- Generate inclusivity – Use community trigger review meetings to work collaboratively and strategically, formulating solutions to end the anti-

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social behaviour
- Establish a precedent of using the community trigger to put victims first and deter perpetrators

Councillor John Beckett, Chair of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee, said “Anti-Social behaviour is not welcome in Epsom & Ewell and we work hard with partner agencies to both reduce and prevent it. Anti-social behaviour can be anything from neighbourhood issues and noise nuisance to tall vegetation, bonfires, flytipping and inconsiderate parking.

“I would like to reassure victims of any sort of anti-social behaviour that we are there to support them. Signing this pledge is a reminder for us as a council and for our partners in the Community Safety Partnership to work more closely with ASB Help and ensure victims are effectively assisted.”

For more information on how to report a community trigger please see https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/residents/communities-health-and-wellbeing/epsom-and-ewell-community-safety.

Adviser to Pope blesses Epsom Heritage Project

31 August 2022



Baroness Sheila Hollins has joined Freemen of the Borough, the local MP and others in their Patronage of The **Friends of Horton Cemetery**. Baroness Hollins is a leading figure nationally and worldwide in the field of psychiatry. A former President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the British Medical Association, she is an adviser to **The Pope** on the protection of minors and is a cross-bench member of the **House of Lords**.

The Charity’s 50+ strong research team leader, **Kevin McDonnell**, said “We are truly honoured that the charity’s objects have Baroness Hollin’s endorsement. Especially as on 6th September we launch our project “**Out of Sight, Out of Mind**“, supported by **Historic England** and **Kings College London**. The story of the Cemetery and the Stories of the lives of those buried there are becoming significant locally, nationally and internationally. We have researchers and followers here, across the United Kingdom and overseas. An extraordinary heritage putting Epsom on the world map.”

Dr Alana Harris, Director of Kings College’s Liberal Arts Department said “The project aims to restore dignity to the 9000 patients buried beside Epsom’s Hook Road, in Europe’s largest asylum cemetery. Our project seeks to recapture these stories and to create a crowd-sourced memorial, overcoming historical amnesia, neglect, and inaction. We are seeking volunteers (who will be trained, and work in pairs) to lead public engagement ‘chat and craft’ workshops, which will discuss the history of the ‘Epsom Asylum’ cluster and its cemetery.”

You can find out more at an information session on Tuesday 6th September 4pm-6pm at St. Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom KT19 8HA and you can contact the Project via www.hortoncemetery.org

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“You’ve NOT got mail”

31 August 2022



Epsom Posties go on strike. Photo above: Local workers and Labour Party activists outside Epsom’s East Street Royal Mail sorting office today. The biggest strike of summer so far will began today as 115,000 postal workers came out for a “dignified, proper pay rise”. Members of the Communication Workers Union – which represents Royal Mail Group workers – have started a series of national strike action .

This will be followed by further strike action on Wednesday 31st August, Thursday 8th September and Friday 9th September.

The decision follows the union’s recent ballot for strike action over pay, which saw members vote by 97.6% on a 77% turnout to take action.

The union is demanding that Royal Mail Group make an adequate pay award that covers the current cost of living increases for our members.

Management imposed a 2% pay rise on employees, who were classified as key workers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, through executive action earlier this summer.

In an economic climate where inflation looks set to soar to 18% by January 2023, the imposition would lead to a dramatic reduction in workers’ living standards.

CWU General Secretary Dave Ward said: “On Friday, we will see a tremendous outpouring of workers’ unity in villages, towns and cities across the country. There can be no doubt that postal workers are completely united in their determination to secure the dignified, proper pay rise they deserve. We can’t keep on living in a country where bosses rake in billions in profit while their employees are forced to use food banks.

“When Royal Mail bosses are raking in £758 million in profit and shareholders pocketing in excess of £400 million, our members won’t accept pleads of poverty from the company. Postal workers won’t meekly accept their living standards being hammered by greedy business leaders who are completely out of touch with modern Britain.

“They are sick of corporate failure getting rewarded again and again. Royal Mail’s leadership have lost the dressing room – and unless they make efforts to get real on discussing a pay rise that postal workers deserve, serious disruption will

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continue."

CWU Deputy General Secretary Terry Pullinger said: "Our members worked miracles during the pandemic and know full well what they are worth. They are fighting for a no strings, real-terms pay rise – something they are fully entitled to. Those managing Royal Mail Group are treating our members with contempt by imposing such a minimal amount. Royal Mail Group have failed to recognise the strength of feeling and have clearly lost the dressing room on pay, so they have left us with no choice but to fight. Our members deserve a pay rise that rewards their fantastic achievements in keeping the country connected during the pandemic, but also helps them keep up during this current economic crisis. We won't be backing down until we get just that."

Royal Mail has responded according to the **Financial Times**: "The CWU had rejected a pay award worth up to 5.5 per cent, which would have added about £230mn to Royal Mail's annual "people costs" at a time when the business was already lossmaking. This decision by the CWU is an abdication of responsibility for the long-term job security of its members. In more than three months of talks, CWU has failed to engage meaningfully on the business changes required.

"We're really sorry for the disruption that this strike action is likely to cause to you. We want to reassure you we will do everything we can to minimise disruption and get our services back to normal as quickly as possible.

Royal Mail has well-developed contingency plans, but they cannot fully replace the daily efforts of its frontline workforce. We will be doing what we can to keep services running, but customers should expect significant disruption.

On days when strike action is taking place:

- We will deliver as many Special Delivery and Tracked24 parcels as possible
- We will prioritise the delivery of COVID test kits and medical prescriptions wherever possible
- We will not be delivering letters (with the exception of Special Delivery)

What you can do:

- Post your items as early as possible in advance of the strike dates
- Continue to post your items at Postboxes or Post Offices, however collections will be less frequent on days when strike action is taking place"

UCA Epsom MA Graduation Show 2022

31 August 2022



The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) Epsom welcomes the return of its in person postgraduate shows with work created by our master's students 2022.

For one week only, UCA Epsom will be displaying innovative work by Epsom MA Graphic Design students as they take the next step in their careers and begin to shape their futures in the creative industries.

Foodbank feeding thoughts...

31 August 2022

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Gillian Nichols of **Epsom and Ewell Foodbank** writes: What price do you put on mental health? Among the people that visit foodbanks, many have severe mental health issues due to traumatic experiences, poor circumstances, and often unaddressed medical issues they've faced in their lives. At Epsom Foodbank we have a higher motive than simply feeding the people who need us.

We want to help reduce the need for our Foodbank services through addressing the cause of the problem, not just the problem itself. And we are already doing this very successfully.

Our outstanding counselling service has been sitting alongside the foodbank, working with clients to help them move on from their problems towards independence and work.

It's hard for many of us to understand the plight of the people we help. It is best described in their own words which you can read at the end of this letter.

To have a qualified Counsellor available at our Foodbank is a huge asset which has changed lives. We really want to do more of this. But we need funding in order to do it. And it doesn't take a huge amount. In fact, just £50 per month would make all the difference.

A partnership or donation from your company can enable our Counsellor to keep working with people, building their confidence, and helping them escape from dependence by listening, offering therapy services, and having them know someone is there and looking out for them.

Everyone knows the importance of mental health, and how poor mental health lies at the root of so many social issues. If you can help support this incredible life-changing service, contact **gillianaudreynichols@gmail.com**



No immunity for CoVid vaccination thief

31 August 2022



A Tadworth man who stole empty CoVid vaccination vials and sold them on Ebay gets a suspended prison sentence. What do you do when you get given one of those proof of postage receipts in your local post office? Crumple it up and stuff it in the bottom of your bag? Pop it in the recycling pile by the back door when you get home? Diligently file it away somewhere safe?

Luckily for our investigators convicted thief and fraudster **Steven Flint** took the last approach, but unluckily for him, his neat and tidy admin was eventually his downfall.

Flint was working as a contract security guard at three vaccination sites in the county during the peak of the Covid vaccination roll-out in January and February 2021 when he stole a large quantity of empty Covid vaccine vials to sell them on eBay.

Investigators initially used Post Office CCTV footage and eBay account details to connect Flint to the crimes and he was arrested on suspicion of theft and fraud at one of the sites he worked at in February 2021. Flint had completed 13 shifts

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before he was arrested.

During a subsequent search of his house, police officers found empty vaccine vials and multiple receipts for packages posted to Flint's eBay buyers.

Surrey Police detectives also discovered that Flint had fraudulently used the details of an acquaintance to set up a new eBay account to cover his tracks.

Steven Flint, 34 of Bidhams Crescent, Tadworth was found guilty of theft on 19 July at **Staines Magistrates Court**. He had previously pleaded guilty to fraud by false representation. He was sentenced to one year imprisonment, suspended for 18 months, at Staines Magistrates Court on **Wednesday, 17 August.**

Flint was also ordered to complete 150 hours of unpaid work.

Detective Inspector Paul Gordon from Surrey Police's proactive investigation team said: "Covid vaccine vials remain the property of the NHS. Due to their sensitive medical nature, this ownership is maintained before, during and after the vials are used. Taking these items could only have been theft.

"Flint's crimes took place when the very successful national vaccine programme was in its infancy and any actions which jeopardised public confidence in the vaccine roll-out were treated with the utmost seriousness. We, along with our health service partners and the vaccine manufacturers, reacted extremely quickly to the situation, working together to identify and arrest Flint."

Lorna Hart, Surrey Heartlands Covid Vaccination Programme Director said: "The NHS will never charge for a Covid-19 vaccination and patients should only ever accept a vaccine from an NHS vaccination service.

"Thanks to the success of our NHS vaccination programme, frontline teams have done an incredible job, delivering over 2.2 million Covid-19 vaccines to people across Surrey Heartlands.

"As part of the autumn booster programme many people, including everyone aged 50 and over, will be offered a Covid-19 booster, as well as a flu jab, to help increase people's protection against respiratory viruses ahead of winter so we would encourage anyone who is invited to get vaccinated. We also continue to offer the Covid-19 vaccine to anyone who is eligible."

Written by Karen Parker of Surrey Police

Two Surrey Stabbings in One Day

31 August 2022



Surrey Police have issued witness and information appeals for two serious stabbings by knives both taking place on **16th August 2022**. The first in **Horley** at about 10.20pm and the second in **Leatherhead** at about 11.10pm. **Epsom and Ewell Times** reprints the Police appeals below:

Surrey Police.

We are appealing for witnesses after a man was stabbed in the chest in **Horley** last night (**16 August**).

Police were called after the victim, a man in his 20s, was found with a single stab wound on a grassed area near **Roffey Close** around **10.20pm.**

The man was approached from behind and thrown from his bike to the ground by two men wearing balaclavas. He was then believed to have been dragged along the ground before being stabbed.

Two men were seen making off from the scene towards the recreation area near Sangers Walk shortly afterwards.

The victim was taken to hospital where he remains in a serious but stable condition.

Enquiries are underway and we are appealing to anyone who witnessed the attack, or who has any dashcam or doorbell camera footage or any other information, to come forward.

Detective Sergeant **Lee Marks** said: "We would like to reassure local residents that we are doing everything we can to identify those responsible and ensure they face the consequences of their actions."

If you can help, please contact us straightaway quoting reference **PR/45220087990** via contacts below

…….

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We’re appealing for witnesses following a stabbing in **Leatherhea**d yesterday (**16 August**).

Last night officers received a report that someone had been stabbed on **Kingston Road**, near to the junction with **Cleeve Road** and the footpath leading to Leatherhead train station. This assault occurred between 11pm and 11.15pm. The victim was taken to hospital with stab wounds to his hand and arm.

Officers cordoned off the area last night to conduct enquiries and this was taken down at 10.30am this morning.

Sergeant **Elliott Hartley,** of Mole Valley Specialist Neighbourhood Team, said: “I know that many local residents will have been concerned this morning after seeing the police scene on Kingston Road. We’re continuing to work hard to establish what happened last night and we’re asking anyone who was walking home from the train station around the time of the assault to please get in touch. The victim has been discharged from hospital and is recovering at home.”

If you witnessed this assault, or have any information which could help our investigation, please contact us quoting PR/45220088010 via

- Webchat on our website https://www.surrey.police.uk/
- Our online reporting tool https://www.surrey.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/cor/tell-us-about-existing-case-report/
- Calling us on 101

If you do not wish to leave your name, please call the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Reaching recyclables others cannot reach .....

31 August 2022



Ro Stretton from **Epsom** has signed up to the **Baylis & Harding Free Recycling Programme** offered by recycling experts **TerraCycle**. By sending waste to TerraCycle, Ro also raises money for charities **Univida** and Christ Church Epsom. Ro also collects other items for recycling including Pringles tubes, cheese packaging, biscuit and snack wrappers and bread bags

Epsom resident, Ro Stretton, has signed up as one of the UK’s first public collection points for recycling used Baylis & Harding products. The free recycling programme was created by Baylis & Harding in partnership with TerraCycle, the world leaders in recycling “hard-to-recycle” waste.

Ro has set up a publicly accessible drop-off location at her home at 233 The Greenway, Epsom, allowing the whole Epsom community to drop-off items including Baylis & Harding caps, hand and mist pumps, flexible plastic lotion tubes, screw tops and Goodness hand wash refill pouches to be sent to TerraCycle for recycling.

While most Baylis & Harding products can be recycled through traditional methods, unfortunately some products can end up in landfill as local councils simply don’t have the infrastructure to recycle these materials. By taking their waste to Ro’s location, members of the community can give their Baylis & Harding products a second life.

The collected waste Ro sends in to TerraCycle is recycled by shredding, cleaning and turning into a pellet format which can then be used by manufacturers to create new generic plastic products, reducing the need to extract new resources from the planet.

Ro commented: “Everyone is aware of how important it is to waste less and recycle more, but this can be a challenge when kerbside recycling collections are limited to certain items. TerraCycle’s free programmes are great because they allow whole communities to give a second life to the waste that’s usually destined for landfill or incineration.”

As well as recycling the waste they receive, TerraCycle awards points for each parcel of waste Ro sends in, which can be redeemed as a monetary donation to the causes of their choice – Univida and Christ Church Epsom.

Ro continued: “So far we’ve raised more than £1,500 for charity by sending this waste to TerraCycle. We donate the funds to Univida, which provides education, support, and food to children in Brazilian Favelas, and Christ Church Epsom which provides support to local people in need. The more we collect, the more we can donate, so I’d encourage everyone in the community to get involved.”

As well as collecting Baylis & Harding products, Ro also collects on the Cathedral City Cheese Packaging, pladis (the company behind McVitie’s and Jacob’s) Biscuits and Snacks, Marigold Gloves, Philips Dental Care and Babybel Free

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Recycling Programmes, among others, enabling the people of Epsom to recycle waste including cheese packaging, biscuit and snack wrappers, dental care products and packaging and more. For a full list of what Ro can accept, visit https://www.facebook.com/greenwayterracycle/.

There are other similar drop off addresses and Epsom and Ewell including one at 72 **Hookfield, Epsom** and **Rymans in Epsom High Street**. Go to TerraCycle for details and search locations

About TerraCycle

TerraCycle is an international leader in innovative sustainability solutions, creating and operating first-of-their-kind platforms in recycling, recycled materials, and reuse. Across 21 countries, TerraCycle is on a mission to rethink waste and develop practical solutions for today's complex waste challenges. The company engages an expansive multi-stakeholder community across a wide range of accessible programs, from Fortune 500 companies to schools and individuals. An estimated 6.9 million people across the UK have helped us to divert more than 231 million items of packaging waste from landfill while earning over £2,000,000 for schools, charities and non-profit organisations. To learn more about TerraCycle and join them on their journey to move the world from a linear economy to a circular one, please visit www.terracycle.co.uk.

Queen fit hats raise £9K for brain charity

31 August 2022



An online auction of a collection of 15 hats created for the Platinum Jubilee by some of the UK's leading milliners has raised close to £9,000 for **Brain Tumour Research**. The collection of hats was inspired by the seven decades of The Queen's reign and entitled "Hats Fit For A Queen".

Pieces by Royal milliner **Rachel Trevor-Morgan** and milliner to the stars **Stephen Jones OBE** formed part of the collection, which was displayed in the **Queen Elizabeth II Stand** at **Epsom Downs Racecourse** on both days of **The Cazoo Derb**y (June 3 rd & 4 th), before subsequently being auctioned online.

The Cazoo Derby formed part of the official celebrations for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The project formed part of **Go Epsom's** wider Platinum Jubilee festivities across the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, which celebrate The Queen's lasting association with hats and their continued importance as a quintessential piece of raceday style.

The initiative was a new collaboration between Go Epsom, **The British Hat Guild**, Brain Tumour Research and Epsom Downs Racecourse and was promoted via the hashtag HatsFitForAQueen.



The project formed part of Go Epsom's wider Platinum Jubilee festivities across the **Borough of Epsom and Ewell**, which celebrate The Queen's lasting association with hats and their continued importance as a quintessential piece of raceday style.

The initiative was a new collaboration between Go Epsom, The British Hat Guild, Brain Tumour Research and Epsom Downs Racecourse.

Karen Pengelly, Bid Manager for Go Epsom said: "I am delighted that we have been able to help raise so much money for Brain Tumour Reaseach with 'Project Hat'. It was very satisfying to see some of these incredible hats being worn over The Derby weekend by some extremely well known celebrities. And to know that they have now gone on to be cherished by their new owners is wonderful. If Her Majesty the Queen had been able to attend the Derby I feel sure she would have been very touched to have seen the efforts that the UK's top milliners had gone to as a nod to her."

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Hugh Adams, Head of Stakeholder Relations at Brain Tumour Research, said: “We are extremely grateful to Go Epsom, Epsom Downs Racecourse and The British Hat Guild for staging this wonderful exhibition, creating such a valuable platform to raise awareness of brain tumours and for the money raised. The auction proceeds will fund the equivalent of three days’ research at a Brain Tumour Research Centre of Excellence where scientists are focused on improving treatments and, ultimately, finding a cure. To be a part of this wonderful initiative during the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations have made this very special for us.”
Edwina Ibbotson, on behalf of The British Hat Guild, said: “All the 15 members of the British Hat Guild who took part were honoured to participate in the Platinum Jubilee celebrations. We loved the idea of making hats from all decades of HRH The Queen’s reign from styles which would have been worn at The Derby in the 1950’s and right through to the modern day. The Guild have a close relationship with Brain Tumour Research, and we were thrilled that our members creations could be auctioned off to raise vital funds for them and their important work.”
Simon Durrant, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said: “The Hats Fit For A Queen display at The Cazoo Derby proved to be a great success and the whole **Jockey Club team** are delighted to see the collection raise close to £9,000 for Brain Tumour Research. It was a great honour for The Cazoo Derby to be part of the official celebrations for the Platinum Jubilee and we hope the money raised for Brain Tumour Research will ensure that there is a positive and impactful legacy for this initiative.”

UCA tips for clearing

31 August 2022



Epsom’s **University for the Creative Arts** (UCA) offers advice to degree seeking **‘A’ Level students**. “With over two million jobs in the Creative Industries across the UK, choosing a degree in a creative subject is no longer just about following your passion – it’s a sound career choice” says **Julian Henry, UCA’s Head of Student Recruitment**.

“If you’re looking at courses in Clearing, choosing a creative degree, can help you develop the skills that employers of the future are looking for – innovation, problem-solving and collaboration. You might also be surprised by the types of creative courses on offer, such digital art, games design or even business degrees focused on creative thinking.”

For students thinking beyond a traditional degree and looking for a course that will let their imagination run free, the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Epsom offers its top tips for Clearing.

1. **Don’t panic – just breathe!** Take the time to think about what you want from your course and what you want to get from your university experience.
2. **Focus on your strengths.** Think about what you’re passionate aboutand the skills you have that are often undervalued in traditional subjects, like imagination, curiosity and open-mindedness.
3. **Keep an open mind and think outside the box.** Want to pursue a creative career – then think creatively about what you study – you might be surprised by the range of creative courses on offer.
4. **It’s not all about grades**. It’s fine to change your mind about your what you want to study but do think about whether your qualifications and personal statement are still relevant. At UCA we consider more than just grades – we want to know about your creative potential.
5. **Check out your options**. Don’t wait until Clearing Day to start looking at universities and courses, ask questions online or sign-up to online events to find out more.
6. **Think about what you need.** Universities come in all shapes and sizes. At UCA we are focused on creating a personal, supportive and close-knitted communities.
7. **Contact someone and ask questions.** If you’re curious about a course, contact the university and ask questions. There’s no commitment and you might just learn something from the way they respond.

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“When you choose to study a creative degree, you’ll be stepping into more than a games design studio, film set or architecture workshop – you’ll be stepping into a lifetime of learning, creating, and opportunities.”



A recent graduate from UCA **Alex Rahneva** enthuses.

“UCA gave me the opportunity to become more independent through self-work and be able to adapt to different circumstances. I think the key skill I’ve learnt for my future is the resilience to create independent work.
And the advice I would give to students would be, believe in your work and trust your talent. It might be very daunting to put yourself out there but at the end of the day, making connections is all about showcasing your work, your skills, and your creative ability to innovate. Industry experts recognise and value this above all else!

I’ve had plenty of opportunities at UCA to meet and network with people from the creative industries, including amazing networking opportunities with industry experts at Graduate Fashion Week. As well as opportunities to meet and network with companies like Meta/Facebook and USP (Unique Style Platform), having won awards sponsored by them at UCA’s Business School for the Creative Industries Industry Awards 2022. Both experiences have been eye-opening and gave me experience and guidance on how to make my way into the fast-paced and global creative industry.”

Flagging Up Epsom Common

31 August 2022



28th July **David King** and **Cynthea Blunden** of the **Epsom Common Association** (ECA) represented **Epsom & Ewell** at the **Green Flag Award** ceremony in Lambeth Community Hall. This marked the sixteenth successive year that **Epsom Common** has received this award, which describes itself as “the international quality mark for parks and green spaces”. Much of the Common is designated as a **Site of Special Scientific Interest**. **Natural England** consider all of this land to be in “favourable” condition. Taken together, these points suggest that **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council**, which owns and manages the Common, is successfully balancing the various and sometimes conflicting demands of a recreational open space and a nationally important nature reserve. The new flag will be flying over **Stamford Green** just as soon as the flagpole that blew down last winter is replaced.

At 176 hectare, **Epsom Common** is the largest Local Nature Reserve in Surrey, with habitats including: rough grassland,

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woodland with veteran oak pollards, remnants of heath, and several ponds. Management is guided by the **Council's One Hundred Year Plan: 2016 to 2116**, which has been approved by **Natural England**. Clearly woodland containing trees aged five hundred years or more takes some time to reach maturity, but even grassland, consisting of short lived plants, takes many years to fully develop its potential range of plants and animals. So planning for the long term is essential.

The **ECA** was founded by local residents in 1974 to fight a proposed road across the Common. In 1979, in partnership with the Council, the ECA completed the restoration of **Great Pond dam**, recreating the mediaeval pond that had been drained in the Victorian era. Nowadays the ECA has a membership of around five hundred households, and works closely with the Council's **Countryside Team** and the **Lower Mole Partnership** to protect and improve the Common. After two years with activity limited by the pandemic, the usual programme of events has resumed.

As well as their conservation work, by the end of this year ECA will have: distributed three newsletters; held two public meetings with guest speakers; and arranged several expert led guided walks, looking at birds, butterflies, etc. Every few years they also hold an "**Epsom Common Day**" on Stamford Green, most recently in 2019.



The Summer sun into the clouded sky over the Great Pond brings out the yellow

On Tuesday evenings in summer (until the end of August) the volunteers hand-pull bracken for a couple of hours, to prevent selected areas of heath or grassland being smothered. Their labours are relieved by a break for homemade sparkling elderflower drink and chocolate brownies. During the autumn ECA will hold the three remaining conservation tasks of the year's programme of eight. Each task runs for two days, usually the third Sunday of the month and the following Monday. The task programme is guided by the One Hundred Year Plan and agreed with the Council's Countryside Team. The work typically involves removing scrub and small trees to maintain and improve areas of grass and heath; they have also planted a hazel coppice.



Epsom Common under plough

Why is all this management work desirable? Old photographs show that before the **Second World War** much of the Common was open, with small areas of woodland and some old trees, many of which are still alive. Much of the open land was ploughed for agriculture during and immediately after the war. This ceased around 1955, and most of the Common was then essentially left alone. By the 1980s the previously ploughed area had become an almost impenetrable mass of young trees. This uniformity of age, along with the absence of the animals such as: aurochs (the extinct large wild ancestor of domestic cattle), wild boar, beaver, etc., that once shaped woodland and kept it more open, resulted in a habitat that was neither particularly natural nor rich in variety of plants or animals. On the Common, grassland and lowland heath were probably manmade habitats, arising from a combination of tree felling and grazing, but they support species not found in woodland. By careful management a mixture of grassland, heath, ponds and varied woodland, can be created and maintained, leading to a much greater range of plants and animals.

During the summer, three areas of the Common are grazed by cattle, this year a total of fourteen animals. The cattle graze the grass and heathland in a way that cannot be replicated by mowing. In recent years the **Great Pasture** has been extended to include an area of woodland, a habitat in which the cattle's ancestors would have been at home. Today's **Belted Galloways** and **Dexters** also appear happy to forage amongst the trees, particularly during hot weather. For their health the cattle must be checked every day, as are the fence lines and water troughs. Each week the ECA provides four of the daily checks; without their contribution it is unlikely that grazing could be continued.

Finally, ECA make excellent hardwood charcoal from logs harvested during conservation work. Last year, thanks to a

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grant from the **Council's Community Infrastructure Levy**, they were able to take delivery of a modern charcoal retort. Compared with the conventional ring kilns used previously, the retort greatly reduces the smoke and increases the yield. The charcoal sales help finance ECA's activities. Volunteers are not paid, but of course they do have to pay for tools, fuel, insurance, etc.

If you would like to find out more about ECA's efforts to keep the Common special, please visit their website: epsomcommon.org.uk or our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/EpsomCommonAssociation

They welcome new members, whether you wish to take part in conservation tasks or simply support their efforts through your membership.

See also press release from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council issued 12th August

Council Pride in Not Uncommon Green Flag

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