

## Church service following sex attack in Epsom

16 April 2026



A service held at Epsom Methodist Church has brought together faith leaders, politicians and residents in a symbolic call for unity following recent events that have unsettled the town.

The “Hope for Epsom” gathering, led by Superintendent Minister Reverend Catherine Hutton, was attended by community figures including Deputy Mayor Lucie McIntyre and Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire, alongside members of the local congregation.

At the heart of the service was a simple but powerful act. Attendees were invited to build a “future of hope” by placing stones one by one, each contribution representing collective strength and resilience. Reverend Hutton urged those present to see the community as something shaped by every individual, with unity and compassion at its core.

She concluded by quoting Dr Martin Luther King Jr: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

The gathering comes in the immediate aftermath of a serious sexual assault investigation and subsequent protests in the town centre, which saw a significant police presence and disruption to local life.

As reported by Surrey Live, Epsom’s MP Helen Maguire said she supported peaceful protest but warned that “those who are turning to disruption and intimidation cannot be allowed to do so.” She added that individuals coming from outside the area “to spread division and cause disruption” should “take it elsewhere.”

Police have confirmed that the victim is being supported by specialist officers, while urging the public not to speculate as investigations continue. East Surrey Chief Superintendent Mark Chapman said the case is complex and that officers are working to gather evidence and bring those responsible to justice.

Despite the message of hope inside the church, a sense of unease remains more widely. With national media attention and visible policing in the town centre, many residents are looking for reassurance that the incident is isolated and that Epsom remains a safe community.

The church service captured both strands of the town’s current mood: a determination to stand together, and a quiet but pressing call for answers.

Sam Jones and Romy Sustar

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## A surprise glimpse into 1883: Christ Church Epsom Common’s Parish Magazine

16 April 2026



Out of the blue, Christ Church Epsom Common was recently approached by a Worcestershire-based bookseller and gratefully accepted her kind gift of a bound volume (about the size of a modern paperback) of parish magazines from 1883. The volume, too battered and niche for resale, nonetheless provides a fascinating glimpse into the life of the parish

just seven years after the church's consecration in 1876.

There were Christ Church parish magazines before this: the January 1883 edition refers to an item in the now-lost December 1882 magazine. As with many such publications, they were seen as ephemeral at the time. Although issued monthly, the next surviving edition in the Christ Church archive dates from 1900, with records then remaining patchy until the late 1940s, when systematic retention began.

Both the gold-stamped spine and the frontispiece give the contents simply as *Parish Magazine 1883*, with no mention of the parish name. The editor is listed as J Erskine Clarke MA, an Anglican clergyman who, in January 1859, launched what is regarded as the world's first commercial parish magazine inset, prosaically titled *Parish Magazine*. Each monthly edition ran to around 24 pages and combined religious material with a surprisingly wide range of secular content.

Alongside sermons and Bible studies were items of fiction (often moralising), practical advice, articles on British wildlife, and descriptions of churches and places at home and abroad. The 1883 editions included pieces such as *First Aid to the Sick*, *Making a Will*, an account of a visit to Malta, an unexpectedly open-minded article on Islam and the Prophet Mohammed, and the intriguingly titled *Worms and their Habits*. Each issue carried at least two engraved illustrations, particularly to accompany the travel articles.

The inset was published by Wells Gardner, Darton & Company of Paternoster Buildings, London, specialists in ecclesiastical publishing, and printed by Strangeways & Sons. It was always intended to be surrounded by locally produced parish material. At Christ Church this usually amounted to a further eight pages, printed and bound with the inset by local firm L W Andrews & Son. In some months, when local material ran to only four pages, the usual plain cover was altered to make better use of the available space.

Parishioners paid 2d per issue - roughly £1 in today's money.

Much of the local content was routine but revealing. Each issue set out the full schedule of services for the coming month, listing not only Sunday services but weekday Mattins and Evensong, along with the hymns to be sung. Lists of baptisms, marriages and funerals followed, together with a standard notice inviting women to offer Thanksgiving after Childbirth, "there being no fee, but it being usual for a Thank-offering to be made at the Altar". Details of the previous month's collections were also carefully recorded.

Christ Church did not acquire its own church hall until 1899, so meetings and events were held in a variety of venues. The January 1883 magazine lists the Vicarage, the Working Men's Club, the Infant School and the Guild Room. The then-new Working Men's Club, opened in 1881 and later renamed the Epsom Common Club, stood just across Stamford Green.

The Infant School, now lost, stood on West Hill (then known as Clay Hill). Founded through an 1844 endowment by Miss Elizabeth Trotter of Horton Manor, O'Kelly's former racing stables were converted for the education of children from families on Epsom Common. The school closed in 1925 and was later demolished.

Another regular feature was the "Penny Bank", encouraging thrift among parishioners. Deposits could be made weekly at the Vicarage, with interest paid at 2½ per cent - or 5 per cent for children attending Christ Church Sunday School.

The January issue opened with a letter from the Vicar, the Revd Archer Hunter, then barely a year into what would become a 30-year incumbency. After setting out his vision for the developing parish, he appealed for more Sunday School teachers and closed by wishing all a Happy New Year - though only, he cautioned, for those "determined to spend it in the constant Presence of their God and Saviour".

Later editions offer vivid glimpses of parish life. February records a recitation of *Dickens' Christmas Carol* in the Infant School room, delivered by Mr Mechelen Rogers before a large audience. While not all were amused, those "qualified to give an opinion" spoke in the highest terms of his performance, promising him an "enthusiastic and noiseless" reception should he return.

March saw the founding of a parish branch of the Church of England Temperance Society, with 37 parishioners unanimously adopting a strongly worded resolution identifying intemperance as a source of poverty, crime and irreligion. Members signed pledges ranging from total abstinence to more qualified commitments, and the movement quickly attracted both adult and juvenile members.

The same edition listed the parish's current "Wants", including Sunday School teachers, a parish bier, a bookcase and books for a parochial library, and a new organ stop. It is a pleasing historical coincidence that this very volume survives bearing a library label inside its front cover, suggesting it was once item number 436 in that collection and heavily used.

For parishes that bound their magazines into annual volumes, the national publishers supplied a frontispiece and index, with the binding undertaken locally. A small label inside the rear cover of this book shows it was bound by John Snashall of Epsom High Street. Though now in poor condition, the quality of the leather spine and gold-blocked title speak of careful craftsmanship.

More than a century on, this battered volume offers a remarkably intimate picture of parish life in Victorian Epsom Common - practical, moral, communal and often surprisingly vivid.

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Image: Christ Church from postcard 1900 and the front pages of the January and April 1883 editions by Roger Morgan © 2022

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# Warm places to go to in Epsom and Ewell

16 April 2026



## Christ Church Ewell

**Address:** Cheam Road, Ewell, KT17 1AD

**Opening Times:** Wednesday from 10am to 1pm

**Services offered:** Hot drinks; meals; social activities

**Accessibility:** Ramps available for disabled access and disabled toilet

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## Epsom Methodist Church

**Address:** Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5AQ

**Opening Hours:** Wednesday from 10am to 6pm

**Services offered:** Hot drinks; meals; craft activities and social activities;

**Accessibility:** Fully accessible

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## King's Church, Epsom

**Address:** Off Gibraltar Crescent, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 9BU

**Opening Hours:** Friday from 6pm to 8pm

**Services Offered:** Hot drinks; Meals; Craft activities; Social activities;

**Accessibility:** Fully accessible.

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## Love Me Love My Mind

**Address:** St Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom, KT19 8HA

**Opening Times:** Monday from 1pm to 7pm

**Services Offered:** Meals; Hot drinks; Craft activities; Physical activities; Social activities; Meals.

**Accessibility:** Wheelchair accessible; Disabled Toilet

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## St Mary the Virgin, Ewell

**Address:** Ewell Village Hall, London Road, Ewell, KT17 2AY

**Opening Times:** Thursday from 12pm to 2pm

**Services Offered:** Hot drinks; Meals; Social activities; Food bank/ Food Club / Community Fridge.

**Accessibility:** Accessible toilet available.

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## Epsom Library

**Address:** 6 Epsom Square, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8AG

**Opening Times:**

- Monday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Tuesday : 9.30am to 7pm
- Wednesday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Thursday: 9.30am to 7pm
- Friday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Saturday: 9.30am to 5pm
- Sunday: Closed

**Services Offered:** Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

**Accessibility:** Full information can be found on the Epsom Library Webpage

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## Ewell Court Library

**Address:** Ewell Court Community Library, Ewell Court House, Lakehurst Road, Ewell, Surrey KT19 0EB

**Opening Times:**

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 10am to 5pm
- Wednesday: 10am to 5pm
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm
- Sunday: Closed

**Services Offered:** Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

**Accessibility:** Full information can be found on the Ewell Court Community Library Webpage

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## Ewell Library

**Address:** Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT17 1UF

**Opening Times:** Tuesday to Saturday from 9:30am to 5pm

**Services Offered:** Warm space, hot and cold drinks via a voucher scheme with the onsite cafe, events and activities.

**Accessibility:** Full information can be found on the Ewell Library Webpage

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## Stoneleigh Library

**Address:** 1 Stoneleigh Broadway, Stoneleigh, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 2JA

**Opening Times:**

- Monday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Tuesday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 10am to 1pm
- Friday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm;

- Sunday: Closed

**Services Offered:** Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

**Accessibility:** Full information can be found on the Stoneleigh Library Webpage

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## Tattenhams Library

**Address:** Tattenhams Community Library, Tattenham Crescent, Epsom Downs, Epsom, Surrey KT18 5NU

**Opening Times:**

- Monday: 10am to 1pm
- Tuesday: 10am to 1pm
- Wednesday: 10am to 1pm
- Thursday: 10am to 4pm
- Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm
- Sunday: Closed

**Services Offered:** Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

**Accessibility:** Full information can be found on the Tattenhams Library Webpage

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## Epsom Vineyard Church (Community Venue)

**Address:** 23 Lansdowne Road, West Ewell, Surrey, KT19 9QJ

**Opening Times:** Wednesday: 2pm to 5pm and Friday 10am to 12pm

**Services Offered:** Hot drinks ;Social activities; Light Meals;

**Accessibility:** Disabled access; accessible toilets; parking for 5 cars, plus on street parking.

Image: Epsom Methodist Church

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# Epsom Christmas carols of two colleges and a council

16 April 2026



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

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

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

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

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

Epsom Racecourse supported the service.

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

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

Lionel Blackman



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### **The Heart of Christmas**

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

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

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

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

We think of Christmases past -  
of laughter spilling across the table,  
carols sung a little off-key,  
hands held during snowy walks,  
stories told beside the glow of the tree.  
Those moments, though now memories,  
are treasures we carry with us -  
poignant reminders of love shared,  
and joyful times that shaped who we are.  
Their voices may have quietened,  
but their light has not dimmed.  
It lives in our hearts,  
woven into every song, every smile, every candle we light.

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

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

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

when we choose to hope.

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

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

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

Jackie King



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## Epsom Methodist Church launches new Story Club and Warm Wednesdays

16 April 2026



### **Epsom Methodist Church (EMC) is organising two exciting ventures for local people and families this autumn.**

First out of the blocks is a new Story Club for parents and toddlers that is now meeting every Monday morning at 11am in the community café at the Church in Ashley Road, Epsom. Christa Schoeni, an experienced children's practitioner, is leading 30 minutes of reading, rhyme time and singing for children up to age five. Parents and carers are able to borrow books to read with their children during the week.

"Our aim is to foster a love of reading. With tablets and other electronic devices so commonplace today there is a risk that children miss out on the value of listening, sharing stories with their parents and having their imagination fired by imaginary worlds," said Christa Schoeni.

And EMC's Warm Wednesdays starts a new chapter in its life. For a fourth year the church is open every Wednesday starting on 5th November.

Robert Hill commented: "Every Wednesday we provide a warm space where people can come and chat, join in with quizzes and games, enjoy free teas and coffees and a lunchtime snack of hot soup and a roll. On the first Wednesday of every month we have an expert who comes and provides practical help and advice on reducing energy costs and dealing with gas and electricity bills. Surrey County Council has also provided us with some warm clothing and accessories to help stay warm over the winter months and we will be distributing these supplies to local residents.

"Every Wednesday afternoon from 3.30 our warm space becomes an after-school club with craft activities for children and parents and a chance for older children and adults to hone their table tennis skills. We end our day with everyone enjoying a hot meal together cooked by a great team of volunteers.

"As a town centre church, we see it as our role and mission to serve the local community. We love having hundreds of people coming through our doors each day. We hope that Warm Wednesdays will provide a place not just to be warm and get help with staying warm, but a place where warmth also means friendship and a generous welcome."

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# Thousands of Young Muslims Gather in Surrey to Raise the Union Flag

16 April 2026



While London headlines were recently dominated by a divisive political rally, a very different gathering of young British Muslims took place quietly in the Surrey countryside.

From 19–21 September 2025, nearly 8,000 members of the **Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association UK (AMYA)** came together in Puttenham, near Guildford, for their annual **National Ijtema** — a three-day programme dedicated to faith, education, and service to the community.

The Ahmadiyya community, which has its largest UK mosque in **Morden** (the Baitul Futuh Mosque, one of the biggest in Western Europe) and another at **Southfields, Wimbledon**, is well established across South London and Surrey including Epsom. Locally, members are often seen involved in charitable activities such as foodbank support, litter-picking drives, and tree-planting schemes.

At the Surrey event, participants took part in academic and sporting competitions, discussions on civic responsibility, and practical workshops designed to encourage young Muslims to be active citizens. The highlight came when the Union Jack was raised and thousands pledged loyalty to the UK, echoing the teaching within Islam that “loyalty to one’s nation is part of one’s faith.”

His Holiness **Mirza Masroor Ahmad**, worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, addressed the gathering via live broadcast. He urged the youth to reform themselves, to uphold honesty and respect, and to serve both God and humanity.

Abdul Quddus Arif, President of AMYA UK, said:

“The National Ijtema is a powerful demonstration of how faith and civic duty can go hand in hand. Our young people show their love for Britain not through empty gestures but through practical service – from food drives and blood donation to supporting the most vulnerable in society.”

For decades the AMYA has raised millions for British charities, donated tonnes of food to foodbanks, and clocked up tens of thousands of volunteer hours. The Puttenham gathering was intended not just as an internal conference but as a visible statement of what patriotism can look like when it is rooted in service rather than division.

As one local attendee remarked, “We’re proud to be British, proud to be Muslim, and proud to show that the two go hand in hand.”

The Ahmadiyya community has long been a part of Surrey’s wider social fabric, opening its mosques for interfaith dialogue and local visits, and regularly organising peace walks. Against a backdrop of national debate about protest and identity, this year’s Ijtema sent a simple message: thousands of young Muslims are committed to building bridges and serving their country with dignity.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

[Surrey County Council flags up the flag issue](#)

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# Epsom’s Parish Church Marks 200 Years

16 April 2026



This September, Epsom pauses to celebrate the 200th anniversary of its parish church, the Church of St Martin of Tours. For two centuries the building has stood at the centre of town life — a place of worship, history, and identity for Epsom and Ewell.

The anniversary weekend will feature a range of special events. On Sunday 14 September at 3pm, historian Peter Ross will deliver a talk entitled *Dining with James and Jane: Eating at Home with the Georgians*. Drawing on the vivid diaries of Norfolk clergyman James Woodforde (1758–1802), who recorded every meal he ate, and the letters and novels of Jane Austen, Ross will reveal the food, manners, and household rhythms of Georgian England. His illustrated lecture will include images of paintings, prints, cookery books, and everyday domestic objects, offering a glimpse into the lives of our Georgian forebears. The afternoon will conclude with tea, followed by a service of Choral Evensong.

### **A stone laid in 1825**

On 19 May 1825, the Rev. Joseph Darby, vicar of Epsom, laid the first stone of a new parish church. The medieval church that had stood for centuries was by then both too small and in disrepair. A meeting in 1823 resolved — after some debate — to rebuild. The sturdy medieval tower at the north-west corner was spared, along with the ancient font and wall memorials, but the remainder was swept away.

The contractors, William Blofield of London, working to plans by architect Mr Hatchard of Pimlico, expanded the footprint of the building. Side aisles were widened and lengthened, the west front was advanced, and new staircases and galleries provided for greater capacity. The rebuilt church could now seat around 1,120 parishioners.

At the stone-laying ceremony, Rev. Darby was presented with a handsome silver trowel, inscribed to mark the moment. Sadly, the trowel has since been lost, but the act it commemorated continues to shape the heart of Epsom today.

### **Victorian Epsom: railways and renewal**

Within a generation, however, Epsom was changing again. The arrival of the railway in the 1840s transformed the town from a quiet settlement of around 3,300 people into a rapidly growing commuter hub. Two lines, one from London Bridge and another from Waterloo, brought new residents and prosperity. By the mid-nineteenth century, the population had more than doubled.

The parish church once again felt the strain. Inadequate for the growing congregation, its galleries deemed unsightly, and its facilities cramped, it became the subject of another ambitious rebuilding plan. The vicar at the time, Rev. Waldegrave Bainbridge-Bell, rallied support from influential local figures, including Lord Rosebery and Sir Thomas Bucknill MP.

There was even talk that Epsom Parish Church might become the cathedral of a proposed new Diocese of Guildford. With such aspirations in mind, the architects Nicholson and Corlette were commissioned to draw up a design of “cathedral proportions”.

### **The 1908 extension**

In August 1907, the foundation stone for the grand new east end was laid. A year later, on St Martin’s Day (11 November 1908), the Bishop of Winchester consecrated the new extension. The project cost £13,000 — a significant sum at the time — and gave the church much of the form it has today.

Not all of the plans could be realised: financial pressures meant the most ambitious elements of the Nicholson and Corlette design were never completed. But the east end remains one of Surrey’s most impressive ecclesiastical interiors, a testimony both to the ambition of its builders and to Epsom’s growth in the early twentieth century.

### **What remains today**

Today, three key layers of history meet in the building:

- The medieval tower, the oldest surviving structure in Epsom.
- The 1825 nave and west end, the fruit of the first great rebuilding.
- The 1908 east end, marking the town’s Edwardian expansion.

Together, they tell a story not only of the parish church but of the town itself: medieval market village, Georgian spa settlement, Victorian commuter suburb, and Edwardian provincial centre.

### **Looking to the future**

While this year’s anniversary recalls the laying of the 1825 foundation stone, there are further milestones ahead. In just

three years' time, the church will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its great east end. That event, too, will provide an opportunity for reflection and celebration.

For now, parishioners and townsfolk alike are invited to join in the September festivities — to mark 200 years since the church we know today began to rise from the foundations of its medieval predecessor.

As one of Epsom's most enduring landmarks, St Martin's stands not only as a house of worship but also as a witness to the town's history. Its tower and walls have looked down on 200 years of change. In celebrating this anniversary, the community also honours the generations who built, rebuilt, and preserved Epsom's parish church at the heart of civic life.

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## Epsom commemorates VJ day

16 April 2026



St Martin's Church, Epsom, was filled on Friday 15th August as the borough came together to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day - the end of the Second World War in the Far East. The service, organised by the Royal British Legion's Epsom and Ewell branch, brought together civic leaders, veterans, families, choirs and the wider community to commemorate those who served and those who never came home.

The service was led by Revd Nick Parish, who in his opening prayer set the tone:

"God, our Father, in the dying and rising of your Son, Jesus Christ, you have brought life and salvation out of cruelty and death. We mark VJ Day in gratitude for the courage of the allied forces who suffered for freedom in the Far East campaign, and in sorrow for all that hinders the coming of your kingdom of peace. Give us wisdom to learn from the bitter memories of war and hearts that long for the unity of all nations."

### A personal touch from local families

Among the most moving contributions came from Mrs Sheila Carlson-Berry, who read extracts from her late father Douglas Fletcher's letters home from Burma. Fletcher, who had volunteered for the RAF at 19, wrote more than 250 letters to his sweetheart Sylvie during his service.

From October 1944 he wrote with cautious optimism:

"I suppose by the time you receive this European war will be just about finished. What a wonderful thought. It must make the people at home very happy... loved ones at home free from all danger. That, of course, is the main reason for our joy. The other is that now we can have the men and materials out here to put an end to this."

In another letter, he reflected on the "forgotten" nature of the Burma campaign:

"Most people don't realise there's a war on out here. It's only the people who have someone here that understand what is happening. The children have suffered most. It will take years to erase horrible memories from their minds. Man's inhumanity to man - a terrible war, isn't it?"

By August 1945, as the atomic bombs fell on Japan, Fletcher wrote with relief:

"So it's all over. Hard to believe, isn't it? It came so suddenly, but there it is. It will make things so much easier... Yes, the atomic bomb is a terrible weapon, but I think we have it to thank for the Jap surrender... I sincerely hope it will be the last war on this earth. War is too terrible a business. So many innocent people have to suffer."

Sheila told the congregation: "As you probably guessed, Douglas is my dad. Sylvie, my mum. He never forgot his comrades. Each Remembrance Day, I went with him to Westminster, and he cried as he planted a cross in the garden for his friend and pilot, Godwin Scudamore, who didn't make it home."

### The stories of Epsom's fallen

Cllr Dr Graham Jones MBE and the Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, Michael Molyneux, read researched accounts of four Epsom men who lost their lives in the Far East campaign.

- **Sergeant Jack Cannon**, Royal Artillery, died 28 February 1944 aged 30 at Imphal, India: "Jack married Nora Rush in 1940, and a year later their son Anthony was born. After just a year with his family, Jack was sent to India... He was killed in action during a Japanese attack and later interred at the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery in Imphal. His widow Nora requested the inscription: *"To a beautiful life came a sudden end, and he died as he lived, everyone's friend."*

- **Corporal Lionel William Murray**, Dorset Regiment, killed at the Battle of Kohima, 4 May 1944, aged 28: “Before the war he lived with his mother in Langley Vale. He was evacuated from Dunkirk, then sent to India to train in jungle warfare. At Kohima he fought in bitter hand-to-hand combat and was killed in action. His gravestone reads: *In loving memory of a beloved son and brother. Rest in peace.*”
- **Lance Bombardier Alfred William Cates**, Royal Artillery, died of cholera 26 July 1943 aged 42: “Stationed in Singapore, he was taken prisoner in February 1942 and sent to work on the notorious Thailand-Burma Death Railway. His widow Emma chose the words: *So young, so calm, so bright, I bid you, my dearest one, goodnight.*”
- **Noel Seymour**, RAF wireless operator, died 14 October 1943 aged 21: “Taken prisoner in Singapore, he too was forced to work on the Burma Railway, where some 30 prisoners died every day. Noel was one of them. He lies in Kanchanaburi War Cemetery in Thailand, and his name is remembered on the war memorial in this very church.”

## Tributes from today’s leaders

Helen Maguire MP for Epsom and Ewell, whose grandfather had served in Burma, spoke of both the past and her own military service: “Those who served in the Burma campaign were referred to as the Forgotten Army, and today we remember them and we honour them... My grandfather fought in the Battle of Kohima, a brutal and decisive turning point in the war. Like many who served there, he never spoke of his experiences, but it was clear the war stayed with him for the rest of his life. I remember him today with pride, gratitude and honour.”

Maguire linked her own military service in Bosnia and Iraq to the experiences of those remembered:

“War is cruel and it affects innocent people. It’s something civilians should never have to live through. Today, I remember my grandfather and those he served with. I remember those who didn’t come home, and I remember too the lasting impact of service on families, on lives and on future generations. We give thanks for peace and pray for an end to wars.”

## Community effort

Barb Warwick, principal organiser with the Epsom RBL, later thanked the many contributors, from choirs and standard bearers to the volunteers who served over 100 cups of tea and cake in St Martin’s Hall. She acknowledged the “wonderful trumpeter Mr Dennis Sexton” for sounding the Last Post, and Tom Davey representing 135 Squadron.

Warwick reflected that this was “almost certainly the last service of its kind” and praised those who helped plan the event, especially John Rogers and Revd Nick Parish: “You did them proud.”

## Remembering the Forgotten Army

The commemoration at St Martin’s – once known as the “Burma Star church” – brought together personal memory, civic duty, and community remembrance. The letters of Douglas Fletcher, the stories of Cannon, Murray, Cates and Seymour, and the testimonies of descendants and leaders ensured that those from Epsom who served in the Far East will not be forgotten.

As the exhortation reminded the packed congregation: “*We will remember them.*”

You can watch the full service on this video link: [Epsom and Ewell VJ Day Commemoration](#)

Image: Barb Warwick of Royal British Legion Epsom and Ewell the principal organiser of the event.

# Run for humanity in Epsom and Ewell

16 April 2026



On Sunday, 18th May 2025, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association (AMYA) in the Southwest Region of England hosted a remarkable charity run that brought together people from across the local community in a spirited show of unity and compassion.

Held at Auriol Park, a public park in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, the event ran from 10 AM to 2 PM and served as a vibrant platform for both raising funds and awareness. With over £8,000 collected on the day, the event was a resounding success. All proceeds went to AMYA’s partner charity, *Humanity First*.

*Humanity First*, established in 1995 and registered with the UK Charities Commission, operates in 66 countries across six continents. It runs eight core programmes that have collectively transformed millions of lives through disaster relief efforts, sustainable development, and community empowerment. The funds raised through this event will directly support

the charity's response to various crises around the world, including the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

Participants came from across the region, with residents of Kingston, Worcester Park, Tolworth, Malden Manor, New Malden, Surbiton, Epsom and Ewell all playing their part in contributing to this noble cause.

The day began with a competitive 10K run that set the tone for the rest of the event, as runners, supporters, and volunteers came together with a shared purpose. Alongside the run, attendees enjoyed a variety of activities, including inflatable attractions, food stalls, and exhibitions that added a festive and welcoming atmosphere for families and supporters alike.

Beyond the fundraising, the event provided an invaluable opportunity for the public to learn more about the Islamic principle of serving humanity. In Islam, service to others is not just encouraged — it is considered a vital part of one's faith and spiritual fulfilment.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association, known for its strong emphasis on community welfare and interfaith cooperation, exemplifies this teaching by actively engaging in charitable activities across the UK and internationally. By organising such events, AMYA not only raises funds for critical humanitarian efforts but also helps foster mutual understanding and a sense of shared responsibility within the wider community.

Faran Shaheen

Regional Press Secretary for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association (AMYA) UK

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## Cleanliness is next to Godliness in Epsom

16 April 2026



On Sunday, 4th May, the sun was shining — and so were the smiles of Councillors Steven McCormick (RA Woodcote and Langley) and James Lawrence (LibDem College). While Steven knew what to expect having joined the group several times before, James was astonished to be greeted by a 110-strong team of volunteers, all equipped with litter pickers, high-vis jackets, and green and grey litter bags (more on those later), gathered and ready in Rosebery Park.

The volunteers, from ASEZ WAO and the World Mission Society Church of God, had travelled from Surrey, London, and as far afield as Manchester, Guildford, and Birmingham. Their mission: to clean up the parks and streets of Epsom as part of a "Reduce Plastic" campaign — an initiative backed not just by words, but by real action.

The event began with inspiring words from the councillors. Councillor James expressed his surprise at the turnout, admitting he had expected a group of around 11 but was delighted to see 10 times that number. "This is wonderful — amazing," he said. "It's so pleasing to see so many young faces in the crowd... so many people think activism is just shouting something online, but it's fantastic to see people actually doing something."

Councillor Steven added: "Hopefully people will just put litter in the bin — I know it's a big ask — but what you're doing is great and sets a really good example. You don't just explain it, you actually do it. Really good job."

Although Councillor Neil Dallen (RA Town) was unable to attend in person, he sent a message of encouragement via email, which was read out by a representative: "Best wishes to you all. This country depends on volunteers in many ways. A clean and tidy town encourages others to keep it clean and discourages littering and graffiti."

The mostly young adult volunteers were uplifted by the councillors' support, giving them a resounding cheer and calling out, "We love you!" Following the speeches, a short presentation was given on plastic pollution, highlighting the dangers of microplastics and encouraging people to think about how they can reduce plastic in their daily lives — something we can all take part in.

Afterwards, the councillors and volunteers set to work along three key routes in Epsom, including the town centre, the car park near Lidl, Epsom Square, Rosebery Park, and Mount Hill Gardens — all areas where litter had been reported. Recyclable and non-recyclable waste were carefully separated, with recyclable items placed in green bags and non-recyclable in grey ones.

Members of the local community praised the volunteers, and several even signed up for future events. Other environmental groups also offered words of encouragement, recognising the volunteers' hard work. By the end of the day, about 40 bags of rubbish had been collected and left at an agreed pick-up point, where they were retrieved by a ranger from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) and taken to the recycling depot. The EEBC depot had kindly supported the volunteers by providing around 30 litter-picking kits, which proved invaluable.

The day stood as a shining example of successful collaboration between community volunteers, councillors, and council staff. More activities are already being planned by ASEZ WAO, based at the World Mission Society Church of God on East Street, in partnership with Councillors Steven and James. These include further plastic awareness events, potential

upcycling initiatives, and of course, more litter picks.

Epsom was recently ranked the second-best place to live in England, and the volunteers are hopeful that, with continued community effort, it will claim the top spot next year. They are committed to working alongside the community and the council to inspire civic pride, keep our streets clean, and make our local area a pleasant place for everyone. As Councillor Neil noted, by setting a good example, we hope others will be inspired to keep Epsom clean and discourage littering and graffiti.

Olivia from ASEZ WAO summed up the spirit of the day, saying, “The event was brilliant — I loved it. I really hope it makes a difference, and if you have the time, I’d definitely recommend getting involved in something like this.”

Joe Adams