

Surrey Uni taking lead on future network security

17 March 2024



A national effort is needed to train the next generation of the United Kingdom’s workforce in intelligent and resilient telecom networks, says a world-leading 5G and 6G expert from the University of Surrey.

The comment comes as the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) announced that Surrey’s 5G/6G Innovation Centre will lead a new £8 million Centre for Doctoral Training in Future Open Secure Networks (FORT).

Over the next eight years, FORT will train more than 50 post-graduate researchers, who will become leaders with unique expertise in wireless communications, cybersecurity, networking, and artificial intelligence (AI). Surrey’s future cohort will influence the roadmaps of future open networking and security technologies and their applications.

In partnership with Queen’s University Belfast’s (QUB) Centre for Secure Information Technologies, FORT also enjoys support from more than 21 industry partners. These partners include: Amazon Web Services, Ampliphae, Angoka, AWTG, Catapult Satellite Applications, Codasip, Ericsson, Hewlett Packard Enterprises, HP, Intel, Interdigital, Keysight Technologies, Kyndryl, National Physical Laboratory, Nvidia, OpenWeb, Qualcomm, Rolls Royce, Virgin Media O2, and Viavi Solutions.

Regius Professor Rahim Tafazolli, FEng, Director of the 5G/6G Innovation Centre at the University of Surrey and Principal Investigator of FORT, said:

“I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to EPSRC for backing the Future Open SecuRe NeTworks (FORT) initiative. I am equally thankful for the support of our 21 industry partners and look forward to working closely with colleagues from Queen’s University Belfast. This powerful team has a unique vision, expertise, and mission of making the UK a powerhouse for future telecommunications.

“In a world evolving at breakneck speed, our programme is designed with this dynamic future in mind. We’re committed to nurturing future visionaries and leaders with in-depth knowledge of advanced space and terrestrial networks, environmental considerations, and AI technology. The UK’s focus must now shift towards upskilling individuals capable of addressing the cyber security challenges posed by AI and take advantage of opportunities presented by societal shifts, environmental concerns, and industrial advancements.”

Along with providing a world-class education with access to industry, FORT will create an environment for students to research new and better ways to build communication networks that are safe, reliable, and ready for the future. FORT is committed to conducting responsible, ethical research in cybersecurity, AI technologies, and future networks, with a strong societal focus. This approach is designed to generate world-class academic contributions and establish a pipeline of talent for the future.

Dr Jesus Martinez del Rincon, Co-Director of FORT and Research Director of Secure Intelligence at CSIT at QUB, said:

“With the FORT programme, we aim to create a community of 50 PhDs who will become the future, industry-conscious thinkers and leaders on secure, trustworthy and autonomous future network communications.”

Along with Professor Tafazolli and Dr Martinez del Rincon, FORT will be led by: Dr Tim Brown from Surrey, who will serve as Director of FORT, and Professor Máire O’Neill from QUB, who is Co-Investigator of FORT.

Should we be going to.....?

17 March 2024



The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games is back. Following on from the success of the games last year, a wide range of activities are available in **Epsom & Ewell** again, including tennis, judo, swimming and more. The Games are the largest multi-sport youth programme of their kind in the South East, offering **free** local training for 7-16 year olds across Surrey, leading to a final celebratory event for the whole family.

The Games are ideal for beginners who may not get the opportunity to attend clubs or are put off by the thought of competing against others. Supportive coaches will help participants join in, have fun, learn new skills, and boost their confidence.

Registration is now open for the free training sessions which start after Easter and are aimed at those who live or go to school in the borough. Following the training, teams can unite for a family-friendly event at the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford on Saturday 15 June.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, said "I'm so pleased that we are running the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games in Epsom & Ewell again this year. The initiative provides a fantastic opportunity for young people who are still building their confidence in sport to access training free of charge.

"I hope that everyone in our borough will take a look at what's on offer and even tell friends and family about the initiative, so that we can ensure that as many children as possible can access the training."

You can find out what's on offer in the Epsom & Ewell borough and register for a place by visiting www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/syg

Better private - public health communications could prevent deaths

17 March 2024



A young woman tragically took her own life in Surrey prompting a warning from a coroner over communication barriers between hospitals. Meghan Christmas, who suffered from anxiety disorder, depression, complex PTSD and ADHD, died by suicide on October 20, 2021 at a Premier Inn in Guildford.

Less than three weeks prior, Meghan had impulsively attempted suicide by overdose and was admitted to Royal Surrey Hospital on the following day. She was offered further psychiatric treatment through the NHS at this time, which she declined in favour of continuing with her private treatments at The Priory Hospital. Information about Meghan Christmas' attempted overdose was only sent to her GP and not her private psychiatrist.

Meghan took her own life the same day as her private psychiatrist said she was "progressing well". Following Meghan's inquest Coroner Darren Stewart OBE wrote in a Prevention of Future Deaths report to NHS England over the 'concerning' communication barriers between private and public healthcare services.

He wrote: "At a time where pressures on the NHS exist, particularly for mental health services, it is of concern that measures which could alleviate this pressure (where someone sources private care) do not exist. There is little or no policy, guidance or other effective arrangements to share important clinical information about patients between private and public healthcare sectors."

"The passage of information between NHS and private healthcare providers is hindered due to the absence of an adequate structure to share important clinical information about patients in a timely and effective manner. Action should be taken to prevent future deaths."

Meghan was prescribed antidepressants after a face-to-face appointment with her GP in February 2021. She started seeing a private psychiatrist around July, and received prescriptions both privately and from her GP.

The coroner also raised this as a key concern. They wrote: "This means Mrs. Christmas had access to double prescriptions. Healthcare professionals treating Mrs. Christmas placed significant reliance on the perception that she would be open and honest in her communication with them."

The coroner also raised concerns around police forces communication between each other. It was at, 4.54pm that Meghan contacted Surrey Police to explain that she was fine. At 5.18pm, the call handler in the Hampshire Police control room communicated with Surrey Police only via email.

After receiving no response from Surrey Police, the handler in the Hampshire Police control room communicated with them via telephone Surrey Police then attended the location in Guildford and found Meghan's room barricaded. Upon gaining access to the room, officers found that Meghan had sadly died.

Officers attempted to resuscitate Meghan and her heartbeat restarted. After resuscitation, Meghan was transported to Royal Surrey County Hospital where she died two days later on October 20, 2021 from a Hypoxic Brain Injury.

The coroner wrote: "The handling of the incident involving Mrs. Christmas in Hampshire Constabulary's Force Control Room which resulted in a hour delay in determining that an important communication (being a request for assistance) had not been received by a neighbouring force." It was not concluded however that this shortcoming contributed to her death.

Hampshire Constabulary have since said they have made significant improvements to their process. These measures included: Revision of training provided and the introduction of additional training for supervisors and control room staff. Implementation of National Policy concerning Missing Persons, including documentation to assist in control room responses to similar circumstances. Revision of the recording of risk assessment measurements on the computer aided dispatch record (CAD) system.

It was further explained to the court that the measures should be seen in the context of wider cultural change management in the supervision and leadership being undertaken by Hampshire Constabulary in the operation of the Control Room.

A spokesperson for Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust said: "Following Meghan's death an amendment was made to our Psychiatric Liaison Service policy stating discharge letters will be sent not just to the GP, but also to any other relevant external professional - provided we have the explicit consent of the individual to do this. The measure was welcomed by the Coroner."

SABP added it has developed new guidelines for both community and in-patient clinicians to ensure it routinely and actively seeks a person's consent to contact and share information with or from their private practitioner.

The Priory Hospital did not make an additional comment. NHS England has been approached for comment.

Fire Assembly for Ukraine

17 March 2024



Saturday 10th March a Bronto Fire Engine came to Epsom's Market Square outside the Assembly Rooms. A crowd gathered to admire the magnificent machine and wish it well on its journey to a city near the front-line of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Roy Deadman of the charity **Surrey Stands With Ukraine** explained: "Some population centres in Ukraine are so close to the Russian artillery that the missiles can strike before the sirens sound. This fire engine with its long-ladder can rescue lives trapped in apartment blocks."

Another volunteer with the charity **Nick Budd** said "There has been a tremendous effort to raise the money to purchase this vehicle and the public have been very generous. Our partners in Ukraine are very grateful to be receiving this vital equipment."

The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell **Robert Geleit** (Labour, Court Ward) was in attendance, confirming a moment of pride for Epsom and Ewell as the headquarters for the humanitarian efforts of SSWU.

Charity director **Lionel Blackman** said: "Post Brexit there remain various bureaucratic obstacles to the engine's transportation across Europe to the Polish border, where our Ukrainian partners will collect and take through their country to where it is most needed; but we will overcome and we expect it to be in place in a few weeks from now."

Varying opinions on local maternity services

17 March 2024



Epsom and St Helier Hospital NHS Trust claims it has a 'strong' maternity service despite failings in a recent CQC report. Safety in the maternity service was rated 'inadequate' in a report published by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in February. The service overall was downgraded from 'good' to 'requires improvement'.

Managing Director of the Trust **James Blythe** said, at an Epsom and Ewell Health Liaison Panel on March 3, he was "disappointed" with the CQC report. He added: "The hospital has a really strong service and what the CQC identified are processes we need to get stronger at."

However, the CQC's report highlights practical issues including qualifications and competence of staff, and an environment 'not fit for purpose'.

An update report by the Trust given to the Epsom and Ewell Health Liaison Panel said: "All of our maternity services meet 10 out of the 10 safety actions required nationally." The 10 safety actions are specific to maternity services and range from submitting maternity data, workforce planning, training and action plans, to delivering best practice.

However, the CQC report found the leadership team 'did not take timely action' to make change where non-compliance with four safety actions was identified in the 2022/23 inspection.

A report in July 2022 identified a shortfall of midwives, yet this had still not been addressed in January 2023. The service was therefore unable to declare compliance with safety action 5 on midwifery workforce planning.

The CQC report said: "On inspection, there was a lack of clarity from managers and leaders about whether the service was on track to make improvements and declare compliance for 2023/24."

Epsom and St Helier hospital Trust were asked about the discrepancy between the agenda stating they met all 10 safety actions and the CQC inspection report outlying non-compliance of safety actions. The Trust did not comment on the difference.

The Trust is planning to invest more than £2m over two years to increase midwifery staffing in the unit by 8% so the Trust can declare full compliance with safety action 5.

Visiting the hospital in August 2023, the CQC found the service "did not have enough midwifery and nursing staff in the right areas with the right qualifications, skills and training to care for women, birthing [partners] and babies".

Staff working in transitional care for babies who require extra support "did not have the qualifications and competence for the role they were undertaking."

A spokesperson from Epsom and St Helier said: "Our priority is to ensure women and birthing people receive the best possible care, and we have already taken steps to improve and strengthen our maternity services - rated by mums in the CQC's own survey as the best in London."

Days before the inspection report was published, the Trust secured a strong result in a CQC patient experience survey of women and birthing partner's experiences of maternity care in England.

Maternity services at Epsom and St Helier received the best scores in London, with maternity care at St George's joint second place.

The environment in some areas was 'not fit for purpose', and on the maternity ward this posed an 'infection prevention and control risk'. Bereavement and recovery facilities did not meet national standards for privacy.

The Trust is said it is 'fast-tracking' estates work with new doors and blinds fitted to improve privacy and dignity.

The hospital's environment was "not fit for purpose in all areas" and the facilities and equipment were found to "not always keep people safe".

An Epsom and St Helier spokesperson implied that patients deserve better than the current crumbling estate - but the hospital can still deliver and receive safe care.

Founded in 1938, approximately 90% of St Helier Hospital pre-dates the NHS itself. A further 98% of the St Helier estate is said to be either in very poor or bad condition and requires capital investment or replacement.

Millions are said to be invested every year to address the most urgent estate challenges, while also improving the buildings, facilities, equipment and environment for patients and staff.

A spokesperson for Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust said: "This new rating is partly a reflection of our ageing estate, and - while the care they receive is safe - mums, babies and other patients deserve better, which is why we're pleased the Government has promised us a new hospital and upgrades to our existing facilities by 2030."

Civic awards at civic reception

17 March 2024



The Epsom and Ewell Mayor's civic reception took place at Bourne Hall, Ewell on Friday 8th March. The "great and the good" of the Borough, including Member of Parliament **Chris Grayling**, gathered at this special annual event that witnessed the conferment of the title of Alderman of Epsom and Ewell to three long-serving local councillors.



The ceremonies began with the Mayor's Active Citizen Award. The Mayor, Cllr **Rob Geleit** (Labour Court Ward), presented this year's award to **Barbara Lewis**, praising her selfless dedication to the community: "Barbara, born in Kingston, was instilled with a strong sense of altruism by her late mother. After attending Tiffin Girls Grammar School and serving in the civil service, Barbara settled in Ewell with her husband Martin, celebrating their upcoming Golden Wedding Anniversary. Barbara's commitment to her local area, Station Avenue, has been unwavering. Notably, she spearheaded efforts to provide scrubs, masks, and other essentials to frontline workers during the pandemic, and organized a heartwarming visit from Santa for children in her neighborhood. Barbara's involvement extends to various charitable endeavors, including Epsom Twinning Society and Epsom Rotary Club, and she even finds time to teach a Spanish class for the University of Third Age (U3A). Additionally, Barbara has dedicated herself to fundraising, notably supporting the Mayor's Charity Committee. Her generosity knows no bounds, always willing to help and support her community."



Cllr **Hannah Dalton** (RA Stoneleigh), spoke up for **Chris Frost**, and welcomed him as an Honorary Alderman of Epsom and Ewell, recognizing his positive impact on local politics: "Chris's journey in politics began in his youth, and his dedication led to his election to the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and later the Surrey County Council. Known for his community spirit, Chris spearheaded initiatives like the Interfaith Forum and the Epsom and Ewell Community Fund."

Ms Dalton commended Chris's wife, Cllr **Liz Frost** (RA Woodcote and Langley), for her unwavering support and thanked his family for their presence. She expressed gratitude to all who supported Chris over the years, including council officers.



Eber Kington signs the book with Mayor and EEBC CEO Jackie King looking on.

Cllr **Peter O'Donovan** (RA Ewell Court) reflected on **Eber Kington's** remarkable career, celebrating his induction as an Honorary Alderman: "Born in Battersea, Eber's journey into local politics began in the 80s when he joined the Woodcote Residents' Association, eventually becoming a respected councillor. Eber's tenure was marked by his commitment to his constituents, often being the first point of contact for residents' concerns. Despite his aversion to planning matters, Eber's dedication to his community was unwavering. His tenure as Mayor in 1999 was memorable, highlighted by his unconventional but effective leadership style. Eber's dedication to community service extends beyond politics, evident in his charity work and love for Chelsea Football Club." Mr O'Donovan praised Eber's integrity, noting his willingness to listen and support fellow councillors.



Finally, Cllr **Jan Mason** (RA Ruxley) spoke emotionally in praise of the late Mr **Clive Smitheram** who was awarded the Honour of Alderman of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell posthumously. Clive was a central figure in West Ewell having lived there for over 30 years with his wife Gill and family and although a proud Cornishman, Clive was someone who knew everyone locally and if he didn't know someone, he knew someone who did! Clive was a former police officer, having served 31 years in the service and was a retired community safety officer. As an active resident, it led to Clive being elected as a Resident Association Councillor for West Ewell serving for over 20 years, Clive was a former Mayor of Epsom and Ewell in 2010- 2011.

Mrs Smitheram receives the honour on behalf of the late Clive Smitheram.

All photos below heading courtesy Steven McCormick Photography

Related reports:

[Long serving Councillor Clive Smitheram dies at 76](#)

[Alderman awards for Epsom and Ewell trio](#)

[Local Council stalwarts up for local honour](#)

Chinn up for women

17 March 2024



On International Women's Day (Friday 8th March) and Epsom and Ewell's association with the struggle for equal rights for women through the actions and death of Emily Davison, local Labour Councillor **Kate Chinn** (Court Ward) shares her thoughts on the special day:

Today is **International Women's Day** and this year's theme is to inspire inclusion.

It means breaking down barriers, challenging stereotypes, and creating environments where all women are valued and respected. I've heard repeated the old idea that women don't really understand figures. Tell that to the three women at NASA who did the maths that were instrumental in one of history's greatest operations - the launch of astronaut John Glenn into orbit celebrated in the book and film **Hidden Figures**. A great read and watch

World renowned feminist, journalist Gloria Steinem reported:- "the story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organisation but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights"

We can all do what we can to support and advance women.

As the IWD website states:- "When women aren't present, we must ask: "if not why not." When women are discriminated against, we must call out poor practice. When the treatment of women is not equitable we must take action"

Local politics is a way that women can get involved with their local communities and work with the community, other councillors and partner agencies to make a difference in their local community.

I became active as I believe local politics matter. People need a decent home, to feel safe in their communities, access to the services they need and the opportunity to enjoy the good things in life. We need "bread and roses too", a phrase attributed to a strike in Massachusetts in 1912 now often referred to as the "Bread and Roses strike". The slogan pairing bread and roses, appealing for both fair wages and dignified conditions. Now a poem by **James Oppenheim**.

It's only good governance that can enable both and why local and national politics are so important to all of us.

If anyone is interested in getting involved in politics then please do get involved and there is plenty of available help and support. Talk to your local councillors and the local political parties. Both the political parties and Epsom and Ewell Council run sessions on being a councillor; some in person and some on line

I believe it is important to mark International Women's Days. One of the many reasons is to celebrate the inspirational women we have both past and present. **Emily Wilding Davison**, Mary Seacole, Rosa Parks and Malala Yousafzai, to name just a few of so many women who have made the world a better place.

Cllr Kate Chinn

IoT Launch: Nescot Welcomes Industry Leaders

17 March 2024



The Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology (IoT) at **North East Surrey College of Technology** (Nescot) in **Ewell** welcomed over 60 guests at its opening event on Wednesday 28 February. Visitors had the opportunity to explore the state-of-the-art facilities, participate in hands-on activities and discover the wide range of resources and training opportunities available at the newly opened IoT.

The IoT at Nescot is the first new space to open as part of the Sussex and Surrey IoT and specialises in digital

technologies with courses and apprenticeships from software development, cyber security, AI (Artificial Intelligence) and networking to cloud computing, data handling, 'internet of things' and IT support.

Visitors included partners and employers from varied industry sectors who were able to find out the many ways in which they can support the future of skills development in the IT sector. Anchor employers including NatWest, Roche Diagnostics, Southern Water, Pearson and Gatwick Airport pledged their ongoing support to work with the Sussex and Surrey IoT in various ways, from recruiting apprentices and upskilling existing staff to working with curriculum experts to help shape study programmes and providing mentoring.

Nescot staff and students also had the chance to explore the newly opened IoT. Computing staff, and students on our computing courses were on hand to showcase the specialist technology facilities and share their excitement with visitors about the courses available.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO at Nescot said, "We were delighted to welcome our first guests to the IoT at Nescot which was buzzing with activity the whole day. It's been wonderful to showcase our specialist digital technology facilities, resources and training. We are looking forward to working with businesses and partners to address current skills gaps and prepare for future skills needs."

Demonstrating some of the technology, Joseph, a student on our Level 3 Computing course said, "The focus on specialist digital technologies is a great opportunity to enhance my knowledge. Nescot is the perfect choice for the Institute of Technology with great access and networking opportunities."

Another student, Jeremy added, "I'm really excited about the Institute of Technology which is a great addition to Nescot. The technology and devices being installed here are amazing!"

Peter Goodenough, Computing tutor at Nescot, said, "With the Institute of Technology we can offer progress. Computers are in every walk of life and every industry. The IoT at Nescot is offering courses to enhance future skills and aid long term sustainability. You can choose from a wide range of courses on offer, from learning how to design, create and program smart devices, industrial and home robotics to making you mindful of your digital footprint."

For more information on the IoT at Nescot please visit their website

Sussex and Surrey IoT

The Sussex and Surrey IoT includes Nescot, Chichester College Group (CCG) and the Universities of Sussex and Brighton. The IoT will enhance higher level skills training, with a new state-of-the-art hub and specialist satellites for delivery at locations across the region. The investment will create new cutting-edge facilities for higher level technical training with a focus on digital, sustainable technologies, engineering and construction.

Find out more about the Sussex and Surrey IoT here

Image: A guest trying some of the VR (Virtual Reality) kit in the VR room at the IoT. Credit NESOCOT

Money advice and more for free in Epsom and Ewell

17 March 2024



A report published in October of 2023 by the UK mental health charity Mind found 2.7m people had considered suicide due to financial pressures and over the last couple years NHS England has seen a rise in inpatient and outpatient referrals connected with the cost of living crisis.

Also in the month of October a service was created in response to this problem for the people who live and work in Epsom and Ewell by the Leatherhead-based charity the Mary Frances Trust, which recently celebrated 30 years since its founding and supports around 2,300 Surrey residents every month.

Set up from scratch in partnership with Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell after a meeting between Mary Frances Trust CEO Patrick Wolter and the CEO of the Guildford based charity Catalyst who run the same service in neighbouring Surrey Heath, the two charities resolved it would be beneficial to create a mental health service that addressed people's experiences with financial difficulty.

"We thought it would be... easier for people who are facing difficulties in both areas to have a service that caters for both sides" said Connie Ridout Communications Lead for the Mary Frances Trust.

Ridout says the two CEOs were struck by how many people already receiving support were discussing problems caused by the cost of living crisis and the issue was considered to be one of the biggest issues facing service users affecting how people meet mortgage payments, homelessness, rent, and council tax.

With backing from the National Community Fund for a three project, the service aims to increase financial resilience, improve overall mental and/or emotional wellbeing, reduce stress and anxiety by having users engage in one on one appointments with a caseworker to help people manage the impact of the cost of living on their wellbeing.

With the launch of the service Mary Frances CEO Patrick Wolter said: “With CAEE and MFT working so closely together, the client only has one point of contact to help them get the full support they need. We are thrilled to offer this free service to the residents of Epsom and Ewell.”

When the service was first being devised it was considered a priority that the service should be as accessible as possible with users having to register only once with either Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell or Mary Frances Trust and currently the service has no waiting list which the MFT hope to maintain for as long as possible.

New service users need to live or work in Epsom and Ewell and experience problems with wellbeing as a result of financial difficulty whether that be finances causing stress, depression, anxiety, or a mental illness that is exacerbated by financial difficulty. During an initial assessment users will be assessed for how financial difficulties affect their lives and set goals.

Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell handled around 8,000 issues last from 2,500 clients with 60% of clients needing advice around money, such as benefits, fuel costs, debt and crisis funding, though there are concerns that the most vulnerable are not being reached.

This points to another issue when it comes to boosting the number of people using the service, as Ridout says, which is about reaching people who may find making this step too overwhelming due to their mental health problems. Even though it may be a difficult step people are not ready for, “We do need to remind people [to reach out] endlessly because of the nature of what they are facing,” Ridout says.

Now with around 30 people using the service the project has one caseworker offering one to one support every six weeks to give users financial independence and manage the stress and anxiety associated with personal finances, the MFT aims to broaden its reach.

It is estimated that one in three people in the UK are living with poor mental health and a poll from the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute found 39% of people with mental wellbeing issues stated that financial problems were the main reason their mental health had worsened

The free money advice and wellbeing support service is available to people living and working in Epsom & Ewell. The Financial and Wellbeing Support Service (FWSS) is delivered by Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell (CAEE) for expert benefits and money advice and mental health charity Mary Frances Trust (MFT) for specialist wellbeing support.

If managing your finances is causing stress and anxiety or mental health challenges are impacting your ability to manage your finances, the three-year project funded by The National Lottery Community Fund will provide a range of free services and resources to help residents to get help during this difficult time.

The aim of the project is to empower the client, and:

- Increase financial resilience and independence
- Improve overall mental and/or emotional wellbeing
- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Increase engagement with local community and reduce social isolation
- Be more informed about how to manage finances and wellbeing going forward.

How to access the service:

If you need support to tackle both financial and emotional/mental wellbeing difficulties;

and

live in or around the Epsom & Ewell Borough and are 18+ years

then please get in touch with either organisation (no need to contact both). No third party referral is required. Case Workers from CAEE and MFT will support you to improve your situation and emotional wellbeing via face-to-face, telephone or online appointments.

Mary Frances Trust:

Email: fwss@maryfrancestrust.org.uk

Telephone / SMS: 07380 567708

Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell

Email: fwss@caee.org.uk

Tel: 01372 300421

www.caee.org.uk

Two years on - Epsom stilled by Ukrainian voices

17 March 2024



Saturday morning the Epsom community gathered at the Epsom Market Place to mark the solemn occasion of the second anniversary of the start of the war in Ukraine. Organized by the **Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network** (EERN) and **Surrey Stands with Ukraine** (SSWU), the event aimed to show solidarity and support for the people of Ukraine during these challenging times.

The atmosphere was one of unity and reflection as locals joined together to honour the resilience of the Ukrainian people. The local Ukrainian choir, **Renaissance**, delivered a moving rendition of the Ukrainian National Anthem, followed by a heartfelt prayer for Ukraine, touching the hearts of all those in attendance.

Jo Sherring, founder of the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network, welcomed the crowd, emphasizing the importance of standing in solidarity with Ukraine during this difficult period. "We are privileged to have met and worked with such wonderful people and we will continue to support them as long as they need our help" she stated.

Roy Deadman, Chair of Surrey Stands With Ukraine thanked all the volunteers who have devoted countless unpaid hours to raising funds, collecting donations and sorting and packing aid for Ukraine.

A member of the choir, **Konstantyn**, a Ukrainian resident of Epsom, stepped forward and gave a poignant speech expressing his gratitude for Britain for its unwavering support to the Ukrainian community. "It is with a profound sense of appreciation that we extend our gratitude to everyone who has supported our country, whether in word or deed," he remarked.

The presence of The Worshipful the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor **Rob Geleit**, and the Lady Mayor, added a sense of official recognition to the event, further underscoring the community's commitment to standing with Ukraine.

Although unable to attend in person, **Chris Grayling**, MP for Epsom & Ewell, conveyed his heartfelt message of solidarity to the Ukrainian community. "I am sorry not to be with you this year, but wanted to take this opportunity to extend my hand of friendship to all of our friends in Ukraine, both those of you who are here, and to your families who are back there.

I am very grateful to all of those locally who rose to the occasion, providing homes and other support for those escaping the War, to the teams of volunteers who continue to work with the Ukrainians who are here, and also the team in Surrey Stands For Ukraine who continue to provide direct aid to those back in Ukraine.

I know that this is a sombre occasion, but it is one which is really important as a signal of our determination to stand with Ukraine. That determination will not waver here in Epsom and Ewell."

The event served as a reminder of the ongoing struggle faced by the people of Ukraine and reaffirmed the commitment of the Epsom community to support them in their quest for peace and stability.

This week SSWU sent its 100th van packed with aid to Ukraine and the day's event raised over £1000. The charity is sending a long-laddered fire engine to Zaporizhzhia. Being near the front line the city's tower blocks can be struck by Russian missiles before the siren warns.



Alan Avis (SSWU), Cllr Neil Dallen (Residents Association), Mhairi Fraser (Conservative PPC), Cllr Bernie Muir (Conservative Borough and County), Lady Mayoress, Cllr Robert Geleit (Mayor and Labour Councillor), Helen Maguire (Liberal Democrat PPC), Roy Deadman (SSWU) joined together at the offices of SSWU and EERN in Global House. Offices generously donated by the **Ashley Centre** and generously exempted from business rates by **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council**.

Politicians from all parties suspended differences in supporting the event.

Lionel Blackman director of the charity for SSWU observed: “After the disunity and chaos in Parliament this week over the war in Gaza it was heartening to see local politicians from all sides demonstrate their united support for the humanitarian work being done in the Borough and Surrey for Ukrainians here and at home.”

If you wish to hear the Ukrainian Choir Renaissance and other professional Ukrainian musicians come to the social and music evening free of charge (leaving collection at discretion) on Saturday 30th March at the Epsom Methodist Church Ashley Road. Bring and share nibbles appreciated from 6pm and music starts at 7pm. No booking necessary.

Top Image- Ukraine Choir Renaissance with supporters from EERN and SSWU

Lessons in slowing down in Surrey

17 March 2024



St Augustine’s Abbey in Chilworth, near Guildford Surrey, will open its doors to the public on May 18, 2024, offering a rare insight into the world of **Benedictine monks**. This public talk aims to provide an objective view of the Benedictine way of life, rooted in centuries-old tradition.

Epsom and Ewell Times seeks to slow down a notch the pace of information in our modern age. We attempt to provide deeper understanding of local news reviving online a tradition lost 20 years ago with the demise of Epsom and Ewells’ Herald and Advertiser weekly prints. Benedictine Monks living in the heart of Surrey have kept a slower tradition of existence going for 1500 years!

The Benedictine Order, founded by Saint Benedict of Nursia in the early 6th century, emerged as a cornerstone of Western monasticism. Benedict's Rule, emphasizing prayer, work, and community life, became the guiding principle for monastic living across Europe. Monasteries under the Benedictine rule became centres of learning, agriculture, and spiritual guidance during the Middle Ages. The order played a pivotal role in preserving knowledge and culture during turbulent times. Benedictine monks contributed significantly to medieval society through their dedication to prayer, scholarship, and service. Today, Benedictine monasticism endures globally, fostering spiritual growth and intellectual pursuits.

The May 18th event will kick off with an optional Holy Roman Catholic Mass at 9 am in the Abbey Church, followed by a talk from 10 am to 11:30 am. Attendees will have the opportunity to delve into the daily rituals and routines of Benedictine monks, including chanting in Latin and the discipline of rising at dawn for prayer, practices that have endured for over 1,500 years.

The event will also explore the relevance of St. Benedict's Rule, written in 530 AD, and its application in modern society. Attendees will gain insights into the motivations driving individuals to embrace the monastic life, characterized by simplicity, contemplation, and service.

In collaboration with the Guildford and District Knights of St Columba, the event aims to be informative for individuals of all ages and backgrounds, regardless of faith. Admission to the talk is by donation, with funds collected to support the monks in their spiritual endeavors.

To secure attendance, interested individuals need to RSVP by emailing richardatob@gmail.com. This event provides a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Benedictine spirituality within the tranquil setting of St Augustine's Abbey.

St Augustine's Abbey is located at Sample Oak Lane, Chilworth, Guildford, Surrey GU4 8QR.

For more information, visit <http://www.chilworthbenedictines.com>

Bags of Confidence in Epsom for cancer survivors

17 March 2024



Epsom-based cancer support charity **Look Good Feel Better** is partnering with Epsom **Café Moka** in the Ashley Centre for a pop-up sale of preloved bags on Thursday 29th February 2024 from 11am until 2pm. Funds raised will go towards supporting people facing cancer to build back their self-confidence and improve their overall well-being.

Leigh Beth Stroud, Look Good Feel Better's Community Fundraising Manager, explains: "Our first ever 'Bags of Confidence' pop-up sale is open to everyone and will raise much-needed funds for people undergoing treatment for cancer. Pre-loved, quality handbags will be available to buy, so do come along and have a browse on the day."

This year, Look Good Feel Better celebrates its 30th anniversary. The charity embarked on its journey in 1994 to support people living with cancer and has helped over 200,000 people to date regain their confidence and self-esteem. Look Good Feel Better knows how challenging it can be to process a cancer diagnosis and manage the physical and emotional side effects of cancer treatment.

The charity runs workshops face-to-face and classes virtually to support women, men, and young adults through this time. Services are free and open to anyone facing cancer, and the workshops are led by trained volunteers in the beauty industry to provide practical advice about changes to skin, eyebrows, eyelashes, hair, and nails during treatment, and body confidence.

Ann M, who was recently diagnosed with cancer, attended a workshop and said: "I signed up to a number of the charity's workshops, including the hand and nail care; the headwear, wigs, brows and lashes, and the styling for confidence sessions. And I haven't looked back. The biggest thing was that I felt less alone. Cancer can make you feel very isolated, but here I was surrounded by other people, soaking up the good advice and information. It was just what I needed and I would recommend anyone undergoing treatment for cancer should sign up for a workshop."

If you are interested in hosting your own 'Bags of Confidence' event, the charity will provide you with all the support you need, with a colourful fundraising pack with helpful hints and tips available at www.lookgoodfeelbetter.co.uk

Leigh adds: "You might find your favourite designer bag or pick up another hidden gem. 'Bags of Confidence' is a simple

and sustainable event where these handbags will go to a new home, while raising funds for the charity. And no bags go to landfill, so it's a win-win situation."

Established 30 years ago, Look Good Feel Better delivers cancer support services in local communities across the UK through a series of face-to-face and online group workshops, along with video tutorials. Its services help people face cancer with confidence, regain their sense of normality, make friends, and most of all look good and feel better. Its vision is to be recognised as one of the UK's leading cancer support charities and the only one dedicated to improving the physical appearance and overall well-being of people living with cancer.

Surrey's hotline for mental health

17 March 2024



Ahead of Helpline Awareness Day (Friday, 23 February), Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Surrey County Council are highlighting a local 24-hour NHS mental health crisis helpline that supports almost 50,000 people each year.

The Mental Health Crisis Helpline, run by Surrey and Borders Partnership, is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Since it started in 2010 it has helped around 600,000 people.

It is staffed by trained professionals who are ready to listen and offer advice, support and signpost to a range of community services.

A mental health crisis is when you feel at breaking point, and you need urgent help. You might be:

- Feeling extremely anxious and having panic attacks or flashbacks
- Feeling suicidal, or self-harming
- Having an episode of hypomania or mania, (feeling very high) or psychosis (maybe hearing voices, or feeling very paranoid)
- Other behaviour that feels out of control and is likely to endanger yourself or others

As well as the Mental Health Crisis Helpline, Surrey and Borders Partnership also provides five Safe Havens across Surrey which provide out-of-hours help and support to adults who are experiencing a mental health crisis or emotional distress.

These Safe Havens are in Aldershot, Epsom, Guildford, Redhill and Woking and are open evenings, weekends and bank holidays. Each one is staffed by a mental health practitioner from Surrey and Borders Partnership and two trained Safe Haven workers.

Mark Nuti, Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Health said: "We are committed to breaking the silence surrounding mental health and providing a safe, confidential and non-judgmental way for people in Surrey to seek help.

"We believe that mental health support should be available to everyone. No one should have to suffer in silence - the Mental Health Crisis Helpline is here for anyone who needs it.

"There is help out there, whether it's through the Mental Health Crisis Helpline or one of the Safe Havens. Let's break the silence and start the journey towards better mental health together."

Emily Hackett, Mental Health Crisis Line Service Manager said: "If you are experiencing a mental health crisis or emotional distress or if you have concerns regarding someone that you care for, please call us. Our dedicated crisis call handlers are on hand to support you 24 hours a day 7 days a week."

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health, don't hesitate to call the Mental Health Crisis Helpline on 0800 915 4644.

Image - illustration only - Carl von Essen CC BY-SA 4.0

The fellowship of NESCOLT

17 March 2024



Nescot (North East Surrey College of Technology) Reigate Road, **Ewell**, celebrated student success at the annual Higher Education (HE) Awards graduation ceremony at **Epsom Downs Racecourse** earlier this month (7th February). 110 graduands along with 300 family members and friends came together to mark the culmination of their hard work.

Degrees, diplomas and professional awards were conferred in over 15 subjects ranging from teaching to osteopathy. Colleagues from Nescot partners including University of Greenwich, Kingston University, Open University were on hand to assist **Julie Kapsalis**, Principal and CEO, with conferring the degrees.

Guests of honour for the ceremony included Councillor **Robert Geleit**, Mayor of Epsom & Ewell (Labour Court Ward), a former HND student of Nescot and **Brian Finch**, Chair of Epsom Downs Racecourse who kindly brought along the amazing Derby trophy. Brian who was the guest speaker, congratulated the graduates on their achievement and spoke about key lessons from his career journey in his inspirational speech.

At the ceremony, annual awards for outstanding endeavours and achievements were also presented by our guests of honour to six nominated students from the Nescot Class of 2023. The prizes included awards sponsored by the College and by the **Rotary Clubs of Epsom and Ewell**.

To mark Nescot's 70th anniversary, Principal and CEO, Julie Kapsalis was proud to award the college's first **Honorary Fellowships** at this year's graduation ceremony. "2024 sees Nescot celebrate its 70th anniversary, to recognise this incredible milestone and achievement, the college is introducing a new Honorary Fellowship award, the highest accolade the college can bestow. It recognises exceptional achievement and excellence by individuals associated with the college," said Julie.

The first Honorary Fellowship was awarded to **Dee Mathieson**, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of Elekta. A former student of Nescot, Dee has had an exceptional career in the science and medical sector. Sharing her journey, she said, "I am very grateful to Nescot for helping me on my way to what has been a fantastic and varied career in cancer care."

The second Honorary Fellowship on the day was awarded to Nescot staff member, **Daniel Addo** from our Security Team. Presenting the award, Julie said, "With his kindness and positivity he is a wonderful role model and encourages students to make the most of their opportunities both in the college and life."

The student vote of thanks was given by **Craig Clout**, who graduated with an Integrated Masters in Osteopathic Medicine. Craig spoke about the supportive and collaborative nature of the college community that contributes to everyone's success.

HE degrees and awards were conferred for the following subjects: osteopathy, animal management, sports therapy, counselling, early years, animal management, healthcare play specialist, food premises inspection, business, creative media (moving image), performing arts, computing, public services, sport and exercise science.

Image: Honorary Fellowship award winners, Dee Mathieson Senior Vice President and Managing Director of Elekta (left) and Daniel Addo, Nescot staff member (right), with Principal and CEO of Nescot, Julie Kapsalis (centre).

Coroner catalogues care failures in diabetic death

17 March 2024



Surrey County Council (SCC) has been accused of not taking its responsibilities seriously after an eighteen-year-old tragically died from diabetes.

Jake Baker, an 18-year-old with a learning disability and type 1 diabetes, died at home following Diabetic Ketoacidosis.

He required residential care since the age of eight, under the guardianship of the council. An inquest concluded a catalogue of failures by Surrey County Council and other bodies contributed to Jake's death.

The coroner found Surrey Care Leavers team and Children Services had failed to obtain information about Jake's cognitive ability and his capability of managing his diabetes independently, a Prevention of Future Deaths report published this month reads.

Coroner **Caroline Topping** said: "I am not satisfied that Surrey County Council have undertaken a rigorous review of the circumstances of the death, nor that the risk of future deaths has been averted. The issues surrounding the inadequacy of Jake's pathway plan have not been addressed comprehensively in the last 4 years. Training for personal advisers is not mandatory and is only now being rolled out."

The court was not provided with copies of the training or any protocol to be assured of the adequacy of the training and its implementation.

The coroner said that Jake's death was "avoidable" and was "contributed to by neglect". In September 2018 Jake (then 17) was placed in a full-time residential placement at **Ruskin Mill College**.

At the time of his death, Jake was staying with family for a few days when he became seriously ill from uncontrolled diabetes. Jake's mother and stepfather found him unresponsive. His family previously said "there is nothing that can take away the pain" of losing their son.

The days before his death were the first time he had stayed away from his care facilities for more than two nights in a row, since being placed in the care of Surrey County Council when eight years old, his family's lawyers said.

He was entitled to a personal adviser who had a statutory duty to write a pathway plan for Jake, including consideration of how his health needs were to be met. However, when away from home, no advice was sought from specialist diabetes services to inform the pathway plan and no risk assessment was made for Jake having unsupported contact with his family and managing his diabetes, the coroner's report concludes.

Meetings discussing Jake staying over at his family's house without support were unminuted. The emails which refer to meeting decisions made no reference to any of the dangers inherent in Jake's diabetic condition nor his ability to manage it unsupported. The family were also not given any advice or training on how to keep Jake safe if he became unwell nor any emergency contact numbers.

The coroner added: "The local authority employees held the mistaken belief that if Jake wanted to go home unsupervised once he turned 18 there was nothing they could do to stop him. No capacity assessment was undertaken in relation to Jake's ability to make a decision to go home unsupported. In my opinion there is a risk that future deaths could occur unless action is taken"

Four years on from Jake's death, the coroner found the process of obtaining learning disabilities diagnoses remains opaque and difficult as there is no protocol in relation to this. Vulnerable care leavers are at risk of being denied necessary support due to the confusion and delay teams accessing adult social care assessments.

Jake was assessed not to meet the threshold for SCC Transitions Team because a report containing his original disability diagnosis was lost. Children's Services were unable to obtain an up to date diagnosis. He did not have the support of an adult social work team and this outcome was being challenged when he died.

Overnight from the 28 to the 29 December 2019, Jake developed diabetic ketoacidosis as a result of being hyperglycaemic in the preceding days. He began to vomit and required immediate hospitalisation. On 30 December 2019 the college was notified by his family that he was too ill to travel. The staff who were travelling to collect him were told to return to the college. His family was not told to take him to hospital.

He was last seen alive at 11pm and found dead at 3am on 31 December 2019. If Jake had been admitted to hospital at any time prior to 5pm on the 30 December 2019 he would have been successfully treated."

The family claim that Jake's death was avoidable if he had been admitted to hospital any time before 5pm on December 29. In a statement, the family said: "Losing Jake has been incredibly difficult for our family, especially as he died in our home at what should have been a happy time. We trusted Ruskin Mill Trust with Jake's care, and we have been let down by them in the worst possible way.

"Jake was an enthusiastic and determined young man who always put his mind to things. As a family we did all we could to make sure that Jake was looking after himself and was well taken care of, but those that were put in charge of his care didn't give us the information necessary to ensure Jake's safety"

Clare Curran, SCC Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, said: "Our deepest sympathies remain with Jake's family and friends. The services provided to Jake fell short of what he and his family needed to keep him safe, and we are very sorry for our part in that. We have taken a number of actions over the past four years to improve our support for young adults leaving care and we will be responding to the Coroner outlining our action plan to prevent future deaths. While we have already made changes, we know there is still further to go and we will carefully consider the Coroner's concerns as we take our next steps."

Published on 14 February 2024, SCC have up to 56 days to formally respond to the coroner's report and outline the service's action plan.

New Family Centre grows out of Nursery

17 March 2024



For nearly 25 years **Epsom Methodist Nursery** has been providing early years childcare in the heart of Epsom – just two minutes from the town centre. Now the Nursery is entering an exciting new chapter in its history. As well as continuing to offer early years education for two to five year-olds the Nursery will become a **Family Centre**.

Following consultation with parents the Family Centre is planning to offer a broad range of activities and support including:

- A bumps and babies group for new parents providing ante-natal and post-natal support.
- Support groups for parents and carers of toddlers and young children.
- Courses and classes covering areas such as potty training, coping with challenging behaviours and family budgeting.
- Support for speech and language development.
- An affordable after-school club.
- A summer lunch club.

Already the Family Centre is running two stay-and-play groups for parents and young children and in April it is offering a free 'Ready Steady Cook on a Budget' course. With the cost of living rising, the FREE four-week course aims to support parents to provide easy, wholesome and healthy meals for the whole family whilst sticking to a budget.

The course will cover menu planning on a budget, planning the weekly shopping list, hands on experiences of creating easy recipes and top tips for saving money and time. The move to becoming a Family Centre has been made possible by a grant award from the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS). CFS has arranged for the Netherby Trust and the Epsom and Ewell Community Fund to provide £12,450 which will match a contribution from Epsom Methodist Church. This money will help fund both the employment of a Family Centre Manager for the next year alongside the various activities that are planned.

Commenting on the grant award **Cara Golding**, the manager of Epsom Methodist Church Nursery, said:

"We are delighted to have secured this funding from the Community Foundation for Surrey. Our work with families at Epsom Methodist Nursery has shown us how committed parents are to their children and families and how keen they are to pick up ideas that will help them with the everyday and sometimes complex challenges that parenting can bring. Local agencies and public services are under pressure and services have been cut back. So the more we can do to provide practical help to parents and give children the best start in life the better. That is our mission."

For further details on the 'Ready Steady Cooking on a Budget' course see

https://www.instagram.com/emcfamilies?igsh=bnNpYnFzNzhzaHp4&utm_source=qr

Business that connects by insulating

17 March 2024



The **Wickes Community Programme** has donated insulation products to the value of £1000 to help struggling families in the local community. This initiative is run by the Epsom based charity, **Good Company**, which also operates a network of local food banks. Since launching the Epsom & Ewell Energy Support Scheme in October 2022, Good Company has helped more than 300 families and over a thousand people in the local area.

The primary aim of the programme is to offer support to families struggling to pay energy bills by helping them make their homes more energy efficient and offering advice on how to reduce their energy use in other ways.

Tom Sefton, the Poverty Lead at Good Company, said: "The products donated by Wickes included secondary glazing film,

various draught excluders and heat reflective radiator foil. These were handed out at group workshops that we have been running in Epsom, Leatherhead, and Tadworth for food bank clients and other local families most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. We wanted to show people that making small changes like this can significantly reduce your energy usage.”

Feedback from participants has been extremely positive, including one client who said: “I found the workshop very helpful and really enjoyed talking to the other participants, sharing tips on how to save energy. The takeaway tips are also very informative. Thank you so much for your kindness and for giving me really useful information about the cost of energy and how to reduce usage and keep warm and safe this winter – which, like many people, has been scaring the life out of me.”

Tom went on to say: “Other clients have told us they are wearing the hooded blankets we provided to stay warm and are using an air fryer instead of their oven to save energy, as well as fitting draught excluders and radiator foil to heat their homes more efficiently.”

Chris Grayling MP Epsom and Ewell said: “Last year we ran an appeal in conjunction with **Citizens Advice Epsom** and Good Company and raised over £40,000 to support our local community. These funds were used to provide short-term help with energy bills and to offer energy-saving advice. We were delighted when Wickes agreed to support us with these products through the Wickes Community Programme. It’s at times like these we need to work together with businesses like Wickes to make a difference.”

Wickes Store Manager in Epsom, **Ben O’Leary** said: “Supporting our local community is really important to Wickes, especially during the current cost of living crisis. For any families interested in how they too can make their homes more energy efficient there’s some great advice on the Wickes website.”

The Wickes Community Programme is open to all local community groups and charities seeking help for improvement projects.

2 years on Epsom to gather in solidarity with Ukraine

17 March 2024



The Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN) and Surrey Stands with Ukraine (SSWU) are calling upon the community to join them in a special gathering on Saturday February 24th at 11 am in the **Market Place in Epsom**. This gathering marks the solemn second anniversary of the commencement of the war in Ukraine.

The local Ukrainian choir, **Renaissance**, will render the Ukrainian National Anthem. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with Ukrainian residents regarding the ongoing situation in Ukraine and to learn how they can extend support to the Ukrainian community within Epsom & Ewell.

The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Cllr. **Rob Geleit** (Labour Court), will attend. The event will foster a sense of unity and solidarity with the Ukrainian population residing in and around Epsom.

“We are deeply moved by the outpouring of support from the Epsom community for Ukrainian refugees,” said **Jo Sherring**, Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network Lead. “This gathering is an opportunity for us to stand together in solidarity with our Ukrainian friends and reaffirm our commitment to supporting them as they rebuild their lives.”

“It is important for us to get together on this sad date to commemorate those who lost their lives in the war, to thank our supporters, defenders, volunteers, and the British people who gave shelter to us at these hard times for Ukraine.” said **Nataliia Zadorizhna**, pianist and director of the Renaissance choir who has been living in Ashted with her 11 year old daughter since May 2022. “It is an enormous privilege to stay in the UK and to be surrounded by such noble, caring and generous people.”

Epsom has exhibited remarkable solidarity with Ukraine since the outbreak of the war, with numerous families opening their doors to Ukrainian refugees and contributing substantial amounts towards humanitarian aid. The community has banded together, with volunteers actively aiding refugees in assimilating into the local fabric.

All members of the Epsom community are warmly encouraged to attend this event, which promises to be a meaningful demonstration of support for the Ukrainian populace.

For further inquiries, please contact:

Nina Kaye: nina@goodcompany.org.uk | 07778 406834



English classes for Ukrainians and other refugees in Epsom.

Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN)

Established in 2015, operates as a community-driven organization in close collaboration with the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council. It operates under the auspices of the charity **Good Company (Surrey)**, with a mission rooted in compassion, solidarity, and inclusivity. EERN extends support to refugees and asylum seekers within Epsom and its environs, facilitating their integration into the community through various initiatives including employment guidance, educational support, cultural orientation, and free English language lessons.



Epsom and Ewell residents welcome Ukrainians fleeing war.

Surrey Stands with Ukraine (SSWU)

At the onset of the conflict in Ukraine, a collective of British and Ukrainian residents from Epsom joined forces to establish Surrey Stands with Ukraine (SSWU), a humanitarian relief project dedicated to aiding Ukraine. SSWU provides support to both the Ukrainian populace within Ukraine and those residing in the UK by gathering and distributing medical supplies and other essential aid. Operating under the registered charity **Harrop HR Missions Ltd.**, SSWU ensures that 100% of all donations are directed towards supporting the people of Ukraine, with no fees or wages deducted for volunteers or trustees.

EERN and SSWU are very grateful for the magnificent support provided for their efforts by **The Ashley Centre Epsom**, through its donation of the use of a suite of offices used for processing donations, English classes and an advice centre. Also to **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** that has waived the imposition of business rates.

Related reports:



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Flight of refugees: history repeating?
Breaking the mould for Ukrainian refugees
Local refugee cash appeal