

# Epsom Foodbank warns of summer holiday pressure as donations fall

30 June 2026



Families facing the school summer break are increasingly worried about affording extra meals and snacks for children, according to Good Company Surrey, which says donations to its foodbank operation are down by 20 per cent compared with the same period last year.

In its latest newsletter, the charity said that while many people look forward to the holidays, the approaching break can bring anxiety for families already struggling financially.

Dafne, Good Company's Operations Manager, said the concern was not simply about the cost of food during the weeks away from school, but also the additional expense of preparing for a new school year.

She wrote: "For many of the families and individuals we support, however, the approaching summer holidays are not associated with a well-earned break or time away. Instead, they bring anxiety about providing extra meals and snacks during the long school holiday, guilt over what they cannot afford to give their children, and worry about the additional costs that come with preparing for a new school year."

The charity, which incorporates Epsom and Ewell Foodbank, said foodbanks and partner organisations can only meet demand where essential supplies are available. It appealed for donations, saying that even small contributions could help ensure local people did not go without during the summer.

The newsletter also highlighted wider support offered through Good Company's network. Epsom Pantry held its first peer-support meeting for parents of neurodiverse children on 10 June. Three members attended the initial session, which was intended to reduce isolation and allow parents to share information about services and activities. Another meeting is planned.

Good Company's three Advice Cafés — at St Barnabas in Epsom, Merland Rise in Tadworth and Leatherhead Community Hub — recently met to develop their work. The service says it has supported nearly 2,200 clients in the past two years, with benefits and grants, debt, and the cost of living among the main reasons people seek help.

The newsletter also carried a personal account from Sharon, a member of the Banstead Pantry Steering Committee, who described the pantry as a place where people could obtain affordable food but also find advice, companionship and a non-judgemental environment.

She said: "Banstead Pantry is a community that works within the local community, it is a real life line, it is a place where you can be yourself regardless of background and situation."

Good Company is also encouraging residents to support its work through fundraising challenges. Jonathan Lees, the charity's founder and Managing Director, is due to cycle 100km in Ride Reigate on 12 July, while Run Reigate follows on 20 September, offering 5km, 10km and half-marathon routes.

The charity's newsletter says donations, volunteering and community fundraising all remain important as it prepares for increased pressure over the school holidays.

Lionel Blackman

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# Former Epsom job centre worker hopes to question next PM in Parliament

30 June 2026



A local marketing entrepreneur seeking Conservative parliamentary selection once went on television's *Blind Date* with the woman who later became Andy Burnham's wife — and was working at Epsom Jobcentre by the time the programme was screened.

The story was reported by *The Sunday Times* on 28 June 2026 in an article by chief news correspondent Rosamund Urwin.

Will Harris was chosen by Marie-France "Frankie" van Heel on Cilla Black's ITV dating show in 1992. Van Heel was then studying at Cambridge University and was already in the early stages of a relationship with Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester and former Labour Cabinet minister.

According to *The Sunday Times*, Burnham gave his blessing for van Heel to appear on the programme. She selected "Will from Surrey" from three unseen contestants.

Harris, then 21, was studying English at Nottingham University. He told the newspaper that he had spotted posters seeking *Blind Date* contestants and decided to audition on impulse.

"I had never watched *Blind Date* — I'm not a big TV guy — but I just thought it would be fun to go on a date and a holiday," he recalled.

By the time his appearance was broadcast, however, Harris had apparently taken a job at a Jobcentre in Epsom. The article reports that he referred to himself as "signing John Major's unemployment dole".

The pair were sent to Gibraltar for their television date and spent about three days there, including visiting the Barbary macaques, dining together and filming sequences for a later programme.

Harris said there was no romantic spark. He described van Heel as "clever and cool" and said they got on well, but compared the atmosphere to being with a sister rather than on a conventional date.

The programme-makers later asked them to return for a follow-up, apparently believing the original encounter had not produced enough drama. Harris said that he found the idea uncomfortable, particularly when production staff urged him to say that van Heel was cold and lacking fashion sense.

He declined a further appearance. Harris said Cilla Black later told him: "Sorry, Will, it's just good TV."

Van Heel married Burnham in 2000 and the couple have three children.

Harris's later career, as described in *The Sunday Times*, was separate from van Heel's. He became marketing director of the Conservative Party in 2003 and later met van Heel and Burnham again in a House of Commons bar after both had been sent on the same training course.

The report says Harris now runs Bridge F61, an AI-powered business intended to help private-equity firms assess the marketing strategies of companies they may wish to acquire. He is also seeking selection as a Conservative parliamentary candidate.

Sam Jones - Reporter



## Epsom's LibDem MP gags her Party's new councillors in their moment of triumph

30 June 2026



Bourne Hall, Ewell, Friday 8th May - the Count of the five local divisions in the East Surrey Unitary Council elections.

As reported elsewhere, local Liberal Democrats took eight out of ten seats in the Epsom and Ewell Area on Thursday's local elections.

Our reporter, in the room reserved for media interviews at the Count, was talking to soon to be elected Liberal Democrat candidate Roy Deadman. Entered the room Helen Maguire's communication (*sic*) officer who stated her party's candidates were not to talk to the press! The press were only to talk to her boss.

What hare-brained politics studies undergraduate idea this was of a communications strategy is any body's idea. Neither "liberal" nor "democratic". Ms Maguire, you can do better than this.

Somewhat handicapped by this injunction your reporter had more time to gauge feelings and responses from the other parties.

Clearly a very poor showing from Labour who had a proud record of consistent representation in Court Ward and a succession of highly respected Labour Mayors.

Reform posted substantial votes in most of the five divisions but failed to get even a second place.

The Conservatives appear to be saying goodbye to Epsom and Ewell as a safe Conservative parliamentary seat, that it had been for ever, up to Helen Maguire's Liberal Democrat victory in July 2024.

The Greens polled admirably but failed to make the breakthrough that they were hoping for.

The Residents Associations' faces were saved by the personal appeal and integrity of Eber Kington and Peter O'Donovan who won their seats by substantial margins. Elsewhere, the RA leaders Hannah Dalton and Neil Dallen fell woefully behind both Liberal Democrats and Reform by hundreds of votes.

It would seem that the direction, motivation and relevance of the long-ruling Residents Association has been lost and a new era has dawned.

The full EAST SURREY election results will be published HERE in due course.

On a lighter note. Council issued coloured rubber thimbles sparked controversy. Handed out to the dedicated and hard-working counters, they were brightly coloured green, red and yellow. Were they for counting particular party votes? No, just a co-incidence but that did not stop one Reform candidate asking why there were no purple ones.

Lionel Blackman

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## Surrey Open Studios Returns - Discover Artists Near Epsom

30 June 2026



Art lovers in Epsom and Ewell are being invited to step inside artists' working spaces this summer as the annual Surrey Artists Open Studios returns from 6th to 21st June 2026. The county-wide event sees hundreds of artists open their doors to the public, offering a chance to meet creators, view works in progress and buy original art directly.

Studios are organised into geographic areas across Surrey, with those closest to Epsom and Ewell forming part of the East Surrey grouping, alongside nearby towns such as Reigate and Redhill. Visitors are encouraged to plan their visits in advance, with many artists opening on selected days throughout the two-week period.

Among the participating studios within easy reach of Epsom is AJ Studio Gallery, where visitors can view a large collection of oil paintings. Also in Epsom, Terry O'Brien and Jacky Cowdrey Studio will be welcoming guests to explore their work in an informal studio setting.

A little further afield in Redhill, Heart and Home Studios brings together a range of disciplines including sculpture, handmade books and jewellery, while other studios across East Surrey showcase everything from ceramics and textiles to contemporary painting and mixed media.

The appeal of the Open Studios format lies in its accessibility. Visitors can explore a wide variety of creative spaces—from garden workshops to established studios—and speak directly with artists about their techniques and inspiration. Many venues also offer smaller works, prints and cards, making the event an opportunity to purchase unique pieces at a range of prices.

Full details of all participating artists, including opening days, times and exact locations, are set out in the official Surrey Artists Open Studios programme, available here:

<https://surreyopenstudios.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/SAOS-2025-Programme-PAG.pdf>

With dozens of studios within a short drive of Epsom and Ewell, the event offers a simple way to explore Surrey's vibrant arts scene and support local artists this June.

Lionel Blackman

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## Epsom Family Highlights “Hidden” Loneliness Among Young Adults with Mild Autism

30 June 2026



Friendship is one of life's quiet essentials. It brings variety, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Yet for a growing number of people, that connection is missing. National estimates suggest around 7% of UK adults experience chronic loneliness — a figure that runs into the millions.

For people on the autistic spectrum, the risk can be even greater.

An Epsom couple have contacted the *Epsom and Ewell Times* to share their son Jon's experience, in the hope it may resonate with others and spark a local solution. Jon, now a young adult, once enjoyed the structure and social circle of a youth group. But as his peers moved on to university, careers, and later relationships and family life, those connections gradually fell away.

What followed has been a pattern familiar to many families in similar situations. While services exist, they often do not meet the needs of those with higher functioning autism. Groups run by organisations such as the National Autistic Society tend to focus on those with more complex needs, while mainstream clubs and societies can feel overwhelming and inaccessible.

The result is a gap — one where individuals like Jon, who wish to participate in everyday social life, find themselves increasingly isolated.

There are long periods where Jon may not meet peers socially at all, spending most of his time at home with family. Yet the contrast when he does connect is striking. A simple outing — a trip to the pantomime, or even the anticipation of a game of adventure golf — can transform his mood for weeks or months, replacing low mood with excitement and purpose.

“It doesn't take much,” his family explain. “Just a small amount of time from someone willing to meet up makes an enormous difference — not only to Jon, but to all of us.”

From this experience has come a simple idea: a local “befriender scheme” in the Epsom area.

The concept is straightforward. Volunteers — individuals or couples — perhaps of a similar age bracket - would offer a couple of hours occasionally to meet a young adult like Jon in a safe, public setting. That might mean a coffee, a meal, a cinema trip, or a game of bowling. Expenses would be covered, but the real value lies in building confidence, companionship, and mutual enjoyment.

The family stress that such a scheme would need to be properly organised, with appropriate safeguards in place. But they believe the community already has what matters most — people willing to show a little kindness.

They are now asking a simple question: is there enough interest locally to make it happen?

Anyone who feels they could offer time as a befriender, or who knows someone who might benefit, is invited to get in touch. If there is sufficient response, the idea could develop into a structured community initiative.

Contact: [epsombefrienders@gmail.com](mailto:epsombefrienders@gmail.com) and they will get back to you.

Lionel Blackman

# Karl Nicholas honoured with Active Citizen Award at Borough Civic Reception

30 June 2026



A long-serving community volunteer whose work spans youth organisations, music, policing and education has been honoured with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Active Citizen Award at the Mayor's Annual Civic Reception.

The award was presented to **Karl Nicholas** by the Mayor, Cllr Robert Leach, during the civic gathering held on the evening of 13 March at Bourne Hall in Ewell. The reception, hosted by the Mayor and Mayoress Marilyn Leach, brought together councillors, aldermen, freemen of the borough, past mayors and other invited residents who have contributed to civic life in Epsom & Ewell.

Among those attending was Mary Zoeller, Deputy-Lieutenant of Surrey, along with a wide range of community figures representing voluntary organisations, education, faith groups and public service across the borough.

The Active Citizen citation described Nicholas as someone with a "distinguished record of public service", highlighting decades of involvement across multiple areas of community life.

He has been involved with Second Cuddington Scouts for more than two decades, including 18 years serving as assistant commissioner for the area. The scout group provides activities for boys and girls aged six to eighteen and offers training opportunities for young people, including camps and leadership development.

Music has been another major thread in Nicholas's community service. He serves as bandmaster and assistant musical director of the Kingston and Malden Scout and Guide Band, a role he has held for 25 years. The band has performed at prestigious occasions including Buckingham Palace garden parties and the Lord Mayor's Show.

His musical contribution also extends to church life. Nicholas learned to play the organ at Cuddington Church and has been involved in church music there for more than 30 years, first as a choirboy and later as organist and choir director. The citation notes that he has frequently stepped in to support services when needed, including standing in at short notice to play for the Mayor's civic service when the regular organist was taken ill.

Alongside his voluntary work, Nicholas has also served as a special constable for 14 years, and in his professional life works as a teacher. He currently serves as Head of Inclusion and Special Needs at Southborough High School, having previously been deputy head at a school in Cheam.

The citation concluded that across these roles Nicholas has shown "commitment and competence" and that his personal manner and skill make him "a worthy recipient of the Active Citizen Award".

The civic reception itself provided a relaxed and celebratory atmosphere in Bourne Hall. The evening featured musical performances from Ukrainian musician Vladislav Voloshin, who entertained guests with a programme including pieces by ABBA and Bach, performed on saxophone and clarinet. The Mayor himself accompanied the performance on the piano.

Guests mingled over refreshments in the hall while reflecting the borough's long civic traditions. The gathering brought together representatives from across the political spectrum and many strands of local life, demonstrating the borough's continuing culture of voluntary service and public engagement.

Proceedings were guided with humour and warmth by Cllr Julian Freeman, the Liberal Democrat councillor who acted as master of ceremonies for the evening.

While politics often divides in the council chamber, the reception provided a reminder that the borough's civic culture rests on a broader shared commitment to public service and community life.

That spirit was embodied in the recognition of Karl Nicholas — a volunteer whose decades of work in youth development, music, education and policing have quietly strengthened the fabric of local life in Epsom & Ewell.

Lionel Blackman

Image: Karl Nicholas holding his award medal against the background of St Mary's Church (Des Blenkinsopp - CC BY-SA 2.0)

Related reports:

[From Ukraine to Epsom: How Music and Kindness Struck the Right Note](#)

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# Epsom Christmas carols of two colleges and a council

30 June 2026



In the first and a unique festive venture for the Borough of Epsom Ewell a special carol service was held in the Chapel of St Luke, Epsom College this evening. Organised on the joint initiatives of Julie Kapsalis (CEO NESCOL), Jackie King (CEO Epsom and Ewell Borough Council) and Mark Lascelles (Head of Epsom College).

The event brought local choirs together including NESCOL's own choir, singers from Epsom College and the local Ukrainian choir Renaissance.

Solos were sung by Evie Kingsley, Sienna-Leigh Campbell, Benedict Raper and Caleb Mangatal-Francis.

Julie Kapsalis read from the Gospel of St Matthew 2: 1-12 and Jackie King recited her own reading "The Heart of Christmas", reprinted below.

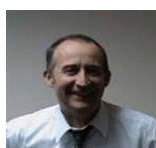
The service was officiated with humour and aplomb by The Reverend Canon Andrew Haviland.

Epsom Racecourse supported the service.

And no less a figure than the Worshipful Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Cllr Robert Leach (RA Nonsuch) accompanied the congregation on the magnificent Chapel organ and played the processional at the end J.S. Bach's Prelude and Fugue in F from his book of 8 preludes and fugues.

The carol service was an uplifting beginning for many to the festive season and promises have been made to make it a regular feature in the Borough in future years.

Lionel Blackman



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## The Heart of Christmas

There are so many ways to tell the story of Christmas.  
Some begin with angels, some with gifts, some with the hush of falling snow.  
But however the story starts, it always finds its way to one place-  
the warmth we share when we come together.

Christmas is found in the quiet moments:  
in the smell of something baking,  
the sound of wrapping paper being carefully - or not so carefully - torn,  
in the giggles of children who can't quite sleep,  
and in the gentle nod of someone who's seen many Christmases before.

It's in the messages sent to far-off friends,  
the unexpected kindness from a neighbour,  
the extra chair pulled up to the table,  
and the thought that maybe - just maybe -  
there is more that connects us than divides us.

And in this season of gathering and giving,  
we also pause for a moment to hold in our hearts  
those who are not with us tonight-  
loved ones we remember with tenderness,  
and friends or family who are far away.

We think of Christmases past -  
of laughter spilling across the table,  
carols sung a little off-key,

hands held during snowy walks,  
stories told beside the glow of the tree.  
Those moments, though now memories,  
are treasures we carry with us –  
poignant reminders of love shared,  
and joyful times that shaped who we are.  
Their voices may have quietened,  
but their light has not dimmed.  
It lives in our hearts,  
woven into every song, every smile, every candle we light.

Distance and time may keep us apart,  
and for some, separation comes through hardship or conflict.  
Tonight, we think of them too –  
those far from home,  
those seeking safety,  
those waiting for peace.  
May they feel the warmth of the world's compassion  
and know that they are not forgotten.

For love is wonderfully stubborn;  
it travels in our thoughts, in our stories,  
and in the quiet spaces where we still feel their presence.  
Each memory, each name whispered with a smile,  
becomes part of the light that surrounds us now.

For some, Christmas means faith.  
For others, it means family, friendship, or the turning of the year.  
But for all of us, it can mean light-  
the light we share when we care,  
when we welcome,  
when we choose to hope.

So tonight, as the music rises and the candles glow,  
may we remember what truly makes this season shine:  
not the decorations or the presents,  
but the people-  
those beside us,  
those we miss,  
and those we have yet to meet.

Because the heart of Christmas is not found under a tree –  
it's found in us,  
in every act of kindness,  
every hand extended,  
every loving thought that crosses the miles or the years.

For when we give, include, and love-  
we keep the heart of Christmas alive.

Jackie King



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## 23rd October 2025

30 June 2026  
Council News

## Surrey County Council under pressure over safeguarding review

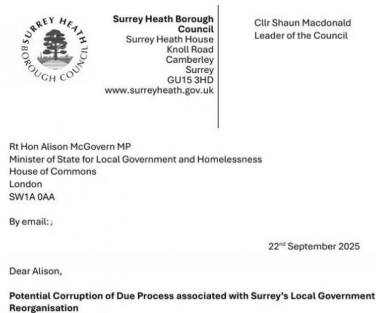


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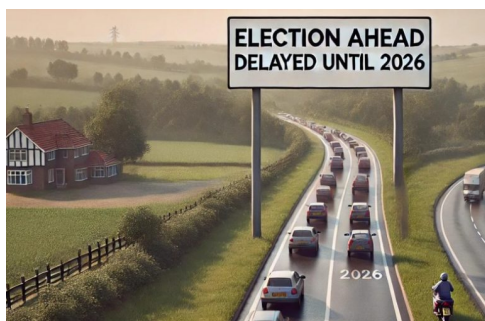


20 October 2025

Claims of potential corruptions of due process have been levelled at key figures linked to Surrey County Council's local government reorganisation (LGR) plans. The charges were put in a letter ... [Read More](#)

Council Elections

## Surrey elections: Democracy delayed, democracy denied?



20 October 2025

Surrey's politicians have clashed over rumours that Conservative council leaders have tried to stop local elections taking place next year. An article in The Times this week, by Max Kendix, ... [Read More](#)

Council Planning Westminster

## Surrey home extension charges aired in Parliament



20 October 2025

"Complex and inflexible" rules that unintentionally and "unfairly penalise" homeowners with six-figure fines "for the apparent crime of building a home extension" will be reexamined, the housing minister has said. ... [Read More](#)

Rugby Sports

## Epsom's Rugby Team Make Light Of Missing Men To Go Top



20 October 2025

Gravesend 12 Sutton and Epsom RFC 29. Saturday 18th October. Sutton and Epsom arrived at the Rectory Field seeking a return to winning ways following their first loss of the ... [Read More](#)

Council Elections

## LibDems continue to rise in Surrey



19 October 2025

The blue wall has crumbled a bit further with the Liberal Democrats having completed a clean sweep in Surrey, winning all six by-elections in a county once seen as the ... [Read More](#)

Editorial

## Local government reform or just more layers?



17 October 2025

EDITORIAL When Whitehall speaks of “streamlining” local government, most people imagine fewer tiers of decision-making, simpler accountability, and a shorter distance between citizen and power. Yet, as the picture for ... [Read More](#)

Council Council constitution

## Where do we stand on local government reorganisation in Epsom and Ewell and the County?



17 October 2025

The future shape of local government in Surrey is moving into its final stage, with national and local plans converging on the abolition of all borough, district and county councils ... [Read More](#)

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Environment News

## Epsom Downs leftovers



15 October 2025

Heaps of leftover racing dirt and old equipment have been abandoned on Epsom Downs, prompting criticism of the “weed-infested eyesores”. Epsom Civic Society has raised the alarm over soil heaps ... [Read More](#)

Council Environment

## Ewell High Street gets a cleaner bill of health



15 October 2025

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Environment Committee has agreed to revoke the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for Ewell High Street, marking a major milestone in local environmental improvement. The ... [Read More](#)

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# Local government reform or just more layers?

30 June 2026



EDITORIAL

When Whitehall speaks of “streamlining” local government, most people imagine fewer tiers of decision-making, simpler accountability, and a shorter distance between citizen and power. Yet, as the picture for Surrey emerges, the so-called “reorganisation” seems to be producing the opposite effect.

Instead of the two existing levels – borough and county – the new design threatens to spawn three or even four. We are told that the twelve boroughs and districts, together with Surrey County Council, will be swept away and replaced by one or more “unitary” councils. But at the same time, ministers promise a directly elected county-wide Mayor and a new Strategic Authority above the unitaries. Meanwhile, below them, parish and neighbourhood councils are to be invented to replace the voice that boroughs once provided. It all begins to look suspiciously like multiplication rather than simplification.

The slogans speak of bringing local government closer to the people. Yet residents may soon find themselves further away from anyone who can actually make a decision. The proposed Mayoral Authority will sit at a distance, occupied with big-ticket issues such as transport, growth and infrastructure. The new unitaries will cover territories so large that many of Surrey’s smaller communities will struggle to be noticed. Below them, the new parish or “community” councils will have limited powers, modest budgets, and uncertain influence.

Epsom and Ewell’s own decision to consult on forming parish councils is both understandable and ironic. For ninety years the borough has prided itself on a direct, residents-led form of local democracy. Now, in the name of devolution, that independence is being dismantled. The new parish layer would exist solely to replace what is being abolished. It may well be the right precaution, but it is a strange kind of progress.

Surrey County Council’s pilot “Neighbourhood Area Committees” add a further tier of consultation. These panels may be

useful experiments in local engagement, but they are not elected and carry no statutory power. However well-intentioned, they underline the growing sense that accountability is being replaced by advisory talk-shops.

If the reform was meant to cut complexity, it has already failed that test. Residents will have to learn a new vocabulary of “unitaries”, “mayoral authorities”, “combined areas” and “neighbourhood committees” - each with its own meetings, officers, and costs. The idea of saving money and clarifying responsibility fades the more layers are drawn on the map.

There is still time for ministers to stop and listen. Surrey is not ungovernable; it is merely suffering from the same pressures faced by councils everywhere - tight budgets and rising demand. Reorganisation may change the furniture, but it will not conjure new funds or restore trust.

Before dismantling the one part of local democracy that still feels local, government should ask a simple question: is this truly reform, or is it bureaucracy reborn?

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## Epsom Hospital’s support for bereaved mum of baby

30 June 2026



A Tadworth mother whose baby died tragically from a rare infection aged only eight days has praised the nurses and midwives who supported her family during “the darkest time in our lives”.

Jodie Picknett gave birth to baby George at Epsom Hospital in April 2023. Shortly afterwards, he returned to hospital to be treated for jaundice but became suddenly very unwell and lethargic. At just seven days old, he was admitted to the Special Care Baby Unit.

That night George deteriorated, and despite the determined efforts of the neonatal nurses, he sadly passed away. A post-mortem later revealed that he had contracted a severe enterovirus — a condition usually mild for most people but which can prove deadly for newborns.

For Jodie and her family, the care and guidance of Specialist Bereavement Midwife Lydia Baker and the Maternity Bereavement Team at Epsom Hospital were a vital source of strength. The team liaised with the coroner and post-mortem services and connected the family with funeral directors experienced in compassionate bereavement care.

Jodie, 37, said: “Lydia supported us through every step - from looking after George and making practical arrangements to simply being there when we needed her. Her compassion and understanding made the hardest moments that little bit more bearable.”

Thanks to funding from Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity, Lydia and her team can provide detailed 3D ‘memory castings’ for bereaved families. The casts capture each tiny feature of a baby’s hands and feet, offering parents a lasting, tangible connection. Previously, families received only basic prints, but the charity’s support now enables the team to create intricate castings from the twenty-sixth week of pregnancy onwards.

Lydia said: “When a baby dies, families don’t have a lifetime of memories, so creating something tangible in that moment is vital.”

Jodie is now fundraising for the hospital charity so this work can continue. She is inviting people to donate ribbons that will form a memorial display at their local church, with proceeds supporting more bereaved families.

“After George died, the bereavement team helped guide us through the darkest time in our lives with empathy and respect,” Jodie said. “By fundraising, we hope to help Lydia and her team continue their vital work, ensuring more families receive the same compassionate, specialist care. Our ribbon display is a small gesture, but it offers a space for others to remember their babies too. It’s a way to say: your baby mattered, and they are not forgotten.”

For Jodie and her husband Ben, 41, Epsom Hospital holds special meaning. Their daughter Alice was born there in August 2021 and their third child, Lucy, in May 2025.

Jodie added: “We think about our son every day - he is part of everything we do. We will never get to see George take his first steps, say his first words, or start school. That loss is felt every day. So being able to say his name and honour his memory publicly is incredibly important to us.”

Molly Simpson, Head of Charity and Fundraising at Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity, said: “Losing a baby is

devastating for any family and we are very proud to support the teams who help them through their grief. We're grateful to Jodie and her husband Ben for sharing such a personal story and know it will inspire others to give what they can - your generosity will mean our exceptional teams can continue to support bereaved parents when they need it most."

Jodie is sharing her story during Baby Loss Awareness Week, which offers a space for anyone affected by pregnancy and baby loss to share their experiences.

Donations can be made via Jodie and Ben's JustGiving page.

St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group

Photo: George with mum Jodie and sister Alice

## 16th October 2025

30 June 2026

Rugby Sports

### Sidcup Burst The Sutton & Epsom Bubble



13 October 2025

Sidcup 22 Sutton & Epsom RFC 12. Saturday 11th October. Sutton & Epsom first visited Crescent Farm in 1914 for a 25-0 win and it is a delight that, despite ... [Read More](#)

Community Volunteers Westminster

### Epsom MP leads cross-party delegation to Ukraine to examine impact of explosive weapons



12 October 2025

A cross-party delegation of UK Parliamentarians has travelled to Ukraine to assess the humanitarian and environmental impact of explosive weapons and to strengthen cooperation between the two countries on mine ... [Read More](#)



Community Foodbank Volunteers

### Handmade in Epsom and Ewell: local makers unite to support Epsom Foodbank

10 October 2025

Handmade in Epsom and Ewell (HiEE) will hold its first community event, The Festive Makers Fair, on Saturday 29th November 2025 from 10am to 3pm in the Youth Hall at ... [Read More](#)

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## Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Annual Report

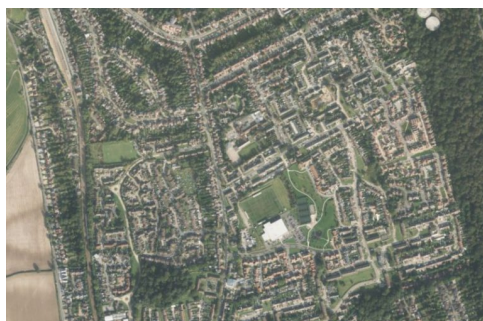


10 October 2025

EEBC publishes an Annual Report amid some questions over priorities and spending. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has released its 2024/25 Annual Report, showcasing a range of achievements over the ... [Read More](#)

Community Education Health

## Surrey inequality report challenges 'leafy county' myth



10 October 2025

The idea that Surrey is all leafy lanes, golf courses and big houses is a myth, according to a new report. Despite being a prosperous area of the country, the ... [Read More](#)

Education Health News

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10 October 2025

A groundbreaking project testing how drones could be integrated into the UK's 999 emergency response system to deliver defibrillators to out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patients has been launched by the University ... [Read More](#)

Business Education

## Epsom and Ewell College Principal wins Silver at National Business Women's Awards



10 October 2025

Julie Kapsalis recognised for bridging the gap between boardroom and classroom. Nescot's Principal and CEO, Julie Kapsalis, won silver in the 'Community Champion' category at the National Business Women's Awards ... [Read More](#)

Arts Community Environment

## Ewell East underpass transformed by new community mural



10 October 2025

A once grim and intimidating underpass in Ewell East has been given a striking new look thanks to a community mural designed to tackle anti-social behaviour and instil pride in ... [Read More](#)

Council Environment

## **Inquest into Banstead tree fall death of 12 year old**



10 October 2025

A full inquest into the death of 12-year-old Brooke Wiggins, who was crushed to death by a falling tree branch on the Surrey and South London border last year, is ... [Read More](#)

Community Health

## **Reducing food waste nationally and in Epsom and Ewell**



10 October 2025

A growing number of major UK supermarket chains are removing 'best before' dates from many fresh fruit and vegetable products in an effort to reduce food waste. Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's, ... [Read More](#)

Council Environment

## **Three new schemes to help Surrey residents save energy and cut costs**



10 October 2025

Surrey County Council is launching three new schemes to help residents make their homes warmer, greener, and more affordable to run. With over 300,000 homes in Surrey energy rated D ... [Read More](#)

Business Community

## **“Outstanding” rating for Worcester Park based carers**



10 October 2025

Trinity Homecare Group is delighted to announce that its Worcester Park-based visiting care service has been awarded an 'Outstanding' rating by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) following a recent inspection. ... [Read More](#)

Business Education News

## Surrey Uni to open in India after UK PM's visit



10 October 2025

Surrey joins new UK Universities in India Alliance while on UK trade mission to India The UK's universities can be a "skills and research accelerator" for the potential of the ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

## Historic Surrey Hills mansion saved from falling into "rack and ruin"

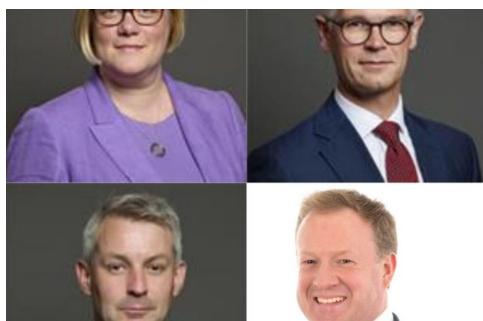


10 October 2025

An additional 27 homes will be built at an abandoned Surrey Hills mansion and stables to stop the heritage buildings falling into "rack and ruin". In February 2023, Mole Valley ... [Read More](#)

News Westminster

## Not MPs' expenses again!?



8 October 2025

Some Surrey MPs have racked up thousands of pounds in hotel stays or London rent, despite their constituencies being within commuting distance of Westminster. The rules allow MPs who live ... [Read More](#)

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## Ewell High Street gets a cleaner bill of health

30 June 2026



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Environment Committee has agreed to revoke the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) for Ewell High Street, marking a major milestone in local environmental improvement.

The decision, made at the committee's meeting on 14 October 2025, follows nearly two decades of monitoring and action to reduce nitrogen dioxide levels that once exceeded national safety limits. The designation, first imposed in 2007, will now be formally lifted after a sustained and verified improvement in air quality, confirmed by data approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Councillor **Liz Frost**, (RA Woodcote and Langley) Chair of the Environment Committee, described the development as "fantastic news" and said the result reflected years of cooperation between the borough council, Surrey County Council as the highways authority, and national agencies. She added that the improvement "is a testament to the work of both Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and our partners in the area, as well as interventions that have taken place both regionally and nationally to tackle nitrogen dioxide emissions."

The Ewell High Street AQMA had been declared when air quality readings showed nitrogen dioxide levels breaching the annual mean limit of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. The pollutant, primarily generated by vehicle exhausts, is known to aggravate respiratory conditions and contribute to ground-level ozone formation.

Over the years, the council and the highways authority introduced several targeted measures to tackle traffic congestion and emissions. These included disapplying certain parking bays during rush hours, widening the road outside 76 to 62 High Street, and re-engineering the busy junction with Cheam Road (B2200). Together with broader improvements in vehicle efficiency, cleaner fuels, and regional policies, these steps brought pollution levels below the national threshold.

#### A cleaner trend across UK high streets

The revocation in Ewell reflects a wider national trend. Across the UK, councils have been removing long-standing AQMAs after years of falling nitrogen dioxide concentrations. DEFRA's latest data show that the number of AQMAs in England has dropped by more than a third since 2019, largely due to the tightening of vehicle emissions standards, expansion of low emission and clean air zones in cities such as London, Birmingham, and Bristol, and increased adoption of electric vehicles.

Nitrogen dioxide levels nationally have declined by around 45% since 2010, although urban areas with dense traffic still exceed targets. According to Public Health England, poor air quality contributes to between 28,000 and 36,000 premature deaths each year.

Local authorities continue to play a key role through the Local Air Quality Management framework introduced by the Environment Act 1995. Where air quality standards are achieved and are expected to be maintained, Section 83(2)(b) of the Act requires AQMAs to be revoked, as in the case of Ewell.

#### Looking ahead

The committee noted that the borough's 2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report has been approved by DEFRA and published on the council's website. Monitoring of nitrogen dioxide and particulate levels will continue across Epsom and Ewell, in line with national guidance.

The revocation also contributes to the council's Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2029, specifically its goal to improve local air quality and maintain a "green and vibrant" borough.

While Ewell's achievement highlights positive progress, environmental experts caution that rising traffic volumes and population growth could reverse gains unless clean transport initiatives continue. Measures such as promoting active travel, installing more electric vehicle charging points, and supporting public transport remain central to long-term sustainability.

Sam Jones - Reporter

