

Surrey services get fire e-bike removed from Amazon



A dangerous e-bike battery that caused a house fire in Surrey has been successfully removed from sale on Amazon, thanks to the proactive efforts of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards.

The fire, which occurred recently in a Surrey home, was caused by an unsafe Unit Pack Power battery pack from a converted e-bike while it was being charged. This incident highlights the risks posed by substandard and unsafe lithium-ion batteries.

Following the fire investigation, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Fire Investigation team worked closely with Surrey Trading Standards to assess the safety of the battery pack. Their findings led to Amazon removing the product from sale, helping to prevent further incidents and protect consumers.

Matt Perry, Fire Investigation Officer at Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, said: "This fire serves as a stark reminder of the dangers associated with unsafe e-bike batteries.

"We are committed to keeping Surrey residents safe, and I am pleased that our partnership with Trading Standards has resulted in the removal of this hazardous product from the market. We strongly urge the public to be vigilant when purchasing batteries and always choose reputable retailers and manufacturers."

Surrey Trading Standards has also warned consumers about the risks of purchasing unregulated or non-compliant lithium-ion batteries online.

Amanda Poole, Assistant Director for Trading Standards at Surrey County Council, added: "Unsafe lithium-ion batteries pose a serious fire risk, and we are pleased to have taken swift action alongside Surrey Fire and Rescue Service to have this product removed from sale.

"Consumers should always check that batteries and chargers meet UK safety standards and be cautious of cheap or unbranded products sold online."

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service continues to raise awareness through its #BatteryWise campaign, which provides essential guidance on the safe use, storage, and disposal of lithium-ion batteries.

For more information on battery safety, visit Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's website and social media channels. If you have concerns about a potentially unsafe product, you can report it to Trading Standards via Citizens Advice.

Image: Credit AVD Fire - CC BY-NC 4.0 [illustration and not the case in question].

Surrey's Cutting-Edge Respite for Families of complex-needs Adults



A new £5.7million short breaks service providing much-needed respite for families caring for adults with additional needs is to be opened by Surrey County Council.

Emily Lodge, located in Woking, will enable family carers to rest and recharge while their loved ones benefit from meaningful experiences at a purpose-built facility.

Surrey-based social care provider Surrey Choices, which has more than 10 years' experience in running respite services, will operate the service on behalf of the council – and is currently recruiting for roles at the facility.

The new site in Goldsworth Park, due to open later in the spring, is part of the council's drive to modernise its short breaks service for people with learning disabilities and autistic people, supporting them as well as their carers.

Short breaks accommodation offers family carers the opportunity to take a break from their caring responsibilities to focus on themselves, while their loved one is supported by experts in a fun and enriching environment.

The new facility features eight spacious en-suite bedrooms, designed to be fully accessible to wheelchair users and suitable for those with complex needs. The site also includes a communal lounge and dining areas, a sensory room and landscaped gardens for enjoyment and relaxation.

The design of Emily Lodge's gardens reflects the surrounding woodland and includes native plantings, wildlife-friendly features and calming outdoor spaces. Designed with sustainability in mind, Emily Lodge incorporates renewable energy sources, including solar photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps. Lighting and heating will be controlled via smart devices, while underfloor heating and the use of natural building materials ensure comfort and wellbeing.

Sinead Mooney, Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: *"It's fantastic to see this wonderful new facility so close to fruition.*

"We know how demanding it can be for carers looking after loved ones with care and support needs, and this service will offer them a chance to rest and recharge. It's about giving carers peace of mind, knowing their loved ones are in a safe and supportive environment, surrounded by dedicated professionals. Emily Lodge will enable carers to take a well-deserved break while their loved ones enjoy meaningful experiences.

"It's part of our wider drive to improve and modernise our short breaks service, which will ultimately enable us to increase the number of overnight stays that we're able to offer in Surrey."

Natalie Bramhall, Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure said: *"We're pleased to be nearing completion on Emily Lodge in Goldsworth Park. This new short breaks service is one of many projects being delivered by our Land & Property Capital Projects Team in partnership with adult social care, to help people stay independent, safe and well, so they can live the lives they want."*

Louise Hayes, Senior Operations Manager at Surrey Choices, said: *"We are incredibly excited to partner with Surrey County Council to open this fantastic new short breaks service. This state-of-the-art facility will provide vital respite for families across Surrey, offering much-needed support for both the person with a disability and their carers.*

"At Surrey Choices, we are committed to improving the lives of people with disabilities, and this new service will make a real difference to the wellbeing of many families."

Surrey Choices is a social care organisation based in Surrey, offering support services for people with disabilities and those with additional support needs. It helps individuals lead fulfilling, independent lives by providing tailored support, meaningful activities and skill-building opportunities.

Surrey Choices is currently looking to recruit full-time Support Workers for Emily Lodge, and to find out how to apply, please visit: **Surrey Choices Openings**

Surrey taking care of your future care



Residents in Surrey and surrounding areas are being invited to take part in the first ever **Planning for Your Future Day** aimed at helping people plan for the later life they want.

Two free events – one in Guildford and one online – are being held on 11 March to equip people with information to make the right decisions at a time when they may need extra support.

Planning for Your Future Day – part of a campaign run by Surrey County Council in partnership with local charity Age UK Surrey – aims to raise awareness of care and support options, costs of social care and ways to maintain independence. By understanding options and starting conversations with loved ones early, people can make informed choices and avoid rushed decisions in a crisis.

Resident research shows that 88 per cent of adults in Surrey are concerned about needing future support and 81 per cent of local people are moderately, or really, concerned, about paying for care. This is an increase on the figure from just two years ago.

Separate figures show that, each year, around 300 to 400 Surrey residents who are paying for their own care run out of money, putting them at risk of having to move to a new care home, or their families needing to contribute a top-up to cover the costs of the home.

Planning for Your Future Day is believed to be the first of its kind in the country and is already gaining regional momentum, with three other local authorities – Hampshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire – also inviting their residents to join the online event.

In Surrey, more than 2,000 people have already attended a Planning for Your Future presentation held in a community location or joined an online webinar, and nine in ten people would recommend it to a friend.

The event on 11 March – at Guildford Baptist Church in Millmead – is set to be the biggest public event yet and will be followed in the evening by the online webinar.

Sinead Mooney, Surrey County Council’s Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: “It’s great to see Surrey at the forefront of helping people take control of their future so they can make confident, informed decisions. This initiative offers a wealth of useful tips and advice on everything from independent living to care costs, while also directing people to the vast range of local support provided by charities, voluntary organisations, faith groups and neighbourhood networks.

“The Government commission on social care won’t report until 2028 so it’s vital that we equip people to navigate the system that’s in place now. By getting out into the community with information and support, we can help people make the right choices for them and avoid making decisions in a crisis which may not be suitable in the long run.”

Planning for Your Future aims to help those who will need to pay for care themselves or whose family pay members pay. The events will cover key topics such as care options, typical costs of care, Powers of Attorney and practical steps to stay independent for longer, including equipment and technology in the home.

The in-person event starts at 11am on 11 March and will include a talk, Q&A and some light refreshments, with everyone who comes along able to leave with a checklist containing a reminder of the key points.

Alongside the council’s adult social care team and Age UK Surrey, the event will be attended by other organisations such as Mole Valley Life, who can help respond to falls, and the Society of Later Life Advisors, who are financial planning experts.

There will be an online version of the presentation the same evening at 7pm. Both sessions can be booked by visiting the Planning for Your Future information hub on the Age UK Surrey website.

The in-person event will be held from 11am – 1pm on Tuesday 11 March at the Guildford Baptist Church, Millmead, Guildford GU2 4BE.

Parking available at Portsmouth Road, Millmead and other local car parks.

The evening’s online presentation will take place on 11 March from 7pm.

Both sessions can be booked by visiting the Planning for Your Future information hub on the Age UK Surrey website.

Jekyll’s Ashtead garden plan can no longer hide



Recently unearthed plans of an **Ashtead** garden, designed by the renowned Gertrude Jekyll, have been donated to the Surrey History Centre.

Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) of Munstead Wood, Godalming, is celebrated as one of the greatest English garden designers. Though she described herself as an ‘artist-gardener,’ Jekyll was also a painter, embroiderer, interior designer, author, and photographer. As an early exponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Surrey, her legacy includes significant garden plans, watercolours, photographs, and publications, all held at the Surrey History Centre.

The newly unearthed plans, detailing the garden at Warren Hurst in Ashtead, were thought to be lost but were discovered inside a copy of Richard Bisgrove’s book, *The Gardens of Gertrude Jekyll* (1992). They were returned to a former property owner, who brought them to the attention of the Surrey Gardens Trust. The plans have been donated to the Surrey History Centre to enhance its extensive Jekyll collections.

The discovery of these two plans is important. While other plans of Warren Hurst exist in the Gertrude Jekyll Collection at the University of California, Berkeley, and can be accessed through the Surrey Gardens Trust website, these newly found plans offer more detailed evidence of Jekyll’s work.

One plan is a tracing made by the house architect, Percy Leeds, to communicate with Jekyll. He wrote notes on it, asking her questions about planting and plant sourcing, and she responded with her own instructions. The other plan is a rough pencil copy of one of Jekyll’s detailed herbaceous border designs, given to the architect for reference.

Together, these plans show that the garden project was active in July 1914, just before the First World War began. They capture the creative exchange between Jekyll and the architect as they brought her designs to life. These documents offer a fascinating insight into Jekyll’s methods and types of plants and shrubs, confirming that the garden was fully planted.

The Surrey History Centre’s Conservator, with funding from the Surrey Gardens Trust, has meticulously conserved the garden plans. The conservation process

included surface cleaning, light humidification and flattening to remove creases, and repairing torn or fragile areas using wheat starch paste and Japanese paper. Once conserved, the plans will be mounted on sturdy boards and protected in archival polyester sleeves. The plans will be featured in an exhibition of archive treasures at the Surrey History Centre’s Open Day on **Saturday 8th March**.

Councillor Denise Turner Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, said:

“The donation of these plans is a remarkable addition to our collection. Gertrude Jekyll’s work continues to inspire and educate, and we are thrilled to preserve and share these historical documents with the public.

The upcoming Open Day on 8th March is a fantastic opportunity for residents and visitors to explore these plans and other fascinating collections. With our friendly and helpful staff, we would like to see as many residents as possible using the Surrey History Centre for research and discovering the fascinating history of the county of Surrey.

Whether you’re a history buff or simply curious about our work, the day will offer something for everyone, so do come along and explore our diverse collections.”

Sarah Dickinson, Chair of Surrey Gardens Trust, added:

“It is a rare moment when lost Gertrude Jekyll plans come to light. These are working drawings, the tools of her trade. They enhance our understanding of Jekyll’s garden design practice. They narrate a moment in history, the Summer of 1914, when a Jekyll design and its planting is being implemented.

We are transported to Jekyll’s desk and witness her tenacity as she responds to questions from the architect who is overseeing the planting of this garden. Surrey Gardens Trust is equally thrilled to be part of this revelation and to support the preservation and presentation of these unique documents.”

For more information on the **Open Day** and to book a place on a behind-the-scenes tour, please visit the **Surrey History Centre website**.

Discover more about **Gertrude Jekyll sources** at the Surrey History Centre.

Explore **Gertrude Jekyll’s Surrey Archive** on the **Surrey Gardens Trust’s website** for additional insights.

Funding for new apprenticeships now available to Surrey businesses



Businesses can grow their workforce and boost productivity in just a few clicks by getting an apprenticeship funded by Surrey County Council.

As part of the Apprenticeship Levy Transfer Scheme, small and medium enterprises across the county can get fully funded support to train local talent.

Apprenticeships are widely recognised as a cost-effective way to recruit, improving diversity and filling skills gaps. In time, they can also help businesses grow, improve employee retention and support the wider economy.

Funding is available to pay for the training of dozens of new apprenticeships across the county. It is open to all businesses in Surrey and allocated on a first come, first served basis – meaning those interested should apply swiftly via the Surrey County Council website.

For those unsure of the process, a free 45-minute webinar will be hosted by the Council’s Business Surrey service on February 26. Reserve your space today to discover more about modern-day apprenticeships and how businesses can access funding.

One Surrey organisation that has benefited already from the scheme is Sight for Surrey, a charity that provides specialist support for people in Surrey with sensory loss. Diane Smith, Head of Adult Services says:

“We have used the levy to support internal succession for those wanting to pursue a career in Social Work from the Deaf Community. More recently we used the levy to support three new apprentices in roles that are recognised to be under resourced across the sector nationally as well as in Surrey.

“The process of completing the Levy Transfer scheme was simple and smooth due to the responsive support from the Council. Our Deaf Services Social Worker has recently graduated from Kingston University and our three new apprentices are settled and progressing well in their new careers! All making an impact for residents of the Surrey community.”

The call comes in National Apprenticeship Week (February 10 to 16), which is a national celebration of the opportunities presented by the training schemes.

According to government figures, benefits of apprenticeships include:

96% of employers report benefits to their business

employers make a net gain of between £2,500 and £18,000 per apprentice during their training period

80% of businesses see a significant increase in employee retention

Almost two-thirds of all UK apprenticeships in the last year have been funded by the apprenticeship levy.

This is a pool of funding made available by large employers, such as the Council, to make apprenticeships more accessible to SMEs. The Council wants as many local residents and businesses to benefit from the scheme as possible – which is why the online process can be completed in a matter of minutes.

Matt Furniss, the Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport, and Economic Growth, emphasised the council’s commitment to providing opportunities for all. He said: “Apprenticeships are a proven cost-effective way to recruit which benefit businesses and employees, as well as the broader economy. As an organisation we are committed to providing opportunities to all of our residents, which includes creating a skilled workforce for the future. “The levy transfer scheme is a fantastic way for SMEs to access funding to develop and grow their workforce – which is why I encourage them to discover more about this fantastic opportunity.”

For more information on how to apply for the Apprenticeship Levy and to start the process of recruiting talented apprentices, visit https://www.businesssurrey.co.uk/workforce/apprenticeship_levy/

Tackling health inequalities in Surrey



Surrey County Council has been awarded 5 years of funding by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to create a **Health Determinants Research Collaboration** (HDRC). The £5m funding will help the local authority to build capacity to do research on prevention and create a culture of using evidence in making decisions.

NIHR HDRC Surrey’s vision is to improve health of our residents and reduce health inequalities which are driven by the social determinants of health. To achieve this, the HDRC Surrey will use the funding to enhance local research capacity, drive research on prevention and public health where evidence isn’t yet available. It will also embed a culture of evidence-informed decision-making which is based on local knowledge underpinned by community involvement and issues that matter most to our residents.

HDRC Surrey is a partnership between the council, the University of Surrey, and voluntary and community partners. Together, over the next five years, we will focus on:

- Improving our research governance and infrastructure
- Building research capacity and providing training support
- Supporting knowledge mobilisation
- Conducting robust research that reflects the needs and experiences of local communities
- Embedding meaningful public involvement at the heart of Surrey HDRC’s work

Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council, said: *“This ambitious project will facilitate a rigorous focus on health inequalities in Surrey. The substantial funding will ensure sustainability in our approach. We already work closely with the University of Surrey and this research programme will build on our existing relationship to provide people locally with better opportunities and outcomes.”*

Councillor Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing, and Public Health, said: *“Improving the wellbeing of residents across Surrey is something that we all strive to achieve. Prevention is the key to a better and healthier place to live and to achieve this we need to know where and how best to invest money and resources. This new funding will enable a fantastic partnership between the council, the University of Surrey and voluntary and community sector to strengthen our research infrastructure. The new research infrastructure will be invaluable in guiding and informing decision-making that will have a real, positive impact on our residents’ lives leaving no one left behind.”*

Professor Lisa Collins Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation at University of Surrey, said: *“The University of Surrey is thrilled to partner with the local authority and involve the community on this vital health research collaboration. The funding will empower us to conduct impactful research that addresses the unique health challenges faced by residents.”*

Ruth Hutchinson, Surrey County Council’s Director of Public Health, said: *“The NIHR grant is exciting as it will enable us to work more collaboratively with the University of Surrey, Districts and Boroughs and local communities to directly meet people’s health needs in Surrey, leading to better outcomes.”*

Why Surrey?

Although Surrey is seen to be one of the most affluent parts of the UK, there are areas with high levels of deprivation associated with poor health. In 2020, someone living in the most deprived area of Surrey is likely to live 10 years less than someone living in the most affluent part of the county. To address this, we need to better understand how factors like the built environment, housing and the economy affect people’s health in Surrey. Our Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) will help us to do this.

HDRC Surrey will improve how, as a local authority, we use research to get a better understanding of what works and for whom to reduce health inequalities.

Image courtesy: RDNE Stock project

Will Surrey potholes outwit AI?



Surrey County Council will now use AI to detect potholes to help speed up road repairs across the county.

Computer vision cameras fitted to dashboards inside highways vehicles will spot and photograph potholes which will then be automatically recorded for repair. Future enhancements will see other defects such as missing signs and foliage overgrowth also programmed for repair.

Highways Inspectors will no longer need to step onto the road to manually carry out inspections which will make the process safer and more efficient. Potholes that don’t need immediate attention will also be regularly tracked to ensure they are dealt with when needed.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said, *“We have some of the country’s busiest roads and we’re working incredibly hard to improve them, with nearly £300m allocated to repairing and improving Surrey’s roads and pavements over the next five years (2023 – 2028).”*

“Adopting this technology will mean we can proactively log and fix potholes, helping to ensure we have well-maintained roads across the county for our residents.”

“We’re also resurfacing more roads and pavements than ever with 100 miles of roads and 30 miles of pavements resurfaced by our highways teams from April – December 2024 alone. This will make our highway network more resilient which will reduce the number of potholes that develop on our roads in the first place.”

“I’m also pleased that we are pioneering AI technology to detect potholes as championed by the government just this week.”

Connell McLaughlin, CEO of Route Reports said, *“We’re thrilled to formalise this long-term partnership with Surrey County Council, who were among our earliest supporters and collaborators in developing Route Reports’ AI road maintenance platform.”*

“Their feedback and hands-on involvement played a key role in refining our defect detection technology to ensure it meets the real-world needs of the community. This partnership exemplifies how innovative solutions and local expertise can come together to make roads safer, more efficient, and more sustainable.”

Surrey County Council is the first local authority in the UK to move away from manual inspections and solely use video and AI technology to log and programme pothole repairs. The council has worked with provider, Route Reports, to trial and develop the software.

Residents can also report and track road and pavement issues on **Surrey County Council’s website**.

Image: Pothole in Woodcote Road Epsom

Surrey carers getting digital support



Surrey County Council is rolling out additional support for tens of thousands of unpaid carers living in the county as part of a new digital service.

At least 90,000 people in Surrey provide unpaid care for friends, family members or neighbours. Through the new initiative, these unpaid carers will gain access to a wide range of free on-demand services, aimed at supporting individuals with the day-to-day realities of caring.

The initiative is being delivered by Mobilise – a carer-led digital community – in partnership with Surrey County Council. It will provide a complementary layer of added support that can be accessed remotely via an online hub by anyone caring for a loved one in the county. New digital support services which carers in Surrey are set to gain access to include:

- **An online peer community** of thousands of fellow carers from across the UK – with the chance to share advice and experiences through a community forum and during regular events, such as the ‘virtual cuppa’
- **Easy-to-use, self-service tools** outlining the different forms of support which carers may be entitled to – including Carer’s Allowance – and guidance on how to navigate eligibility criteria and access various benefits, for example
- **Tailor-made support guides** on everything from how to balance caring with full-time work, to managing personal health and wellbeing while looking after someone else
- **Information on carers’ rights** and relevant social care law, in line with the latest government guidance

An AI-powered ‘assistant’ is also available to help carers quickly and easily find the specific information, resources or support that they need.

Martin, a carer from Surrey who looks after their partner, said: *“I’m delighted to have come across Mobilise. It’s great to know that there is a wide community of carers who can, without judgement, share their honest views and experiences on such a wide range of topics. It’s reassuring to know that there are like-minded people out there and that we’re not alone.”*

Suzanne Bourne, Co-Founder and Head of Carer Support at Mobilise, commented: *“An increasing number of us are taking on caring responsibilities, with one million additional carers set to emerge in the UK over the next ten years. The reality of caring will look different for each of these people – including the 90,000 people who are looking after their loved ones in Surrey.*

“For some, it will start with needing to check in with family members more frequently, with caring responsibilities increasing over time. For others, it might be a case of having always needed to support relatives with their medication, self-care, and appointments, or even full-time care. But in each and every case, having the right support is vital.

“That’s why we’re proud to be partnering with Surrey County Council to deliver additional support for carers living in the county. Through our community of carers – the largest of its kind – carers in Surrey will gain access to a powerful peer support network, as well as round-the-clock advice, resources, and guidance from experts. We’re delighted to be able to work to connect carers in Surrey to this added support and to each other.”

Sinead Mooney, Surrey County Council’s Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: *“Carers play a crucial role in families and in our local communities by supporting people who would otherwise struggle to cope alone which is why it’s so important for us to make sure carers themselves are cared for.*

“We’re pleased to be partnering with Mobilise to reach more carers across Surrey and support them in new and different ways. I’d encourage anyone who looks after a family member or friend to visit the Mobilise online community and explore the additional support available.”

Vicky Stobbart, Director of Long Term Planning Delivery and Senior Responsible Officer for Carers at Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board, added: *“This initiative with Mobilise is a wonderful way for carers across Surrey to gain additional, digital support with their day-to-day caring duties. We’re delighted that it’s being rolled out and look forward to seeing the benefits as our carers start to use it.”*

For more information about the support now available in Surrey, visit Surrey’s Mobilise community. To start accessing support, the Mobilise app can be downloaded via the Apple App Store or Google Play, with more information available on Mobilise’s website.

Surrey University Launches UN-Affiliated Centre to Tackle Climate Change



Drastically improving the UK’s ability to address climate change is the grand challenge that the new United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)-affiliated CIFAL centre at the University of Surrey will tackle.

CIFAL Surrey will be officially launched on Monday, 25 November, with a ceremonial UN flag raising, a Signing Ceremony and a panel event. In attendance will be a senior delegation from UNITAR, including Alexander Mejia, Head of the CIFAL Global Network and Director of the Division for People and Social Inclusion at UNITAR, other UNITAR delegates, Zöe Franklin, M.P. for Guildford, alongside a range of the university’s collaborative partners in business and government.

Drawing on the University’s strong research heritage and active engagement in sustainability, the new CIFAL Centre (Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders), known as ‘CIFAL Surrey’, will work with UNITAR (the UN’s training branch) and the CIFAL Global Network among other stakeholders to lead both training and capacity-building initiatives in sustainability. In doing so, CIFAL Surrey will make a unique and much-needed contribution to empowering climate leadership through enhanced climate literacy within and beyond Surrey.

As part of its activities, CIFAL Surrey will work in partnership with national and local government, industry, civil society, and beyond, developing sustainable economic practices, and helping to advance action towards the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

Situated within the University’s Institute for Sustainability, CIFAL Surrey will draw strongly on multi-disciplinary expertise in delivering both training and capacity building on a wide range of sustainability challenges, to help facilitate knowledge exchange among leaders in government, the private sector, and civil society – locally, nationally and internationally, as well as UK-based international organisations.

Professor Amelia Hadfield, the University of Surrey’s Associate Vice President for External Engagement, and the new Director of CIFAL Surrey, said:

“Sustainability is far more than just a philosophy limited to net zero here at the University of Surrey. For us, and our community, sustainability reflects our deep, shared commitment to rebuilding a thriving planet for future generations. From the fundamentals of climate change to advanced policy implementation, CIFAL Surrey will provide hands-on training and resources to national and local government, businesses, and community groups, helping them deliver on the demands for a more sustainable future.

“Focused on knowledge sharing, skills building and decision-making, CIFAL Surrey will connect local expertise with global insight, fostering collaboration across government, the private sector, civil society, and the United Nations system to drive sustainable progress. As CIFAL Surrey Director, I’m delighted to be working with our own Institute for Sustainability, other CIFAL centres around the world, and UNITAR itself to deliver these critical goals.”

CIFAL Surrey is the second UN-affiliated centre on campus, following the 2023 launch of the Centre of Excellence for Ageing, which appointed its first cohort of Fellows in June 2024.

Nathalie Hinds, co-founder of the Institute for Sustainability at the University of Surrey, said:

“If the UK is to be a leader on sustainability, leaders need more than just an awareness of net zero – they need the skills to create real change. CIFAL Surrey’s training gives leaders hands-on experience with sustainable practices and governance, focusing on systems thinking and breaking down silos across sectors. Alumni of CIFAL Surrey will leave not only with world-renowned accreditation but they will also be part of a global network of alumni, gaining access to our Sustainability Innovation Hub for insights, research partnerships, and ongoing support.”

Mr Alex Mejia, Division Director at United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), said:

“We are honoured to inaugurate CIFAL Surrey, hosted by the University of Surrey, a renowned global institution at the forefront of innovation and learning. This new centre will mark an important step in our mission to advance sustainable development and capacity-building worldwide. It will serve as a vital hub for fostering collaboration, innovation, and knowledge exchange across the United Kingdom and beyond.”

Deputy Leader and Lead Councillor for Regeneration at Guildford Borough Council, Cllr Tom Hunt, said:

“We are proud to support the launch of CIFAL Surrey and be a key partner in the project. This initiative will play a big role in driving sustainable development. It will give us the chance to work together to share knowledge, improve skills and deliver practical solutions for our communities. One of our key priorities as a council is to create a more sustainable borough. Our partnership with CIFAL gives us a unique opportunity to work alongside local, national and international experts to ensure a bright, sustainable future for Guildford.”

Councillor Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth at Surrey County Council, said:

“It’s a pleasure to be able to welcome the team from the United Nations to launch this new international centre in the heart of Surrey. The CIFAL centre will play a key role in promoting sustainable development at home and abroad while also opening up opportunities for our communities. It also reinforces the region’s global reputation for innovation, research and knowledge exchange.”

£12 million bus boost for Surrey



Surrey County Council has been allocated £12,074,800 from the Department for Transport, to further improve and protect local buses.

The council will work with bus operators to allocate the funding, which is likely to generate more frequent buses on popular routes, protect services in rural areas and improve punctuality.

The investment will also be used to help Surrey bus services grow their passenger numbers and to support people who rely on them to make essential journeys.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth at Surrey County Council said, “I’m delighted that Surrey will benefit from this essential funding which will help us to build upon our own significant investment and encourage more people to take the bus.

We’ve recently added 54 new zero emission buses to our fleet, invested £6.3m in more ultra-low and zero emission community transport minibuses, £9m in bus priority measures to ensure Surrey buses turn up on time, and £1.4m in improving information for passengers at bus stops.

Our Surrey LINK card gives young people half-price bus travel and we’ve expanded our on-demand Surrey Connect bus services to cover areas where there are limited fixed bus routes, giving more options to travel by bus for all residents right across Surrey, particularly supporting our rural areas.”

26 million journeys were made by bus in Surrey during 2023.