

Surrey wasting education in primary schools

24 February 2026



Surrey County Council (SCC) has launched the Surrey Schools Waste Engagement Grant Scheme for primary schools in the county. Through the scheme, SCC will support schools to educate their children and the wider community about waste reduction and recycling.

The funding, which will be spread across the county, can be used to develop and deliver projects that may contribute to educating children and families on:

The impact and importance of recycling.

The impact of putting items that can't be recycled into recycling bins.

How to dispose of different types of waste correctly, including which items should be recycled, either via home recycling bins, council recycling collections, community recycling centres or non-council recycling schemes, and which items should go in rubbish bins.

Food waste.

Clothing, textile and electrical waste.

The Waste Hierarchy.

Waste reduction, reuse and repair.

Schools that complete waste projects will also be given funding to contribute to or deliver projects that improve the environment of their school for the benefit of pupils.

Natalie Bramhall, SCC's Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure, said: "I'm pleased to announce the launch of the Surrey Schools Waste Engagement Grant Scheme and look forward to seeing as many primary schools as possible apply for funding. By helping schools educate children about their responsibilities now, Surrey County Council's scheme aims to create sustainable citizens and recyclers of the future."

Waste is a key area in which residents can take direct action to help fight climate change. When residents reduce waste and recycle right, there are benefits for the environment. Fewer resources are used up creating new materials and fewer harmful emissions are made during resource production. There are also benefits for other council services as waste disposal is expensive for councils; reducing waste and increasing recycling saves councils money.

The window for schools to apply for a grant opens on Monday 23 February and closes on Wednesday 25 March 2026.

To find out more information and to apply for funding, schools should visit the Together for Surrey website page on the Surrey Schools Waste Engagement Grant Scheme.

Surrey County Council



Epsom on course to connect Surrey businesses

24 February 2026



An innovative initiative to help Surrey businesses benefit more from spending in the region's £50 billion economy will soon launch. Source in Surrey has been developed by Surrey Chambers of Commerce after it secured a grant from Surrey County Council's Economic Growth Fund.

The six-figure initiative is designed to strengthen the regional economy by connecting small and medium-sized businesses with larger organisations for major contract opportunities. It kicks off next month, with the first of 10 roadshow events taking place in Woking on February 11.

The programme will also include sales masterclasses and the creation of an AI-powered platform, streamlining connections between buyers and suppliers.

Source in Surrey is one of several projects funded via the council's Economic Growth Fund, which pools public and private funds — including government Shared Prosperity Funding — into a single pot.

Since launching in April, more than £3 million has been invested via the council in local businesses and organisations to support business growth, innovation and employment opportunities.

Cabinet Member comment

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

"Source in Surrey will tackle a real challenge - helping our smaller businesses access the kind of major contracts that can transform their growth trajectory. By connecting SMEs with larger organisations and equipping them with the skills to compete, we're not just creating jobs and boosting our economy, we're building a more resilient and collaborative business community across the county.

"We're pleased to have been able to support the initiative via the Economic Growth Fund and I look forward to seeing our people, places and businesses benefit from closer connections in the future."

How the programme works

Source in Surrey will look to bridge the gap by focusing on four key areas: enhancing selling capabilities, improving procurement access, building customer databases and forging closer connections, starting with a county-wide roadshow programme.

Each roadshow session includes a keynote session from a business leader. Attendees will also be introduced to the AI platform, designed to help businesses find and procure suitable contracts.

Roadshow dates and venues

The roadshows, which are free to attend, take place at:

- Dukes Court, Woking (February 11)
- Tandridge Golf Course, Oxted (February 24)
- Hartsfield Manor, Betchworth (February 26)
- Login Lounge, Camberley (March 3)
- The Thames Club, Staines (March 11)
- Farnham Maltings (March 17)
- Reigate Manor, Reigate (March 24)
- Guildford Pavilion (April 14)
- **Epsom Racecourse (April 23)**
- Brooklands Museum (April 28)

Sales training programme

The initiative also includes expert-led sales training courses delivered by Anita Saini of HX Solutions. Sessions begin on 10 February at Login Lounge, Camberley, and 10 March at Dukes Court, Woking.

These practical courses aim to equip smaller businesses with the confidence and skills needed to compete for and win significant contracts.

Surrey Chambers comment

Louise Punter of Surrey Chambers said: "The Surrey economy is large but much of the spend of the larger organisations is made outside of Surrey, so we want to encourage larger businesses and organisations to 'buy local' and make it easier for smaller businesses to win contracts. By bringing these different parts of the business eco-system together we will also facilitate other ways of supporting the smaller businesses through training opportunities and economies of scale."

Further information

Businesses can find out more and book onto announced events online at:
<https://www.surrey-chambers.co.uk/event-listing>

Alternatively, enquiries can be made by email to:
sourceinsurrey@surrey-chambers.co.uk

Surrey County Council



Source in Surrey lunches with Matt Furniss (centre) alongside Charlotte Webb (Surrey Chambers) and Dawn Redpath (SCC Director for Economy and Growth)

“Go all in” is Surrey’s literary call to read books

24 February 2026



Surrey Libraries are thrilled to be taking part in the National Year of Reading, a UK-wide campaign designed to inspire more people to rediscover the joy of reading.

A Department for Education initiative and led by the National Literacy Trust, this year’s theme is “Go All In” and is being delivered by a group of more than 60 literacy sector charities and partners.

Throughout 2026, Surrey Libraries will host a vibrant calendar of events and activities to celebrate reading in all its forms. Each month, one of the county’s main libraries will take the lead on a key theme linked to the campaign, with all 52 libraries in Surrey joining in through themed activities, events, workshops and family-friendly sessions to engage and inspire readers of all ages.

February will see Redhill Library host a ‘Love Your Library’ family fun day on Saturday 14 February.

Residents are encouraged to explore their local library, where they can join for free if they are not already members, and discover a wide range of books and resources to borrow at no cost. Libraries also offer services including free Wi-Fi and computer access, e-books and audiobooks, e-magazines, digital skills support, and welcoming spaces for learning and wellbeing.

Cabinet Member comment

Denise Turner-Stewart, Surrey County Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, said:

“The National Year of Reading is a fantastic opportunity for us all to ‘Go All In’ and celebrate the joy of reading together. We will continue to champion our libraries as welcoming, inclusive spaces in the heart of our communities that inspire, connect, and empower people; whether through borrowing a book, joining an event, or learning new digital skills.

“I encourage everyone to visit their local library, take part in the exciting events planned throughout the year, and help us make the joy of reading a shared experience across Surrey.”

Volunteering in your local library

Have you thought about volunteering in your local library?

Libraries are great places to volunteer, and there are many ways to get involved. Volunteering can help people learn new skills, meet and connect with others, and make a difference in the community. Some people volunteer to gain work experience which they can use to help find employment.

Volunteering can be for just a few hours each week, making it easier to fit around other commitments while still making a meaningful contribution.

Examples of how volunteers can support libraries include:

- Running reading groups or book clubs
- Helping at author events and workshops
- Becoming a Summer Reading Challenge volunteer or supporting children’s storytime sessions

How will you ‘Go All In’?

Residents are encouraged to stay connected by visiting the Surrey Libraries events and activities webpage for the latest updates throughout the year.

Notes

For more information on events and activities in Surrey Libraries, visit: [Events and activities in libraries – Surrey County Council](#)

For more information on volunteering in Surrey Libraries, visit: [Volunteering in libraries – Surrey County Council](#)

Surrey County Council



Surrey businesses benefit from County grants

24 February 2026



Greentech innovators and gourmet food producers are among businesses benefiting from a further £1 million investment into the county's economy by Surrey County Council.

Nearly 30 companies and entrepreneurs are receiving individual grants of up to £75,000 in the latest round of funding.

The investment, which is largely made up of UK Shared Prosperity Funding from government, will unlock millions of pounds of match funding while creating dozens of local jobs.

Among the recipients are Mantisonix, a University of Surrey spinout in Guildford, which has developed ultrasonic technology to sustainably destroy "forever chemicals". The new facility will reinforce Surrey's position as a leader in environmental innovation.

MS Venison will create a new butchery facility in Oxted while family-run catering business Afromufasa will purchase a new food truck, creating up to eight jobs in Weybridge.

Godalming-based DIY Her Way will look to provide online training for 100 women to become electricians, helping addresses Surrey's shortage of skilled tradespeople.

Councillor Matt Furniss, Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said: "This investment represents another significant step in strengthening and growing Surrey's economy.

"The quality and breadth of the bids within the hundreds of applications that we received is testament to the vibrancy of the business community across the county.

"I'm delighted we have been able to support close to 30 companies with their innovative ideas to grow and look forward to seeing them delivering benefits to our people and places over the months to come."

Surrey County Council launched the Economic Growth Fund in April with a focus on supporting ideas to accelerate growth, boost innovation and create new employment opportunities.

About £2 million was distributed when the first round of grants was announced in September.

With a further £1 million awarded in round two, the total invested locally this year now stands at more than £3 million.

Among those to benefit include Rhevia (formerly known as Streetwise Technology) in Reigate. The firm uses hardware and AI to make highways safer for pedestrians while improving vehicle flow.

Dorian Isaacson, of Rhevia, said: "Being selected for funding by Surrey County Council was a huge vote of confidence for us at a critical stage of our growth.

"The grant has been genuinely transformational, it enabled us to recruit two new team members and significantly advance our technology, making our product more sophisticated and commercially viable.

"That progress has directly helped us win new customers and accelerate our growth. As we scale, we expect this to translate into high-value jobs, continued innovation, and a growing contribution to the Surrey economy."

The Economic Growth Fund is one of several ways the council supports businesses and a growing Surrey economy.

For further details and to register for fully-funded support to start and grow a business visit www.businesssurrey.co.uk.

The businesses to win funding in round two of the Surrey Economic Growth Fund are:

Afromufasa
Aqua Broadcast Limited
Batts Hill Distillers
BecDan Limited (DIY Her Way)
Carpet Ease Limited
Carry on Coffee
Charlie and Ginger LTD

DigiKind Ltd (Kathy Kyle)
Fit with Frank
Hurtwood Events CIC
Kampyro Ltd t/a Emovement
Lesh
MS Venison Ltd
Mantisonix
More Meals Ltd
Morpheus Fluid Ltd
Old School Longcross Ltd (t/a Old School Windscreens)
Parcours Velo Ltd
Porky Whites Ltd
Rawlings Opticians
Rhizo PTX
Shetland Pony Club (registered as Shetland Pony Centre LLP)
Silvermere Gymnastics
Star Player Ltd
Surrey Signs & Display Limited
Systems & Networks Training
The Nourishment Academy (t/a Strength & Bloom LTD)
West Fisher Winery
Surrey County Council



Photo: Dorian Isaacson, of Rhevia, received funding from the Surrey Economic Growth Fund

Green escape to wellness for Surrey's anxious

24 February 2026



A new photography exhibition by Active Prospects is shining a light on the power of nature, creativity, and personalised wellbeing support.

The stunning images on display were all taken by people who have taken part in the charity's Green Escape wellness recovery programme, funded through the Mental Health Investment Fund (jointly funded by Surrey County Council and Surrey Heartlands ICB).

Over the past year, small groups of two or three people have enjoyed 8-10 nature trips to beautiful parts of Surrey, including places that are sometimes difficult to reach by public transport, such as RHS Wisley. Each trip gave participants the chance to explore new places, take photographs and build confidence at their own pace. Their work has now been brought together in a unique photo book and this special exhibition.

For many, these trips were life-changing. One participant had not left their home for 10 years. With gentle encouragement, practical support and small achievable steps, they were able to join the group, enjoy the outdoors and reach a personal goal they once thought impossible. Families are involved too, and wellbeing coaches from Active Prospects support each person throughout their journey. It's a true team effort.

At the end of the wellness recovery programme, each participant leaves with a personalised action plan. By removing barriers, such as fear of using public transport or trying new activities, people gain the confidence to become more independent. Some have even taken their new skills into work or volunteering. One participant discovered a passion for paddleboarding and is now a qualified instructor.

Research shows that around half of autistic adults experience anxiety disorders. Every part of Active Prospects' wellbeing coaching is designed to ease anxiety, build confidence and open up new opportunities for neurodivergent people over 18. Participants often tell the team they felt "invisible" before joining. Peer connection is central to the programme, and activities focus on what makes people smile, whether that's creative writing, photography or paddleboarding. One member's love of table tennis inspired Table Tennis Thursdays, which is now a much-loved weekly meet-up.

The programme is person-centred, with coaching tailored to each individual. Thanks to Mental Health Investment Fund support of £299,270 over 2 years, as well as the programme, Active Prospects also developed Emojo, a digital wellbeing app that helps people track how they're feeling across eight areas of wellbeing such as 'Environment'. Users can set goals, get ideas for new challenges, and create a monthly mood calendar that helps them notice progress and patterns over time.

The photography exhibition celebrates everything the programme stands for, confidence, creativity, connection, and the joy of discovering something new.

Councillor Mark Nuti, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, and Public Health said: "The exhibition has showcased wonderful moments captured in nature, and it was inspiring to hear the stories behind each photograph. It's clear to see the positive impact of the support provided by Active Prospects—helping people improve their mental health, build confidence, and enhance their overall wellbeing."

Dr Charlotte Canniff, Joint Chief Medical Officer for NHS Surrey Heartlands, said: "This exhibition shows the real difference personalised wellbeing coaching can make. We're proud that, through the Mental Health Investment Fund, Active Prospects has been able to create Inclusive Wellbeing Coaches to support adults with multiple challenges to grow in confidence and quality of life."

Maria Mills CEO Active Prospects said: "Connecting to nature and the outdoors offers a real boost to wellbeing. Already participants have shared a documented 25% improvement in their wellbeing presentation, showing how investment in inclusive community support pays back public funding in multiples, but most importantly enables people to thrive."

Leanne - Programme participant: "I wasn't going out, was overwhelmed and my senses were overloaded. Since being part of the programme, I'm able to get out and about and I'm seeing things differently."

Kieran - Programme participant and a member of the Active Prospects Wellbeing Team: "Being outside (in nature) after years in hospital gives you a feeling of freedom and space."

Mental Health Investment Fund

The Mental Health Investment Fund (MHIF) is a Surrey wide, all age, resource to enable the delivery of the outcomes in Priority Two of the Health and Well-Being Strategy. This priority area is focused on prevention, removing barriers, and supporting people to become proactive in improving their emotional health and wellbeing.

Established in 2022, the MHIF is a joint fund with Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board (ICB) and is part of the county's No One left Behind agenda. The additional investment in mental health provision was ring fenced within the 22/23 Council Tax with an additional contribution from Surrey Heartlands.

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Photo: Lucy a participant

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Surrey tops Man v FAT contest

24 February 2026



Guildford’s MAN v FAT Football Club has been crowned Community Club of the Year 2025 at the nationwide MAN v FAT Football Awards, recognising its outstanding contribution to improving men’s health and wellbeing.

In Surrey, the MAN v FAT weight loss programme is commissioned by Surrey County Council through the free healthy lifestyle service One You Surrey. The FA-accredited scheme, which also runs in Woking, combines football with structured weight-loss support and is aimed at overweight and obese men with a BMI of 27.5 or above, helping participants lose weight, gain confidence and build friendships.

At each session, players weigh in before taking part in a 30-minute six-a-side football match. Teams receive extra goal bonuses based on their combined weight loss. A team’s match scores and weekly weight-loss totals then contribute to its standing in the club’s league table.

Mark Smithies from the Guildford club said joining had been transformative for him: he has lost weight, improved his fitness and made lasting friendships. He added that the positive, supportive environment has boosted his confidence and mindset, describing the club as “more than just football... a proper community”.

H5 How the programme supports players

Alongside weekly football sessions, MAN v FAT players receive additional support off the pitch, including healthy meal ideas, general fitness tips and access to a bespoke mental health platform through partners JAAQ.

Across the UK, MAN v FAT players have collectively lost more than 800,000 pounds in weight.

H5 Success in Guildford and Woking

The Guildford club meets on Friday evenings at Kings College - Community Sports Hub on Southway and currently has 68 members regularly achieving their weight-loss goals. Over the past twelve months, players at the club have shed more than 34 stone of excess weight, with progress continuing week on week.

The Woking club meets on Monday evenings at the Woking Sportsbox and has supported 40 players to lose a combined 365kg during 2025.

H5 Find out more

Funded places are available for Surrey residents at the Guildford and Woking clubs through Surrey County Council and One You Surrey.

To register, visit manvfat.com/football and search for Guildford or Woking to apply and begin your journey to a healthier 2026.

Surrey County Council



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Calculating the cost of care in Surrey

24 February 2026



Surrey residents and their families can now benefit from a simple new online tool to help them be prepared for the costs of care, if they become less able.

Many of us don't realise that we are likely to have to pay for some or all of our own care, especially if we have savings over £14,250. And while most people who need care tend to be older, support needs can emerge at any age due to illness or injury.

Surrey County Council's new **Care Cost Indicator** allows people who arrange and pay for their care to see how much it may cost to stay in a typical residential / nursing home compared to receiving care or support in their own home. Using a simple slider to choose the number of weeks, months or years they wish to plan for, people can judge how long their savings or assets may last.

Once people know the costs, it's easier to prepare, or see how spending some money now can help avoid more expensive care further down the line. Simple equipment, new technology or small changes to people's homes can make the difference between living independently and needing assistance.

Research with Surrey residents in January 2025 highlighted:

- 81% were concerned how they would pay for their care
- Only 13% have sought or plan to seek independent financial advice about care costs

Furthermore, a **recent study into care home residents by the independent health and social care champion Healthwatch Surrey** showed only 33% of people interviewed had actually planned for the costs involved.

The new indicator, which was designed and tested with local people, aims to prompt residents to plan ahead. The online information features lots of useful tips to help with preparation and ensure that future arrangements are affordable.

Figures show that Surrey residents live longer than most other parts of the country. But the same reported data shows that at least a decade is likely to be spent in poorer health, increasing the likelihood of care being required.

While homeowners in Surrey might think they can always use the proceeds from a house sale to fund any care they need, even this is not certain. Based on an **average house sale of around £590,000**, if a couple both needed to move into a care home, their nest egg could easily be used up in a little over three and a half years.

Sinead Mooney, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care at Surrey County Council, said: *"No-one knows what the future will hold for us or our loved ones, but understanding the costs of care is complex and many people are shocked to learn the true figures.*

"Doing what we can to stay independent and live in our own home is most people's goal, and receiving care at home from a visiting provider can be more cost-effective than a move into a residential facility. But we also need to be aware that our needs may change - and discuss our wishes with our families.

"Every year we see people who are 'self-funding' run out of money, at which point their families may have to step in to help them stay in a more expensive care home, rather than face the upheaval of moving. Planning ahead can lessen the chance of that happening, which is why appreciating the price you can expect to pay for care is so important."

The Care Cost Indicator can be found at www.surreycc.gov.uk/carecostindicator

It supports Surrey County Council's nationally commended **Planning for your Future** campaign which is run in partnership with local charity, Age UK Surrey. The campaign aims to help people prepare for later life, and have an early conversation with family about their plans.

Surrey County Council



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

24 February 2026



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 or worse, many properties are poorly insulated, expensive to heat, and at risk of damp and mould. Improving energy efficiency is a key step in supporting residents and progressing towards Surrey's ambition of becoming a net zero county by 2050.

Three ways Surrey residents can take action:

Home Energy Improvement One-Stop Shop

In partnership with energy specialists Furbnow, Surrey County Council is offering a comprehensive retrofit support service. Homeowners can access expert guidance through a three-stage journey: a home energy plan, design support, and project management. Recommended retrofit measures may include insulation, solar panels, draught-proofing, ventilation upgrades, and heat pumps. Eligible Surrey households may access up to 20% off a Home Energy Plan and 30% off design and project management services.

Registration is free and without obligation. Visit the **Furbnow website** to learn more.

Switch Together: Air Source Heat Pumps

Through the council's group-buying scheme, Switch Together, residents can upgrade to a highly efficient air source heat pump at a competitive rate. Each household receives a tailored quote and may be eligible for up to £7,500 in government funding via the Boiler Upgrade Scheme.

Residents can find out more and register on the **Switch Together Surrey website**. Registration is open until 31 October 2025.

Big Community Switch

This free group-buying scheme helps residents find competitive energy tariffs with trusted suppliers, including 100% renewable electricity as standard. Participants receive a personalised energy offer based on their usage and household needs, making it easier to compare and switch without the hassle.

To apply for this scheme, visit the **Big Community Switch webpage**. Registration is open until 31 October 2025.

Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Environment, said: *"We know many households are interested in how to make their homes more comfortable, healthier, affordable-to-run and future-ready, and these tailored schemes are designed to make it easier to take action. Whether you're looking to improve insulation, switch to a heat pump, or find a better energy tariff, there's support available - and no pressure to commit. I'd really encourage residents to explore all three options and register their interest. It's a simple step that could make a big difference, and it helps us move closer to becoming a net zero council and county by 2050."*

For more information on all three schemes and other energy offerings visit our **home energy saving support for residents page**.

Surrey County Council



Businesses get £2 million boost in Surrey

24 February 2026



An economic boost worth millions, scores of new jobs and hundreds of local opportunities will be delivered thanks to funding awarded to dozens of businesses by Surrey County Council.

From vineyards and biotech to manufacturing and AI firms, a diverse range of organisations from across the county have been awarded grants in the first round of the Surrey Economic Growth Fund.

The scheme, launched by the council in April, brings together pooled funding streams including the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund. Following a highly competitive process, close to £2 million has been awarded to dozens of recipients, unlocking significant match funding and private investment.

The successful bids are collectively estimated to grow Surrey's economy by £9 million, create or safeguard 300 jobs and bring 1,350 residents into employment.

Local firms supported

Among those receiving funding is Aero Sensor, a technology firm at Dunsfold Industrial Park in Cranleigh, led by former F1 engineer Dr Barney Garrod. The company is one of only three globally developing new aerodynamic measurement probes for automotive and aerospace applications.

The grant will support the creation of a new wind tunnel facility to test its designs, creating highly skilled jobs in the process.

Dr Garrod said:

"The grant enabled us to fully kit out the wind tunnel with the tools and instruments we need. We'll also be hiring new staff and technicians. Having our own wind tunnel means we can halve our turnaround time and massively accelerate our development. It's moved the business forward by about a year."

Other successful bids include Woodlark Nurseries in Hersham, which is creating a new horticultural facility, while Upper Birtley Farm Partnership near Bramley will establish a premium glamping and outdoor education site in the Surrey Hills.

In Godalming, Sammi-Select will develop a 'practice interview' tool adapted from an AI platform to support marginalised jobseekers such as young people not in education or training and those who are digitally excluded.

County-wide initiatives

There are county-wide projects too, including the Surrey Venture Studio scheme, a collaboration between Surrey's three universities to support start-ups, and Source in Surrey, led by the county's Chambers of Commerce, encouraging larger businesses to 'buy local'.

Both are expected to complement existing work through the council's Business Surrey initiative.

Councillor Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said:

"The new Economic Growth Fund has generated a huge level of interest from across Surrey, demonstrating the real appetite from our amazing business community to drive innovation, growth and job creation in our county.

"Round one was highly competitive and we've only supported the highest quality bids which fully met the criteria. This ensures every pound invested delivers genuine growth, meaningful jobs and positive outcomes for Surrey's communities.

"Our ambition is to position Surrey—which already contributes £50 billion to UK plc every year—as one of the UK's leading regional economies, and this fund is one of the ways we're building the foundations to achieve that."

Next round

Round Two of the Surrey Economic Growth Fund is due to launch in October, focusing on Business Growth Grants. Applicants can expect a streamlined, one-stage process supported by a guidance handbook.

For full details visit: businesssurrey.co.uk/innovate/economic-growth-fund

Epsom and Ewell Times reporter adds Epsom winner Lesh Wear (or Lesh), is a maternity and nursing wear company focused on creating comfortable, leak-proof products for mothers, such as their FREEFLO nursing bra, aiming to reduce the use of disposable breast pads. The company, also known as Lesh Wear Ltd, was incorporated in March 2022 and is headquartered in Epsom, Surrey, with the primary goal of making the breastfeeding journey easier.

Recipients of Round One funding

A total of £1,979,982 has been awarded to the following organisations:

- Dorking Distillery, Dorking
- Halt Glass, Guildford
- Emilia JH, Reigate
- Sammi-Select, Godalming
- Molecular Medical, Guildford



- Bonovate, Camberley
- Woven Bio, Woking
- Streetwise Technology
- The Good Bacteria Company, Farnham
- UKIOT, Weybridge
- Lesh Wear, Epsom
- Woodlark Nurseries, Hersham
- Aero Sensor, Dunsfold
- Rhizo PTX, Guildford
- Cambertronics, Cranleigh
- Misty Moon Cider, Farnham
- DIREK, Guildford
- Tiontech, Guildford
- Raw Honey Distillery, Fetcham
- Whitespace Work Software, Godalming
- LenziQ, Horley
- GT Joinery, Molesey
- Source in Surrey (via Surrey Chambers of Commerce)
- Surrey Venture Studio
- Surrey Innovation Board (via the University of Surrey)
- Blakes Lane Farm, Guildford
- Upper Birtley Farm Partnership
- Ivelle Farm, Waverley

Image: Matt Furniss, Exec Member for Growth, with Barney Garrood of Aerosensor
Surrey County Council



Half price Surrey bus journeys for under 20s soar to one million

24 February 2026



19,000 young people aged 20 and under are now benefitting from 50% off bus journeys across Surrey.

The Surrey LINK card was developed by Surrey County Council in 2023 to give young people half price travel on all single and return bus journeys within the county.

Each month, 100,000 trips are now made using the card, with students travelling to higher education among the biggest users.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth at Surrey County Council, said:

“I’m delighted that our scheme to offer half price bus travel to all our young people here in Surrey is proving so

beneficial. We know that cost can be a barrier to people using public transport so we hope this significant discount will continue to make bus travel a more viable option, whilst also reducing car journeys across the county.

“This is part of our significant investment in bus travel and our efforts to encourage more people to use Surrey’s buses. We’re investing in making our buses greener including £32.3m for more ultra-low and zero emission buses and £6.3m for more ultra-low and zero emission community transport minibuses. A further £9m is being invested in bus priority measures to ensure buses turn up on time, and £1.4m in improving information for passengers at bus stops.”

Applications for the LINK card can be made at www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreylink.

Surrey County Council



Epsom library opening to register births and deaths

24 February 2026



Surrey’s Registration & Nationality Service has been undergoing changes over the past year with the aim of providing an improved experience for residents at important life moments. Dated and non-energy efficient buildings have undergone a makeover, and the council is increasing the number of locations where people can register births and deaths, all to make the service more accessible, modern and fit for the future.

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

“We are committed to ensuring that our Registration Services are accessible, sustainable, and reflective of the needs of our communities.

“The improvements at Rylston in Weybridge and the expansion of services into our modern Library Hubs demonstrate our ambition to deliver high-quality, convenient services for residents across Surrey.

“These changes are part of our wider vision to modernise council services and create ceremony venues that are fit for purpose and truly special. We want every couple, every family, and every individual marking a significant life event to feel that they are in a space that reflects the importance of the moment.

“Whether it’s welcoming a new life, registering the death of a loved one, or celebrating a union in marriage or civil partnership, our venues are designed to provide a warm, friendly, and memorable setting for these cherished occasions.”

Rylston, Weybridge reopens

Refurbishment works are now complete at Rylston Register Office. These were undertaken to preserve its future as a premium ceremonies venue in Weybridge. The whole building has benefitted from new carbon-efficient heating systems and windows and newly decorated ceremony rooms, ensuring it is a sustainable ceremonies venue for the county in the long term.

The redecoration works complement the historic building’s elegant style, enabling couples to exchange their vows in a classic and beautiful space.

More locations to register births and deaths

Epsom Library Hub and the new flagship Library Hub at Staines-upon-Thames now offer additional locations in Surrey to register births and deaths. Both library hubs have undergone major refurbishment offering multi-functional spaces in the heart of communities. Registrations are now part of that, helping to bring together complementary services all under one roof.

By October 2026, it is expected that Guildford Library will also be offering a registrations service for births and deaths, making sure residents can access key services in places and locations that are convenient to them.

Ceremonies in Guildford

To provide better value and more efficient services for residents, the council is moving towards the use of modern, efficient, multi-purpose buildings that allow multiple services to operate from a single location.

Guildford Register Office, also known as Artington House, does not meet the criteria to support this approach. It is a building which is not carbon efficient and where the ongoing costs of maintenance and necessary upgrades have significantly increased.

Following careful consideration, the decision has been made to vacate and sell Artington House. Bookings for ceremonies at this location will continue to be taken up until 31 October 2026. It is expected there will be alternative local provision in place for the registration of births and deaths at Guildford Library from October 2026. Customers will still be able to

book appointments online as usual.

Surrey is home to over 100 licensed ceremony venues across the county where couples can marry or form a civil partnership. This includes two council register offices in Weybridge and Leatherhead, each offering a range of different ceremony options. Other council venues are also being considered for ceremony use to increase the offer available for residents.

Further information

Frequently Asked Questions about the closure of Artington House can be found here: Guildford Register Office as a ceremony venue - Surrey County Council

A full list of registration services can be found here: Birth, death and ceremonies - Surrey County Council

Surrey County Council

Image: Epsom Library

New Business Start-Up Surrey Programme

24 February 2026



Budding entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses across Surrey are set to receive a major boost with the launch of the Start-Up Surrey Programme, a dynamic new initiative funded by Surrey County Council and delivered by leading business support provider The IncuHive Group.

This pilot programme will offer free, tailored guidance and practical support to residents who are preparing to launch their own ventures, as well as businesses in their first year of operation.

It will guide founders step by step, with expert-led workshops, one-to-one mentoring, practical advice, and support from others on the same journey.

The programme is expected to engage a diverse range of businesses across Surrey and will cover key areas such as funding, marketing, finance, digital presence, and scaling strategies. 120 businesses are set to receive support in the next six months.

It's the latest initiative from the Council under its Business Surrey offer, which provides free accessible support to help businesses of all sizes to start, grow and thrive.

Matt Furniss, the Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, welcomed the launch, adding:

"Surrey has a wealth of untapped entrepreneurial talent, and this programme provides a much-needed platform to turn ideas into action. It aligns strongly with wider efforts to boost inclusive economic growth, support innovation, and build resilience into our local economy - all of which provides benefits to our people and communities."

George Scott-Welsh, CEO of The IncuHive Group, said:

"IncuHive is delighted to bring this initiative to life. We've seen first-hand how the right support, delivered at the right time, can completely change the trajectory of a business. We're not just helping people start businesses, we're helping them build viable, resilient ventures that can generate a real income and contribute to the local economy. We are thrilled to be working with Surrey County Council to bring hands-on support and real opportunities to Surrey's start-ups."

The Start-Up Surrey Programme is now open for registrations to all start-ups and businesses in their first year of trading across Surrey.

Participation in the Programme is free for businesses, as it is fully funded by Council via UK government Growth Hub funding.

Anyone interested is welcomed to register for the introductory webinar hosted by the IncuHive team on Wednesday August 27 from 11am to 12pm. Register via the Eventbrite event link.

For more information or to register for the programme, visit <https://incuhive.co.uk/acceleration-investment/business-surrey>.

Or you can contact the Business Surrey team via the website - <https://www.businesssurrey.co.uk/advice-and-support/business-support-form/>

IncuHive will deliver the new Startup Surrey programme for budding business founders

The IncuHive Group is a leading business support provider offering mentoring, funding guidance, flexible workspaces, and training across Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Surrey. Their hands-on, high-impact approach has helped hundreds of businesses grow, thrive, and succeed.

Business Surrey is a Surrey County Council initiative focused on economic growth, skills development, and entrepreneurial support to help businesses start, grow, and scale in the region. Its offer includes a Growth Hub service, which is funded by UK Government.

Surrey tops UK hydrogen bus league

24 February 2026



Surrey County Council has invested over £16m in 34 zero emission hydrogen buses to ensure the county's bus service is cleaner and greener.

Over the last few months, 11 double decker buses have gone into service to join the 23 single decker hydrogen buses which have been serving Surrey residents since autumn last year.

The buses were built in the UK by Wrightbus and are run by bus operator Metrobus, which now has a total of 54 hydrogen buses making it the largest zero emission hydrogen bus fleet in the UK.

The single deck buses can operate for 600 miles before they need refuelling. Refuelling takes less than 10 minutes and they do not need to be refuelled or recharged throughout the day, offering more time on Surrey's roads serving passengers.

The hydrogen buses are operating in the following areas:

Single deckers:

Fastway route 100: Redhill - East Surrey Hospital - Salfords - Horley - Gatwick Airport - Crawley

Routes 430 & 435: Merstham - Redhill - East Surrey Hospital - Woodhatch - Reigate

Double deckers:

Routes 420, 460 & 480: **Epsom** - Preston - Tadworth - Banstead - Sutton - Lower Kingswood - Reigate - Redhill - East Surrey Hospital - Salfords - Horley A23 - Gatwick Airport - Crawley.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said: "I am delighted that all 34 of our new hydrogen buses are now serving on Surrey's roads. It is great to be partnered with likeminded Metrobus who are also committed to providing sustainable travel options.

"I couldn't be prouder that over half of the buses we have significantly invested in, make up the largest hydrogen bus fleet in the UK and the benefits this will bring for our residents.

"Our continuous investment in our bus network has contributed to almost 27 million bus passenger journeys made in Surrey last year. And over 14,500 residents aged 20 and under are benefitting from the Surrey LINK card which offers discounted bus travel around the county."

Ed Wills, Managing Director, Metrobus, said: "We are delighted to be rolling out an additional 34 new British-built hydrogen buses on to Surrey's streets, adding to the 20 already in operation, making it the largest hydrogen bus fleet in the UK. These buses are an excellent example of what can be achieved through partnership working. Together, we put sustainability and the transport needs of local people first."

The single deck buses use the latest generation of Ballard fuel cell which uses an average 6.2kg of hydrogen per 100km. CO2 savings - hydrogen buses are zero emissions at the tail pipe and use green hydrogen.

12,000 years of Surrey history to spring to life

24 February 2026



Fetcham Springs, Surrey - One of Surrey's most important archaeological sites has secured £250,000 in National Lottery Heritage Fund backing to launch a groundbreaking five-year community archaeology initiative.

The Communities at the River: The Fetcham Springs Archaeology Project, led by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU), will uncover over 12,000 years of human history while offering local people opportunities to get involved through volunteering, open days, and educational events.

Thanks to National Lottery players, the funding will expand on discoveries made in 2009 at the site, which revealed evidence of a prehistoric hunting camp dating from the end of the last Ice Age and a high-status Roman building. The new phase of work will explore periods ranging from the Ice Age to the Saxon era.

Hands-on history for all

The project, developed by SCAU's Community Archaeologist Hannah Potter, includes:

- **Volunteering on live archaeological digs**
- **Public open days** showcasing findings
- **Workshops** including **flintknapping** and even **gladiator training**
- **Visits from Stone Age and Roman reenactors**
- **Free school visits and loan boxes** for educational use

Fetcham Springs, which also holds the Wildlife Trust's Biodiversity Benchmark, is owned by SES Water, who are a key project partner and will help support landscape conservation alongside the archaeological work.

A legacy for the future

Findings will be shared through a pop-up museum, exhibitions, talks, and online resources, ensuring a lasting educational impact.

Cllr Denise Turner Stewart, Deputy Leader of Surrey County Council and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, said:

"Surrey has a rich and diverse history, and projects like Fetcham Springs help us preserve and share our heritage with future generations. This initiative will provide valuable educational and volunteering opportunities, allowing residents to actively engage with archaeology and deepen their understanding of our county's past."

Stuart McLeod, Director for England (London & South) at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, added:

"Projects like this inspire people of all ages to connect with their local heritage. We're proud to support Fetcham Springs, thanks to National Lottery players."

Grace Wood-Lofthouse, Sustainability Manager at SES Water, commented:

"Water at Fetcham Springs has supported life for millennia. This project will help us better understand how to protect our landscapes for the future."

For further details, visit the Surrey County Archaeological Unit website.

Image: Archaeologists at work - Cleaning a Roman wall at Fetcham Springs in 2009

Bus station app for visually impaired a first in Surrey

24 February 2026



Surrey County Council is now the first UK local authority to provide a new app to help guide blind and partially sighted passengers around bus stations across the county.

The Aira Explorer app allows customers to place a video call with a trained visual interpreter on speakerphone, who looks through the person's smartphone camera to guide them around the bus station.

The service is now operating at bus stations in Guildford, Redhill, Staines and Woking.

All app usage at these locations will be free of charge, provided by Surrey County Council using some of its allocation from the Government's Bus Service Improvement Fund.

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

"We're very aware that using buses and navigating bus stations can sometimes be difficult for people with visual impairments. We're keen to make bus travel accessible for everyone and hope this will support people with sight loss to travel confidently and independently.

As well as helping blind and partially sighted bus users to locate their bus, interpreters can also direct them to a member of staff for assistance, read the timetable for them or explain the way into town.

This initiative is part of our wider investment in buses which also includes £6.3m to provide 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.

We've worked with Govia Thameslink Railway, Sight for Surrey, the Sussex Sight Loss Council and the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People to get this trial underway, which we hope to extend if it proves popular."

The app is being launched as part of **Better Transport Week**, the annual celebration of how better transport can help connect communities and bring people together. This year, the week takes place from 16 to 22 June and is funded by the UK Government.

Ben Curtis from Campaign for Better Transport, which organises Better Transport Week, said:

"Good public transport networks help connect us to the people we love, the things we need and the places that matter. That's why I'm really pleased to see first-hand how Surrey County Council is working to improve the local bus network. Buses are key to keeping us connected, and the new Aira app will help ensure that everyone can access and use the county's buses, building a fairer future for everyone."

This initiative follows a successful roll out by Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), who have also partnered with Aira.io to support visually impaired passengers get around their rail network more confidently.

More information is available on the Surrey County Council website.

Epsom Library celebrates refurbishment this week

24 February 2026



To celebrate its extensive refurbishment, Surrey Libraries is holding a **Taster Week** at **Epsom Library** from **Monday 16 to Saturday 21 June**. The newly transformed Library Hub in the heart of Epsom town centre will offer a vibrant programme of free and ticketed activities for all ages.

What's On

Throughout the week, visitors can enjoy face painting, yoga, author talks, and the library's regular sessions including **Rhymetime, Storytime, digital support**, and **craft groups**.

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

'We know that our Library Hubs are in the heart of our thriving and bustling communities. Every effort has been made to ensure that this investment delivers essential services, event, work, study and socialising spaces that our local residents need and want, creating a lasting legacy to serve our communities now and for years to come.'

Two special exhibitions will be on display during the week:

- **'In the Margins'** - celebrating the voices of marginalised disabled artists.

- **Conquest Art Exhibition** - showcasing work by individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions.
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Daily Activities Schedule

Monday 16 June

- 10:00am-4:00pm: Digital Skills Support - NHS App help (Drop-in)
- 10:30-11:00am: Rhymetime (Under 5s, free)
- 3:00-4:00pm: Knit & Natter Group (Free)
- 3:45-4:15pm: Craft: *Medieval Flags* (Ages 4+, £1 suggested donation)

Tuesday 17 June

- 10:15-10:45am: Storytime (Ages 4-8, free)
- 3:45-4:15pm: Craft: *Helicopters* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
- 4:00-5:00pm: Author Talk - **S.J. Bennett** (£6, book via Eventbrite)

Wednesday 18 June

- 10:00am-12:00pm: Bourne Hall Museum
- 12:00-2:00pm: Digital Buddy Session (Free, book in person)
- 2:00-3:00pm: Talk by Surrey History Centre Archivist **Julian Pooley** (Free, book via Eventbrite)
- 3:00-4:00pm: Exercise Class with Rainbow Centre (Free, book in person)
- 3:45-4:15pm: Craft: *Pirate Flags* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)

Thursday 19 June

- 10:30-11:00am: Rhymetime (Under 5s, free)
- 3:45-4:15pm: Craft: *Dinosaurs* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
- 6:00-6:30pm: Choir Performance - Refugee Network Choir (Free, book in person)

Friday 20 June

- 10:00am-4:00pm: **Smoothie Bike** - pedal for a fruity reward
- 2:00-3:00pm: Yoga (All abilities, free, book in person)
- 4:00-5:00pm: Craft: *Butterflies* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)

Saturday 21 June - Family Fun Day

- 9:30-11:00am: Face Painting (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
 - 12:30-2:00pm: Balloon Modelling (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
 - 2:00-3:00pm: Children's Author Workshop with **Sam Stewart** (Ages 8-14, £4, book via Eventbrite)
 - 3:45-4:15pm: Craft: *Create Your Own Bookmarks* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
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Explore the New Library Hub

Epsom Library now features:

- Flexible event and performance space
- Upgraded furniture and study areas
- Two new meeting rooms
- **Super Access technology**: extended access for members beyond staff hours (book an induction in person)

This refurbishment is part of the first phase of the **Surrey Libraries Transformation Programme**, supported by Surrey County Council's Land and Property and Capital Projects teams.

The initiative aims to improve accessibility, modernise facilities, and offer more to Surrey's communities.

Get Involved

- Visit the Epsom Library webpage for more event details.
- **Joining your local library is free** - sign up at the Surrey Libraries website.