EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
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19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

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Bookham to get new community centre

24 September 2025



After six years of waiting and false starts, Bookham is finally getting a new community centre.

The old Bookham Youth Centre on Lower Road shut its doors in 2019 after falling into disrepair, leaving the area without a dedicated youth and community hub.

Members agreed to spend £2.8m of existing capital funds to knock down the old building and replace it at a Surrey cabinet meeting on September 24. Councillors said they hope the new multi-purpose building will be ready by March 2027.

Cllr Clare Curran, Conservative member for Bookham and Fetcham West said: “There is real excitement in Bookham that a new centre is going to be delivered.

“This is not just a youth facility […] The former centre was used by a huge range of community users from everything from the University of the Third Age to challenges with disabled children and an early years provider.”

The new centre is set to take the place of three lost facilities – the former youth centre, The Bridge in Leatherhead (closed after RAAC was found in the roof) and the Bookham Family Centre. Day-to-day running of the centre is expected to be handed to a third-party provider, meaning no additional ongoing costs to the council or future unitary authority.

“It has taken some time to get to this point,” said Cllr Clare Curran who represents Bookham. “We’ve had a few false dawns on the journey.”

In 2021, councillors promised a shiny new building on the Lower Road Reception Ground, at the cost of £2.5m, with homes alongside to help pay for it. But that plan was scrapped after tougher planning rules on the Green Belt and new biodiversity requirements meant the recreation ground scheme was no longer possible.

Instead, Surrey County Council has shifted its focus back to the old youth centre site. But housing that was meant to come alongside the scheme has been kicked into the long grass, with any decision on new homes

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ISSN 2753-2771

delayed until after 2027.

Public consultation and planning approvals are still to come so residents still have an opportunity to have their say.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Bookham Community Centre on 164 Lower Road. (Credit: Google Street View)

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