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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Epsom on course to connect Surrey businesses

31 January 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)

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

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

Council agrees to continue jobseeker support in Epsom & Ewell

31 January 2026



On 27 January 2026, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s Strategy & Resources Committee approved continued funding and delivery arrangements for the Epsom & Ewell Hub (EE Hub). This decision ensures that this valuable community service can continue helping residents develop their skills, build confidence and improve emotional wellbeing in an easily accessible location— supporting more residents to move successfully into employment. Between 2022-2025, over 1,319 residents registered with EE Hub.

The EE Hub will continue to be delivered by Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership – a local charity that is active in employment support, skills training and community learning.



Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village), Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee, said: “We are extremely proud to continue supporting the Epsom & Ewell Hub, which has become an invaluable resource for residents taking positive steps towards work.

“The Hub’s strength lies in its holistic, people-centred approach—helping individuals overcome both practical barriers to employment and the anxiety or low confidence that can often accompany time out of work. For many, challenges linked to education, confidence or personal circumstances can hinder progress, and the Hub provides exactly the support needed to move forward.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

“Over the past five years, the Hub has built strong partnerships with local businesses, NESCOT and DWP Jobcentre work coaches, which are essential to helping residents access training and meaningful opportunities.

“I am delighted that we are continuing our partnership with Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership to deliver this service, and I would like to thank them—and all our partners—for their commitment to providing such an effective and supportive resource for our borough.”

EE Hub services available

The Epsom & Ewell Hub provides free support for residents entering the workforce or returning to work, offering help with CVs, interviews and interpersonal skills, while also supporting those facing barriers such as anxiety or low confidence. Its holistic approach includes creative activities that build resilience, and it maintains strong links with local employers—connecting jobseekers to opportunities across organisations and high street businesses—and hosting regular job fairs.

Digital support is also available, helping anyone who wants to set up a mobile phone, access email through to using Microsoft Office or finding jobs online.

Residents can also access complementary programmes and training such as Work Well, which supports adults with long-term conditions to re-engage with employment; and Multiply, a numeracy skills initiative.

Mandy Bosher, Deputy Chief Executive, Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership said: “We are delighted that, with the support of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, the Epsom & Ewell Hub has been able to help residents build new skills and gain the confidence needed to move into work. Empathy and understanding are at the heart of everything we do, and our focus is always on providing the personalised support individuals need to move forward. What inspires us most are the individual learning journeys—each one unique, powerful and truly heartwarming.”

How to access EE Hub services

No appointment is needed, residents can simply drop in.

- Opening hours:9am to 5pm
- Location: 2nd Floor, Global House (opposite Waitrose exit in the Ashley Centre)
- Phone: 07903 697546
- Email:epsomandewellhub@surreyllp.org.uk
- Website:www.epsomandewellhub.com – *site is currently being updated*

Residents can also be referred through the local Job Centre Plus or other local charities and voluntary sector organisation.

More information on the EE Hub services can be found here: Employments, skills and training support | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

About the Epsom & Ewell Hub (EE Hub)

Initially the service was funded by the DWP and focused on supporting people aged 18-24 into employment. Following marked improvements in local youth unemployment, DWP funding ceased in 2023. From August 2023 the council utilised funding from the UK Prosperity Fund to support a service providing a wider range of employment support to residents of all ages across the borough and the Hub became the Epsom & Ewell Hub.

The service employs a small team of three dedicated staff, alongside other partners who deliver complementary services such as Work Well (helping to get long term sick back into employment) and other training schemes such as Multiply, a mathematical skills programme. www.epsomandewellhub.com is currently being updated

About Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership

Established in 1999, Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership (SLLP) is a registered charity. Each year they help around 2,000 people return to learn to gain new skills, qualifications and employment. They rely on a mix of income streams, including generating funds through their Bike Project social enterprise and securing grant funding for projects. About Us – Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership

About NESCOT

The North East Surrey College Of Technology (NESCOT) is a large further education and higher education college in Epsom and Ewell, Surrey. Attracting learners from the local community, nationally and from overseas, their range of courses include Further Education, Higher Education, professional, leisure, short, full- and part-time courses. Nescot College Surrey. College of Further and Higher Education | Nescot

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Related reports:

Big employment hub coming to Leatherhead

Employment Hub opening to all

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Ex-Gendarme launches Epsom safety awareness programme for children

31 January 2026



A new safety awareness programme for children has been launched in **Epsom** by former French armed police officer Xavier Vollin, who now works in the UK as a close protection officer for foreign diplomats and a behavioural detection instructor. Mr Vollin, who was awarded a Medal for Bravery during his police service, has more than 25 years' frontline experience in law enforcement, personal protection and behavioural analysis. He also trains colleagues in recognising early warning signs and behavioural anomalies in everyday environments. The initiative, developed under his training company XavSafety, is currently being piloted with children aged 9 to 13, with plans to expand to older teenagers and adults.

Seeing what others miss

Mr Vollin said that much traditional safety advice focuses on what to do once a situation has already gone wrong, whereas his approach concentrates on what happens before that point, helping participants notice changes in behaviour, inconsistencies in surroundings and subtle cues that may signal emerging risk. The programme emphasises calm awareness, observation and environmental understanding rather than confrontation or fear-based thinking. It is described as helping children "see what others miss", while remaining age-appropriate, engaging and accessible. Mr Vollin said the aim is not to turn children into "mini security officers", but to help them become more present, confident and aware of how people and environments can change around them.

Pilot programme underway in Epsom

The initial six-week programme began in early January 2026 and has deliberately been kept small to allow the format to be refined and adapted before wider rollout. Sessions combine practical exercises with elements of behavioural observation and pattern recognition, presented in a way intended to remain playful rather than intimidating. Early feedback from parents and children has been positive, although images and evaluation material are currently limited while the pilot phase continues. Future developments are expected to include programmes for older teenagers and adults, exploring the same core skills in greater depth, and Mr Vollin intends to formalise the framework and pursue CPD accreditation.

Focus on awareness in a digital age

Mr Vollin said the wider purpose of the project is to help young people reconnect with their surroundings at a time when attention is increasingly absorbed by screens. He described the underlying idea as being less about strength or reaction, and more about presence, understanding people and recognising risk early, before reaction becomes the only option. The programme is currently launching locally in Epsom, with potential for expansion depending on demand and community interest. Further details about the initiative can be found on the XavSafety website.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Puppy School has arrived in Epsom!

31 January 2026

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771



■ Owning the perfect puppy has never been easier now that “Puppy School” has arrived in Stoneleigh, Epsom!

■ “Puppy School” is a UK-wide network of professional dog trainers and Angelika received her own tutor training from renowned author, dog trainer and canine behaviourist Gwen Bailey.

Six weekly lessons held in St John’s Church Hall, Stoneleigh run by Angelika, are based on kind, gentle and effective methods. Angelika teaches owners how to improve their dogs’ obedience and ensure their puppies become good-mannered, well-balanced pets − friendly with adults, children and other dogs, and responsive to basic commands. Based on behavioural research and a better understanding of how animals learn, Angelika will teach owners to train their pets using kind, reward-based techniques, rooted in science. This helps produce obedient, well-mannered dogs who are not timid or fearful.

Angelika attends regular courses in the latest animal behaviour and training techniques and keeps up to date with information that may be useful to pet dog owners.

Angelika says, “My classes are designed to make training simple, and to be fun for both owners and puppies. They are ideal for dogs aged up to the age of 20 weeks and I teach owners and their puppies how to enjoy a healthy and happy life together.” She continues. “I am passionate about what I do, I feel that I am a friendly, approachable trainer and I shall always be on hand to give all the advice owners need to turn their puppies into well behaved adult dogs and beloved family pets.”

Classes held at St John’s Church Hall, Station Approach, Stoneleigh, Epsom KT19 0QZ

■ Studies show that it’s never too early to begin training and socialising pups. The earlier the better (and the easier it is) Socialisation and Habituation are key!

■ Puppy School was formed in 2002, and professionally trained tutors are running classes UK-wide.

■ Puppy School founder Gwen Bailey worked for the Blue Cross animal welfare charity, from 1988 to 2002 and pioneered the use of dog behaviour knowledge in the rehoming of unwanted animals. She was the first person to be appointed by a national animal welfare charity as a full-time animal behaviourist, eventually heading a team of behaviourists. Gwen has successfully solved behaviour problems in thousands of rehomed dogs, helping to prevent dogs with behavioural problems being passed from home to home and improving the rehoming success rate

■ For further information or to make a booking please contact Angelika on email:

Angelika@Puppyschool.co.uk alternatively, please visit: **www.puppyschoolepsom.co.uk**

Sponsored article.



Surrey businesses benefit from County grants

31 January 2026

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771



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

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

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

Surrey Uni powering hydrogen and low carbon energy

31 January 2026



A new partnership between the University of Surrey and leading clean energy technology company Ceres aims to speed up the development of next-generation clean power systems and hydrogen production – supporting the UK's net zero ambitions and helping address a growing skills gap in electrochemical energy technologies.

The collaboration brings together Ceres' expertise in solid oxide fuel cells (SOFC) and solid oxide electrolysis (SOEC) with Surrey's research strengths in electrochemical energy systems, digital and multiscale modelling, and advanced materials characterisation. Solid oxide electrolysis allows for highly efficient hydrogen production using electricity and heat, while solid oxide fuel cells can generate low carbon power for applications ranging from industrial processes to data centres.

Under the partnership, the teams will focus on improving the efficiency, durability and performance of these technologies, using advanced modelling and mechanistic insights to help translate fundamental research into real-world systems more quickly. Together, they will pursue joint research projects, collaborative funding bids and new training and placement opportunities for students.

Professor Qiong Cai, Professor in Sustainable Energy and Materials at the University of Surrey, and academic co-lead, said:

"Solid oxide electrolysis and fuel cells have huge potential to underpin the UK's future energy systems, from large-scale hydrogen production to low-carbon power for industry. But real progress depends on improving efficiency, durability and performance so these systems can operate reliably in the real world. This partnership gives us the opportunity to tackle those challenges head-on, combining fundamental science with a clear route to application."

Professor Jin Xuan, Associate Dean of Research and Innovation for the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, who is also a co-lead at Surrey, said:

"There is a growing skills gap in hydrogen and electrochemical energy technologies, at a time when demand for these capabilities is increasing rapidly. Working together with Ceres, we aim to help train the next generation of engineers and scientists in these fields through placements and hands-on research, ensuring the UK has the expertise it needs to support a net zero economy."

The partnership is outlined by a three-year Heads of Terms agreement and will see the teams work together to develop a pipeline of joint research projects and funding bids.

A symbolic signing ceremony, which took place at the University of Surrey on 14 January 2026, formally marked the start of the collaboration and provided an opportunity for both parties to set out priorities for the work ahead.

Dr Subhasish Mukerjee is Chief Scientific Officer at Ceres and was recently appointed a Visiting Professor within Surrey's School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. He said:

"We are delighted to expand our collaboration with the University of Surrey across fundamental electrochemistry research, modelling and digitalisation, and strategic testing to develop the next generation of clean energy technology.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

This collaboration strengthens our leadership in the solid oxide field and supports the UK's drive toward achieving its net zero targets."

.

.

.

.

.

Surrey University

.

.

Council's refusal leaves Esher's Marquis of Granby derelict

31 January 2026



The owners of the Marquis of Granby in Esher have hit back at Elmbridge Borough Council after it refused to recognise the venue as a restaurant. They said the decision they say is "wrong" and "based on a misunderstanding".

Greene King, which owns the site on Portsmouth Road, has now submitted a fresh planning application asking for a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use. They want official confirmation that the Marquis of Granby should be classed as a restaurant, not a pub.

They argue the council made a "fundamentally flawed" decision last year when it rejected their original application in November 2023.

According to Greene King, the venue has operated primarily as a restaurant since 1994, with alcohol sales playing a secondary role. In simple terms: most people went there to eat, not just to drink.

Elmbridge council, however, ruled that the premises looked more like a "drinking establishment with expanded food", a specific planning category used for pubs that also serve meals. The classification puts it outside the normal restaurant category and limits what the building can be used for in future.

Although 77.8 per cent of its sales come from food, officers said in their 2023 report, this is typical for modern pubs, which commonly serve meals, and pointed to industry data showing similar patterns nationwide. They also highlighted pub-style features including a large bar area, self-seating, multiple beer taps, a cellar stocked with kegs, gambling machines, event nights with DJs, and the venue's own website branding itself as a "local pub". The council found these characteristics outweighed the presence of a restaurant area and concluded the premises more closely resembles a pub, not a restaurant, leading them to refuse the certificate.

But Greene King strongly disagrees. They say the council has misunderstood the planning rules and how they apply to the site. Their planning consultants argue:

- The Marquis of Granby has never been a drinking-led pub, so it cannot suddenly be classed as one.
- Planning rules do not allow a restaurant to automatically change into a "drinking establishment with expanded food" without permission.
- The business was still food-led even after its carvery deck was removed in 2020.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

- Features like a bar, beer taps and a garden do not automatically make somewhere a pub and many restaurants have these too.

They also say the council relied too heavily on a trade magazine article about pub food and drink sales, which they describe as “meaningless” evidence.

Greene King points out that it successfully secured the same certificate for six similar venues elsewhere, with no objections from councils. The Marquis of Granby is the only one that has been refused.

Since closing, the building has become run down, with heavy graffiti, vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Greene King says the lack of a certificate is “sterilising” the site and stopping it from being reused and that it is now a potential fire risk.

A spokesperson said the evidence clearly shows the venue was laid out for dining, with large kitchen facilities, menus focused on meals, tables set with cutlery and condiments and most of the space is dedicated to seated customers. They argued this proves food was the main attraction.

Greene King is now asking the council to reconsider and approve the certificate without delay. If granted, it would officially confirm the Marquis of Granby as a restaurant, making it easier to bring the site back into use.

The council has not yet commented on the new application.

.

.

Emily Dalton LDRS

.

.

Marquis of Granby pub on Portsmouth Road, Esher. (Credit: Google Street View)

.

From the Cosmos to Commerce: University of Surrey Leads the Way

31 January 2026



The University of Surrey has been showcasing a remarkable breadth of achievement in recent weeks, with major advances announced across fundamental science, international collaboration, digital trade policy and lifetime academic excellence.

From unlocking the origins of the universe’s rarest elements, to shaping the future of UK trade infrastructure and celebrating world-leading research careers, the University’s latest announcements underline its growing national and international impact.

Unlocking the universe’s rarest elements

Surrey scientists are leading a new £215,100 international research project that aims to transform understanding of how chemical elements are formed during extreme cosmic events such as supernovae, neutron-star collisions and X-ray bursts.

Funded by the Royal Society’s International Science Partnership Fund, the three-year project brings together researchers from Surrey, Kyushu University and Japan’s world-leading RIKEN laboratory. The team will develop and deploy cutting-edge instruments capable of measuring some of the rarest and most unstable atomic nuclei ever studied.

These exotic isotopes do not exist naturally on Earth and can only be created briefly in advanced physics laboratories. By measuring their mass and decay rates for the first time, researchers hope to refine theoretical models of nuclear structure and gain new insight into how the heaviest elements in the universe are formed.

Experiments will take place at RIKEN’s Rare-Radioactive Isotope Ring, a unique facility that allows repeated observation of these short-lived nuclei. Surrey researchers will play a central role, leading the design and testing of advanced detector and data-acquisition systems in the UK ahead of the experimental programme in Japan.

The collaboration is also expected to strengthen scientific ties between the UK and Japan and reinforce the UK’s position at the forefront of nuclear physics research.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Warning over UK digital trade and border fragmentation

In a very different field, new research from Surrey Business School and the Centre for the Decentralised Digital Economy has issued a stark warning that the UK risks falling behind global competitors in digital trade unless urgent action is taken.

The study argues that the UK's digital border initiatives are fragmented, with no single organisation responsible for coordinating legislation, technology platforms and end-to-end border processes. As a result, businesses face repeated data requests, delays and uncertainty, increasing costs rather than reducing friction.

Researchers examined UK trade and border policies since 2017, including the 2025 UK Border Strategy, recent digital trade legislation and multiple government pilot projects. Drawing on international case studies and academic research, the team proposes a collaborative governance framework to guide reform.

The report calls for the government to give one body a clear mandate to orchestrate policy, digital platforms and data standards across departments. It argues that, with the right leadership, the UK has a window of opportunity to create a new digital "silk road" for trade, enabling trusted data sharing that benefits smaller firms as well as multinationals.

Lifetime achievement recognised in materials science

Surrey's excellence in research was further highlighted by the announcement that Professor Joseph Keddie, Professor of Soft Matter Physics, has been awarded the 2026 Sir Eric Rideal Award for lifetime achievement in colloid and interface science.

Jointly awarded by the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Society of Chemical Industry, the prestigious honour recognises sustained and distinguished contributions to the field. Professor Keddie is internationally known for pioneering work on polymer colloids, sustainable materials and so-called "living materials", with applications ranging from coatings and adhesives to wastewater treatment and bioremediation.

Over a career spanning more than three decades, he has authored more than 150 academic publications, holds multiple patents and co-authored the influential book *Fundamentals of Latex Film Formation*. His work at Surrey has previously been recognised by major awards from both the Institute of Physics and the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Professor Keddie will deliver the Rideal Lecture, titled *More than Watching Paint Dry*, on 8 April 2026, presenting highlights from his research including self-layering coatings and carbon-storing "living paints".

A university with global reach

Taken together, the announcements paint a picture of a university operating at the cutting edge across disciplines: advancing fundamental science on a global stage, influencing national policy debates, and nurturing research careers with lasting international impact.

For Surrey residents, the achievements reinforce the University of Surrey's role not only as a local institution, but as a centre of innovation and expertise with reach far beyond Guildford.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Get That Drain Unblocked in Epsom & Ewell – Trusted Local Drainage Specialists

31 January 2026



Blocked drains are one of the most common and disruptive problems faced by homeowners and businesses in Epsom and

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

Ewell. What often starts as a slow-draining sink or unpleasant smell can quickly turn into an overflowing drain if left untreated. Acting early is usually the best way to prevent further damage and unnecessary costs.

Drainage & Plumbing Ltd is a local drainage company providing professional drain unblocking services across Epsom, Ewell and nearby areas. Working regularly within the community, the team understands the drainage challenges common in the area, particularly in older properties where pipework has been in place for many years.

The company focuses on thorough, long-lasting solutions rather than temporary fixes. Blockages caused by grease, debris or everyday waste are cleared properly using professional equipment, helping restore normal flow and reduce the likelihood of repeat issues. Whether the problem affects a kitchen sink, toilet or external drainage system, work is carried out efficiently and with minimal disruption.

Reliability and transparency are key priorities. The business places strong emphasis on clear communication, punctual attendance and fair pricing. Customers are given honest advice based on the condition of their drains, allowing them to make informed decisions without pressure or unnecessary upselling.

Drainage issues can affect residential homes, rental properties and local businesses throughout Epsom and Ewell. Having access to a dependable local drainage specialist can make a significant difference when problems arise, especially when quick action helps prevent further disruption.

By choosing a local service, residents are also supporting a business that contributes to the local economy and community. The company continues to build its reputation in Epsom & Ewell through repeat customers and word-of-mouth recommendations.

If you are experiencing a drainage problem or would like professional advice, local help is available from a team that understands the area and its infrastructure.

Drainage & Plumbing Ltd
Local drainage specialists serving Epsom & Ewell
Call: 07771 200075
Website: drainage-plumbing.co.uk

Sponsored article

Neurodiversity good for business Surrey study shows

31 January 2026



Businesses and policymakers risk missing out on workforce potential by misunderstanding neurodiverse conditions and the biological differences that shape entrepreneurial strengths, according to new research led by the University of Surrey. Instead of considering ADHD, dyslexia and bipolar conditions only as static clinical challenges, researchers build on the existing entrepreneurship literature to argue that these conditions can equip people with unique abilities that drive entrepreneurial action, innovation, and business growth.

In a study, published in Neurodiversity in Entrepreneurship, researchers carried out a systematic review of scientific evidence published between 2011 and 2023, mapping 139 papers and 28 core studies across business and management. Importantly, they focused on using organisational neuroscience evidence, spanning from brain activations to genetic mechanisms linked to ADHD, dyslexia and bipolar conditions.

Researchers found evidence that entrepreneurs with ADHD often show high entrepreneurial alertness and strong performance in innovation and risk taking. Dyslexic entrepreneurs may instead compensate for reading and writing challenges by developing advanced delegation strategies to accelerate business growth. Meanwhile, traits linked to bipolar conditions correlate with creativity, idea generation and willingness to pursue bold ventures.

Dr Sebastiano Massaro, co-author of the study and Associate Professor (Reader) of Organisational Neuroscience at the University of Surrey, said:

“We often behave as if neurodiversity automatically means a deficit. The biological evidence shows something completely different. These conditions span a continuum and there is strong evidence that in entrepreneurial contexts they bring valuable strengths. Simply put, we need to stop treating them as problems to be fixed.”

The research advocate for a shift in how businesses support programmes and employers view neurodiversity. It argues for business environments that value difference rather than seeking to normalise it and calls for practical organisational strategies that actively harness neurodiverse strengths. The study also highlights policy implications, noting that

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

entrepreneurial settings can provide pathways to work and equality for people who are often miscategorised as unemployable.

Dr Sebastiano Massaro continued:

"To the best of our knowledge, we are presenting the first grounded explanation of why neurodiversity matters in business by drawing a direct connection between neural mechanisms and entrepreneurial behaviour. If universities, industry and governments overlook how these biological foundations impact entrepreneurship, they might miss valuable capability hidden in plain sight."

Surrey University

Toyota prevention of future death report

31 January 2026



A senior coroner has warned that more drivers could die because a Toyota braking system failed to stop a woman's car before a deadly M25 crash. Lisa Bowen, 48, died instantly when her Toyota Corolla hit the back of a stationary lorry on the hard shoulder at almost 38mph in January 2022 despite her pressing the brake pedal repeatedly. Senior Surrey coroner Richard Travers said the car's anti-lock braking system (ABS) "operated to reduce the braking effect almost entirely" and was "working in accordance with its design", but the design did not account for what happened when her tyre deflated and detached at speed. He said the outcome was "an unintended effect of the system's design which arose because the specific scenario […] had not been taken into account in the design process." Mr Travers warned this creates "a continuing risk that future deaths could occur unless action is taken".

The senior coroner said he was noting that a large number of Toyota Corollas on UK roads have the same anti-locking braking system as Ms Bowen's car, and other brands may well be affected too. He also criticised the "catastrophic failure" of the lorry's under-run protection bar saying its strength was "grossly insufficient" under current laws. The coroner said he was concerned that the risk of future death will arise without more stringent requirements for how much force such bars must withstand.

He has issued a statutory Prevention of Future Deaths report to Toyota, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and the Department for Transport (DfT), saying: "Action should be taken to prevent future deaths by addressing the concerns set out above." They must reply by 16 January 2026. A DfT spokesperson said: "Every death on our roads is a tragedy, and our thoughts are with Lisa's family and loved ones. We will carefully review the coroner's findings from this tragic case to determine the appropriateness of further amendments to these requirements."

A Toyota spokesperson [Toyota's HQ is in Burgh Heath, Epsom] said the company was "deeply saddened by this tragic accident" and "acknowledges the findings of the coroner", adding it would "carefully review the Senior Coroner's conclusions."

Emily Dalton LDRS

Toyota HQ Epsom Google

Nirvana comes to Epsom care home

31 January 2026

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771



Sponsored article: **Linden House Care Home in Epsom** is proud to announce a new era under its new owners, Nirvana Care Group. Established in the 1980s, the home has long served the local community, and the new leadership has already made significant investments to further elevate care standards across Surrey.

Phase 1 of a resident-led refurbishment is now complete, shaped by meaningful input from those who live at the home. Linden House has also invested in modern technologies and strengthened service partnerships to enhance safety, comfort, and wellbeing.

The transition has been warmly received by staff, with six former team members returning to support the refreshed vision. The home is also delighted to welcome back former manager Reshma Tupsy, reflecting Linden House's strong sense of community and continuity. With a dedicated multicultural team and an in-house chef, residents enjoy personalised menus tailored to cultural and faith requirements, along with fully customised activity programmes.

Following the renewed leadership, upgraded facilities, and a focus on truly personalised care a small number of vacancies remain for families seeking warm, modern, and compassionate care.

For enquiries or to arrange a visit, contact Reshma on **01372 721 447**

Is Epsom and Ewell ideal for remote working?

31 January 2026



When remote work is supported well, it can raise job satisfaction, reduce commuting stress and give people meaningful control over their work life balance. However, the recent drive by some organisations to bring staff back into offices risks reversing these gains and widening the gap between regions, according to a new study that University of Surrey researchers contributed to as part of the R-Map project.

A new study, published in Nature's Scientific Data, details how access to reliable internet, local services, green space and community facilities can determine whether remote work improves quality of life or deepens inequalities. The research is based on a survey of more than 20,000 workers from across Europe and explores how remote work is influencing relocation patterns, wellbeing, job satisfaction, productivity, travel behaviour and the pull between urban and rural living.

The study gathered responses from people living and working remotely in Europe through a large, structured survey. Participants were asked about their preferences, experiences and the practical realities of working away from a traditional office. The survey was distributed across multiple languages and included workers in both rural and urban environments.

The study highlighted that remote work, either fully or partly i.e. hybrid work, is often associated with higher job satisfaction and a stronger sense of personal autonomy, particularly because people can choose where and when they work. This can support better work life balance, reduce commuting stress and create more space for family time or personal priorities.

However, where remote work is discouraged or unsupported workers may lose these benefits. Returning to a daily commute or living far from their workplace can limit choice, increase strain and reduce the positive local impact remote work can bring to smaller towns and rural communities.

Dr Nikolas Thomopoulos, Principal Investigator of the study from the University of Surrey, said:

"Remote work is changing how our towns and cities function and who gets access to good and rewarding jobs. When remote work is supported properly it can reconnect residents and tourists with their communities and boost local economies. When it is not, it risks deepening divides. We are hopeful that this research will provide policymakers with the clear evidence needed to shape a fairer and more sustainable future of work."

Dr Tracy Xu, Co-Director of the Future of Work Research Centre at the University of Surrey, said:

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

“Our research shows that remote work can genuinely improve quality of life by giving people more choice in where and how they live. Without strong digital access and supportive environments, remote workers can feel isolated and overlooked. This study gives us the detail needed to understand where remote work thrives and where it needs to be improved.”

The R-Map findings suggest that remote work can revitalise some rural or suburban areas, especially when people are able to move away from expensive city centres in search of more space, affordability or proximity to nature.

However, the benefits are not shared equally. The study shows that access to everyday amenities such as green spaces, grocery shops, healthcare and public transport within a short walking distance plays a key role in whether remote work feels sustainable and supportive of wellbeing. Where these amenities are lacking, and where digital connectivity is weak, remote workers were more likely to report feelings of isolation and difficulty maintaining work life balance. In contrast, participants with reliable internet and access to local services reported greater satisfaction with remote work and stronger ties to their communities.

Surrey University

Primark finally indicates a season to open in Epsom

31 January 2026



The Ashley Centre in Epsom has confirmed that Primark is set to open its doors in Spring 2026, occupying a two-floor, 44,000 square foot retail unit. The arrival of this major fashion retailer is being billed as a milestone for the Centre and for the local retail offering in Epsom.

Background and delays

The unit which Primark will occupy has had a long and troubled history of vacancy. The previous occupier closed three years ago, leaving the large space empty ever since. Work to transform the unit was delayed when the first building contractors appointed to carry out the full refit went bust, setting the project back significantly. After these setbacks, the confirmation that Primark will finally open its Epsom store marks the end of a long wait for local shoppers and a major boost for the Ashley Centre.

The new Primark store

Primark will open next to fashion giant JD Sports and within easy reach of other major retailers such as NEXT, Marks & Spencer and Oliver Bonas. The store will span two floors and showcase the brand’s extensive range of women’s, men’s and children’s clothing, accessories and homeware. Its size and location will make it one of the key anchors within the shopping centre.

A boost for the town centre

Ashley Centre Assistant Manager Will Greenland said: “The opening of Primark is one of the most highly anticipated openings that Ashley Centre has had for quite some time, and we know just how much local shoppers are looking forward to it. Primark’s arrival will not only bring a fantastic new retail offer to Epsom, but it will create new job opportunities, increase footfall, and further elevate the centre’s role as a prime shopping destination in the community.”

The store is expected to generate new employment, draw additional visitors from across Surrey, and strengthen the Centre’s position as Epsom’s prime shopping hub.

About Primark

Primark was founded in Dublin in 1969, trading as Penneys in Ireland, before expanding to the UK in the 1970s. It has since grown into one of the country’s biggest clothing and homeware retailers, known for its affordable fashion and high turnover of seasonal collections. The company continues to rely on the appeal of physical stores rather than online sales, promoting what it describes as a lively, social shopping experience.

In recent years, the brand has invested in sustainability and responsible sourcing, aiming to improve transparency across its global supply chain. Despite broader challenges in the retail sector, Primark has consistently reported strong growth and remains a major draw for shopping centres across the UK.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Looking ahead

For Epsom, the long-awaited opening of Primark represents more than just another store. It brings one of Britain's best-known brands to the town centre, fills a large empty space, and sends a signal of renewed confidence in the local retail economy. Shoppers can expect a broad and affordable range of fashion and homeware when doors finally open in Spring 2026.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Primark to open in Epsom

5 Shops that could replace House of Fraser in the Ashley Centre

---

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

31 January 2026



Julie Kapsalis recognised for bridging the gap between boardroom and classroom.

Nescot's Principal and CEO, Julie Kapsalis, won silver in the 'Community Champion' category at the National Business Women's Awards in London last night. Julie was also a finalist for the 'Corporate Leader of the Year' award, highlighting how the college brings together corporates, the community and students, offering young people exciting opportunities to shine.

Under Julie's tenure, Nescot has made business and community partnerships a primary focus, consistently opening doors for students. Examples include collaborations with the cruise industry and Epsom Downs Racecourse which have given students hands-on experience and led to new apprenticeships. Other students have gone behind-the-scenes at darts tournaments, hotels, museums, airports and at the Hampton Court Palace Garden Festival, while the art department has revitalised community spaces in Epsom with vibrant murals.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO at Nescot said: "Congratulations to the worthy and inspirational winners last night. It was great to win silver and to be in such illustrious company. The recognition reflects the hard work that goes on across Nescot, where we're always creating and taking opportunities to help our students thrive. I love my role, which I see as an enabler, and being able to make things happen. I get huge job satisfaction from bringing employers and students together so they benefit, either through an apprenticeship, a placement or even just an introduction that changes their path.

"The joy of attending awards is the connections you make and the inspirational stories you hear. Networking is key and I love meeting people, as I know that each business, community or civic connection we make has the potential to change a student's life."

Julie established a Women in Business Network, which hosts local leaders from organisations including KPMG, NatWest, Ringway, Wates and Atkins Realis. This year, she is especially proud of a partnership that Nescot has formed with the Royal Society for Blind Children which has enabled the establishment of a new Centre of Excellence for Blind and Visually Impaired students at Nescot, meaning young people from Surrey no longer need to travel outside the county for a college education.

The National Business Women's Awards aims to raise the profile of industrious, hardworking and enterprising Business Women nationally. The awards are made up of 23 categories and winners are chosen by an expert panel of judges. Find out more here.

NESCOT

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

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

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY