

New home needed for disability theatre group

1 November 2023



A performing arts charity that won the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service has been made homeless after crumbly concrete was found in the hall it had called home for the past 17 years.

Freewheelers in Leatherhead is on the lookout for a new base - ideally one suitable for its disabled theatre and media company members.

On Tuesday, October 17, the group was forced out of its **Bridge Centre** base after the dangerous Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) which can collapse in an instant and without warning was discovered throughout the building’s roof.

For safety reasons, the building cannot be used nor accessed by any groups, according to **Surrey County Council**.

Posting to Facebook, the Freewheelers charity said: “We are homeless and sending out an SOS!

“Freewheelers are looking for a new home in or around Leatherhead. Do you know of an accessible space or spaces, suitable for our disabled theatre and media company members? We need spaces for dance, drama, film making and music on Mondays, Tuesdays and Friday mornings.”

“We are a diverse and creative company of people with disabilities based in Leatherhead, Surrey. We work alongside directors, producers, composers, artists and writers, to co-create and produce engaging, thought-provoking, funny, joyous and highly entertaining theatre, dance, film, and music.

For over thirty years we’ve been a force for change and artistic excellence in the world of Disability Arts.”

Freewheelers website.

Survey work is being carried out at the Clare Crescent site and Surrey County Council has confirmed that it is also actively helping the search for a new suitable location for the group while the centre is closed.

A spokesperson for the county council said: “We have been in constructive dialogue with the Freewheelers Theatre and Dance Company this week so that we fully understand their requirements. We are currently working at pace alongside Freewheelers to help find a suitable location for them to use while the Bridge Youth Centre is closed.”

They added: “The closure of the youth centre will allow further investigations to take place so that we can be assured the building is safe. We understand that the short notice closure of the Bridge Youth Centre may be challenging for groups that use the building and the residents they support. However, as residents would expect, safety is our top priority.”

Other groups who regularly use the Bridge Youth Centre have been offered temporary alternative accommodation, the council said adding that they were working to ensure anyone who may need to access equipment or items stored in the building will be able to do so safely.

They said “At present, as the discovery of RAAC in the building is very recent, we need to carry out further inquiries before we can provide any details on proposals to deal with the RAAC or timelines for re-opening.”

Image courtesy: Freewheelers

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang in Epsom

1 November 2023



Following a successful run of Little Shop of Horrors last November, **Leatherhead Opera Society** have been busy preparing for their next musical production, and it's a big one!

The title character in this show holds the record for the most expensive stage prop ever, and with "Chitty Hire" on board, this production certainly won't disappoint. This November, LOS proudly present a dazzling production of the beloved musical "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" at the Epsom Playhouse. This amateur production is set to captivate the hearts of audiences young and old with its enchanting story, memorable tunes, and the sheer excitement of live theatre.

The musical, with a book by Jeremy Sans and music by Richard and Robert Sherman, is based on the classic 1968 film, which follows the adventures of the eccentric inventor Caractacus Potts (played in this production by Joe Black) as he rebuilds a magical car and sets off on a whirlwind journey with his children Jeremy and Jemima. They are joined along the way by Truly Scrumptious (played by Charlotte Fisher) and together they must outwit the villainous Baron & Baroness, as well as the evil Child-catcher - prepare to experience heart warming moments, daring escapades, and the power of imagination throughout!

The Leatherhead Operatic Society's cast and crew have been hard at work for the last few months under the watchful eye of director John Harries-Rees, and are perfecting this production with their talent, dedication and passion, which is sure to shine through in every performance. With musical direction from Sam Fisher, and choreography by Louise E. Wilson, this production features a talented ensemble of local actors, singers and dancers, all coming together to create a show that promises to be a 'fantasmagorical' treat for the whole family.

"Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" boasts a memorable score, with songs including "Truly Scrumptious," "Hushabye Mountain," and of course, the hugely popular "Me Ol' Bamboo". Audiences can expect top-notch musical performances that will have them humming the tunes long after the show has finished!

This production is a must-see for all ages, and the Epsom Playhouse is the perfect venue to bring this timeless tale to life. Don't miss this chance to experience the magic of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" with your friends and family. Tickets are on sale now and selling fast, so make sure to secure your seats early!

Performance Details:

Dates: November 21st - 25th, 2023

Venue: Epsom Playhouse, Ashley Avenue, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5AL

Tickets can be purchased from www.epsomplayhouse.co.uk or by calling the Box Office on 01372 742555.

The Leatherhead Operatic Society started way back in 1904, and since then have staged hundreds of musicals old and new, including Beauty and the Beast, Hairspray, South Pacific, Oklahoma, My Fair Lady, Camelot, Guys and Dolls, Oliver, Fiddler on the Roof etc.

Image - Chitty Chitty Bang Bang in the Epsom Market Square

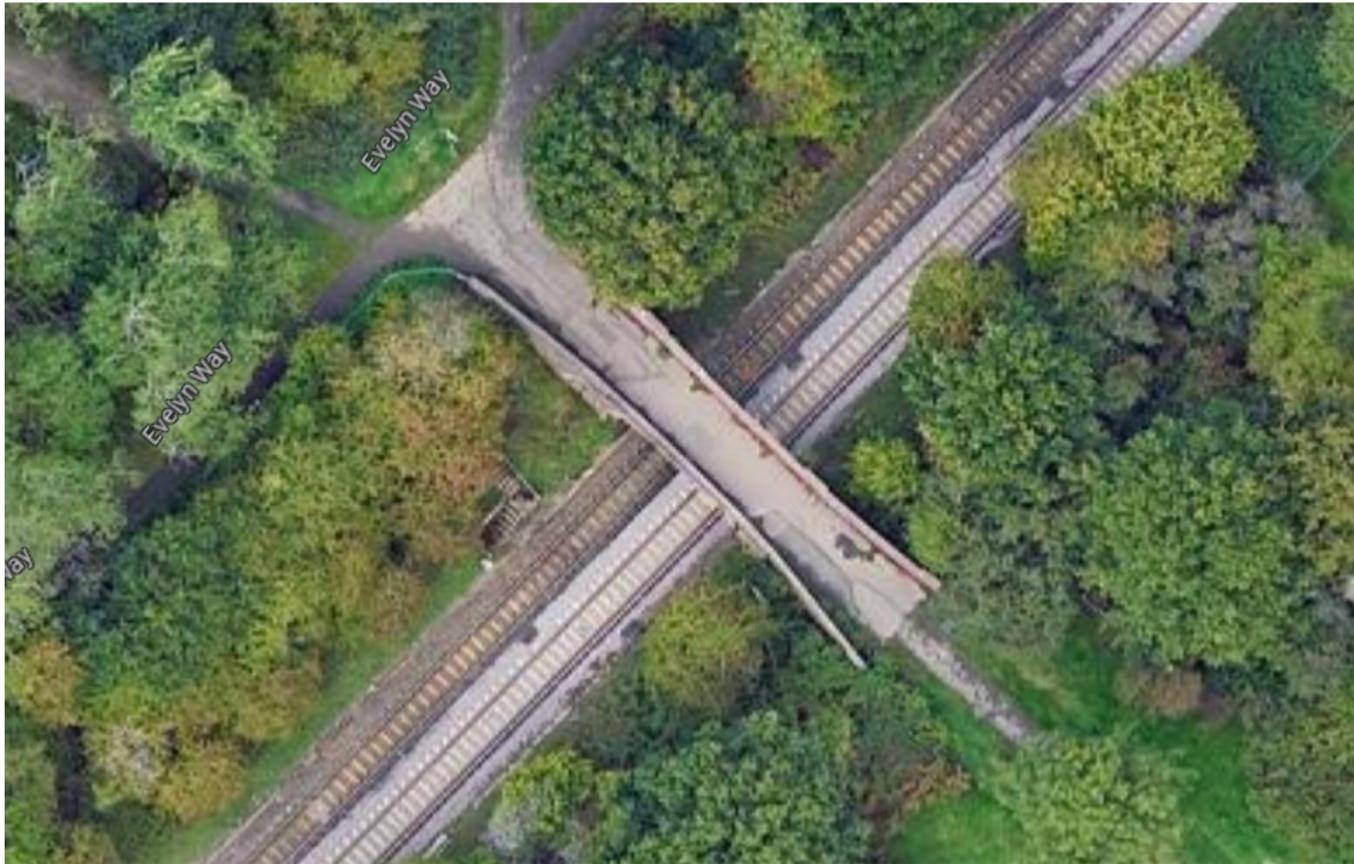
A bridge closed too far?

1 November 2023



In a saga that has left many residents scratching their heads, a seemingly routine footbridge closure in Epsom has morphed into an unexpected and prolonged headache. The bridge, over the railway line connecting **Castle Road** to **Epsom Common**, which was initially shut down at the end of February, has confounded locals with its persistent downtime, offering more questions than answers.

Initially, the bridge's closure seemed to be prompted by some mysterious "movement," which had caught the attention of passersby and authorities alike. However, the reasons behind this decision were left shrouded in mystery.



Castle Road bridge to Epsom Common - Google Earth

A brief flurry of activity was seen shortly after the initial closure, with residents hopeful that the issue would be resolved. But this optimism was short-lived. Fast forward to late July, and the mystery deepened as news surfaced that the bridge had been closed due to the discovery of an electricity cable. Many were left puzzled as to why such a discovery had not been anticipated in the first place, leaving the community without their bridge connection.

Since August, the situation appeared to be inching towards a resolution, as services crossing the railway were reportedly lifted and temporarily attached to the bridge's parapet. Work was ongoing, although without any obvious sense of urgency. In late September, Surrey County Council dropped a bombshell, renewing the closure order for an additional six months, prolonging the ordeal for beleaguered locals.

Chris Grayling MP, brought some semblance of hope when he announced that Network Rail expected the bridge to finally reopen in November. However, skepticism lingered, and residents continued to endure the inconvenience of the ongoing closure.

The closure's ramifications have rippled through the community, prompting discussions between the **Epsom Common Association** and **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council**, although the influence of both parties on the situation remains in doubt. Notably, the footpath diversions on the bridge's north side have proven problematic, especially as they traverse areas that traditionally transform into quagmires during the winter months.

In an effort to mitigate these challenges, the community proposed an extension of rubber mats to cover all unpaved sections of the diversion route. Though the Council has been in contact with contractors to address this issue, it offers little comfort to those who rely on the bridge for daily crossings.

Adding a twist to this already puzzling tale, Cllr **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley Vale) has stated "Following excavations on site, the understanding of how dire the condition of the bridge has started to come to light. Due to the extent of the movement of the bridge and the size of the cracks visible only beneath the surface, it was deemed not safe to excavate further with machinery."

Engineers were brought to the site to investigate the matter further, and their conclusion was nothing short of alarming - the bridge, it appears, is in such a precarious state that it must be demolished and replaced. This revelation has shaken the community, as further ground investigations are planned to determine suitable foundations for the new bridge.

In light of this troubling development, it seems that the footbridge will remain inaccessible until further notice, casting a shadow of uncertainty over the community's daily routines.

Image courtesy Epsom Common Association

Warm Wednesdays return to Epsom

1 November 2023



Last winter **Epsom Methodist Church**, in the heart of Epsom, opened up its premises every Wednesday as a place where people could come to keep warm, enjoy hot drinks and a lunchtime bowl of soup and have a friendly chat with others. In the afternoons Warm Wednesdays hosted an after-school club that included children’s entertainment and an evening meal for all the family. Everything was free of charge and the initiative proved very popular, with an army of volunteers making and serving over 1,000 meals during the course of the winter.

From 1st November through to 13th March 2024 Warm Wednesdays is back and from 10am to 6pm will be making the same offer available as last year. On the first Wednesday (November 1st) students from the nationally acclaimed Laine Theatre Arts will be coming to the after-school club to lead a Disney-themed entertainment session.

In an exciting new development Warm Wednesdays will this winter also include a weekly one-stop advice cafe. The church has partnered with a range of local organisations including Citizens Advice, The Mary Frances Trust, Epsom & Ewell Employment Hub, The Good Company, Surrey Community Action and Surrey County Council, to offer advice and support on:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Benefits, welfare rights, housing and rents
- Energy saving in the home and dealing with energy suppliers
- Finding a job and accessing training
- Budgeting and managing your money
- Getting help in a crisis

Robert Hill, one of the organisers of Warm Wednesdays explained: “No appointments are required – just drop in, grab a free hot drink and have a chat to one of the friendly advisers. One week the advice café will operate in the morning from 11.30am until 1pm and the next week in the afternoon from 3.30pm to 5.15pm.

“We know life is tough for many people at the moment. Some people just want to be part of a friendly community where they can stay warm and make new friends. Others have particular worries and pressing concerns. And some will simply welcome somewhere where they and their children are entertained and catered for in a relaxed environment.

“We look forward to welcoming back many of those who joined us last year as well as making lots of new friends this winter.”

Further details and a map of Epsom Methodist Church’s location can be found at

https://www.epsommethodistchurch.org.uk/Groups/409512/Warm_Wednesdays.aspx

Play streets coming to Epsom and Ewell

1 November 2023



A closed-street scheme is being launched in Epsom to “get more children away from their ipads and TVs and actually play outside”.

A ‘play street’ for Miles Road was approved by **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** after residents pushed for temporary closures so their children could play outside.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, chair of the community and wellbeing committee, said: “More than 90 local authorities have introduced the Playing Out scheme in their areas, and I’m really pleased to see this initiative come to Epsom and Ewell. “We believe the scheme will help support the mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of children and the community by creating a safe and inclusive space for everyone to play in and by fostering a much needed sense of

neighbourliness.”

The scheme has already been adopted by neighbouring Elmbridge Borough Council.

Playing Out is a not-for-profit organisation set up by parents in 2009 with the aim of getting young people out and about more freely.

The schemes, which have the backing of Play England, allow for streets that are not a main road or bus routes to be closed to through traffic for up to three hours.

Play streets are resident-led and need the agreement of neighbours. They are designed to give children the freedom to play outside and bring communities together.

Volunteers steward the roads and parents are responsible for their own children.

Applications to become a play street are handled by the same council team responsible for street party road closures.

Addressing the October 10 meeting, Cllr Woodbridge said: “We’ve looked at it and wherever it’s been adopted there has been some significant benefits and it’s a useful scheme.”

He told the committee the decision would be reviewed in a year to determine what, if any, changes were needed. He added: “But it’s quite valuable to get it up and running. “One of the most important things is to let our residents know that they can do this. “It would be great to get more children away from their ipads and TVs and actually play outside.”

As part of the application process Surrey County Council and the emergency services are notified of any road closures.

Cllr Chris Aimes (Lab, Court Ward) said: “I and my fellow councillors from Court Ward are very much in favour of this.”

Don't wait for the Feast of St Stephen

1 November 2023



For the seventh year running, **Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell** (CAEE) has teamed up with the **Rotary Clubs of Epsom and Ewell** to bring much needed support to those in the borough in need of help with paying fuel bills this winter.

Project Wenceslas enables those who receive, but do not need, the Government’s Winter Fuel Payment to donate it to either Rotary Club of Epsom or Rotary Club of Ewell. This money will be distributed to people in critical need of assistance with energy bills, much needed during the Cost of Living crisis. All monies donated are redistributed 100% without any deductions for costs or expenses.

Lisa Davis, CEO, Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell, said: “With energy bills still the biggest cost-of-living worry for many individuals and families across the country, this fund is a crucial support for those in our borough. Please get in touch if either you want to donate your Winter Fuel Payment, or you are in need of support.”

Since January 2018, CAEE has received nearly £15,000 in donations and made over 170 payments to families in Epsom & Ewell suffering from fuel poverty.

If you would like to know more about donating your Winter Fuel Payment, please contact via the websites epsomrotary.uk or ewellrotaryclub.org.uk and search for Project Wenceslas.

If you are struggling with fuel bills, then contact Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell on 0808 278 7963 (Mon-Fri, 10am – 4pm) or see our website : www.cae.org.uk <https://www.cae.org.uk/>

St Stephen’s Day (the first Christian Martyr) is 26th December in Western Christianity.

Local community gathered at Horton Cemetery

1 November 2023



Faith leaders read a committal together

The celebration started in a private field provided for the day by local farmer Mr Seymour Bourne and located right next to the five acre Cemetery. The largest asylum cemetery in Europe. Under a blazing Autumn sun the gathering was addressed by the charity's secretary **Mr Lionel Blackman**, who called for a rejection of a local council categorisation of the Cemetery as "amenity woodland". The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, **Cllr Robert Geleit** (Labour Court Ward) spoke of Epsom's historic connection to the five psychiatric hospitals in the Borough.

Patron of the charity, **Chris Grayling** MP sent a message, read by Horton Ward Cllr **Kieran Persand**: *"It's easy not to realise, as you drive past, the piece of history that lies behind the fence. Thousands of people lived in the old hospitals, lived and died mostly anonymously. They have no gravestones to mark their final resting place. And disgracefully the cemetery has been allowed to rot by its current owners. It is a credit to the work of the **Friends**, and of people like **Alan Carlson** who raised the money for a memorial, that their memory has not been lost. I hope one day that the cemetery can be taken back, and turned into a real garden of remembrance for those who passed so much of their lives here."*

Theresa Keneflick, a trustee of the charity and head of St Josephs Primary School spoke and brought a school choir who sang "True Colours" by Cindy Lauper.

The following each read a verse from Thomas Hardy's 'Voices from Things Growing in a Churchyard':

Rosie Spence, relative, on behalf of her great, great, great grandfather. **Allen Price** from Love Me Love My Mind. **Carmen Nel**, NHS Clinical Practitioner. **Audrey Ardern-Jones**, local poet and project volunteer. **Charles Wood**, former Nurse at Manor Hospital and Horton Hospital. Kevin McDonnell, Friends of Horton Cemetery Trustee and lead researcher of the lives. **Timothy Folkard**, project volunteer.

Then voices from the Cemetery were spoken by **Epsom Players** representing the lives of Enid Barnet and Richard Waterer.

Dr Alana Harris explained the symbolism of the ribbons everyone had tied for the day to the fence near the Cemetery.

Rev Nick Parish and Judith Mitchell (St Martin's Church of England); Fr Stephen O'Brien (St Joseph's Catholic Church); Pastor Josh Selfe (Epsom Methodist Church); Clerk Frances Touch (Epsom Quakers) said in unison:

"We are gathered to remember these 9000 souls who lived and died in Epsom - to remember them and to make representations that they might have dignity and rest in their death.

To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose on earth. A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to heal, a time to break down and a time to build up.

We affirm our mutual commitment to honour the residents of Horton Cemetery and to work for their memorialisation. Amen."

Finally a trumpet solo 'Marking the Unmarked' - was performed by its composer **Erin Symonds**.

The gathering then followed Scots Piper **Bob Ash** to the former Horton Chapel where a Memorial Garden of the ceramic flowers was unveiled. The audience was addressed by Patron of The Friends of Horton Cemetery, **Baroness Sheila Hollins**, who once worked in the St Ebbas Hospital in Hook Road, Epsom. Dr Harris concluded speeches with an overview of the project and its significance and meaning.

'In Memoriam' a film created by Cameron Cook, Jack Daly and Mica Schlosser of Kings College simply rolled the 9000 names to suitable music. The audience was spellbound.

Company Concentric performed a dance 'Garden Unlocked' and led the audience to the Memorial Garden unveiling. This

involved the planting of final flowers within the Forget Me Not installation by **Sue Littleboy** planting for James Poppelwell (great grandad, 1867-1914, d. Long Grove, grave b977); **Nari Fairbanks** (by proxy as resident in NT, Australia) - planting for Charles Holdgate (great, great, great uncle, 1854-1932, d. Long Grove, grave 1105a); **Iveta Goddard** - creator of the ceramic flowers used in the memorial garden and **Lauren** of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

Joining the 200-odd strong audience beside Horton Cemetery were Liberal Democrat PPC **Helen Maguire**, Chair of Epsom and Ewell Labour Party **Mark Todd** and **Gina Miller** the True and Fair Party PPC for the constituency. And as ever on her push-bike, Cllr. **Alison Kelly** (LibDem Stamford) and **Janice Baker** a leader of the local Green Party. Two Residents Association Councillors appeared including Cllr Phil Neale (Cuddington Ward) and another.

Lease reprieve for Langley Village Hall

1 November 2023



Langley Vale Village Hall was under the threat of closure but due to the hard work of the Langley Vale Village Hall Association and local residents a new 10 year lease has been negotiated.

The Hall, situated at 47 Rosebery Rd, Epsom, is the heart of community life in the somewhat otherwise isolated housing estate over the Downs. The freeholder of the hall is THE GUILDFORD DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE, a company limited by guarantee and not-for-profit.

Nevertheless, it is reported to have been a trying and difficult year dealing with the lease renewal.

Sharon Watkinson, a long standing resident of Langley Vale, witnessed the signatures of the trustees of the Association on the new lease.

The new lease includes a guaranteed option to add a further 5 years to take the Hall safely through to 2038.

The renewal allows the Association to apply for grants for the Village Hall for some much-needed maintenance works and possible eco friendly upgrades to the heating and also the windows.

The Hall was the venue for a highly successful Kings Coronation Street Party, "the best party the Village has seen" said Sean Porter, Chairman of the Langley Vale Village Hall Association.

Pollution around Epsom and Ewell Schools

1 November 2023



Epsom and Ewell Extinction Rebellion embark on a public education drive on Sunday 9th October in Epsom High Street. The climate action group has tabulated the pollution statistics for schools in and around the Borough.

The table below is based on statistics provided by addresspollution.org a United Nations accredited initiative of the Central Office of Public Interest.

Between 10am and 1pm the XR group will have a Doctor's surgery (with an Intensive Care Unit Doctor) giving real world advice on the health impact of Air Pollution. A Citizens Polling Board so passersby can vote for their favourite Pollution Solutions and an information desk so you can find out the Air Pollution levels at your home and local schools.

In 2020 in a study published by the journal *Science of the Total Environment*, experts from the University of Surrey's world-renowned Global Centre for Clean Air Research (GCARE) partnered with a local school and the local community in Guildford to investigate the impact cars have on air quality in and around schools during drop-off and pick-up times.

Children face a worrying threefold increase in air pollution during the daily school runs, causing air quality experts to call for restrictions on the use of cars during those periods.

These are the statistics provided by addresspollution.org for local school postcodes year long average figures assessed on 4th October 2023:

School	Air Pollution Level	UK Ranking Higher is worse	PM2.5 Level mcg/m3 WHO Safe Limit 5 .	PM10 Level mcg/m3 WHO Safe Limit 15 .	NO2 Level mcg/m3 WHO Safe Limit 10 .
Auriol School	Very High	82 %	12.22	18.89	20.17
Beacon School	Significant	51 %	10.40	16.84	15.16
Blenheim High	High	78 %	11.90	18.64	19.06
Cheam Common	Very High	84 %	12.28	19.07	21.50
Cuddington Croft	High	70 %	11.17	17.80	18.82
Cuddington School	Very High	82 %	12.19	18.84	20.84
Danetree	Very High	80 %	12.05	18.71	19.59
Downsend	High	72 %	11.46	18.05	18.31
Epsom & Ewell High	Very High	83 %	12.16	18.84	21.22
Epsom College	High	64 %	10.96	17.52	17.05
Epsom Downs Primary	Significant	52 %	10.38	16.92	15.38
Epsom Primary	High	78 %	11.77	18.41	19.82
Ewell Castle	High	78 %	11.79	18.49	19.87
Ewell Grove	Very High	82 %	12.01	19.02	21.02
Glyn	High	74 %	11.69	18.25	18.12
Kingswood House	High	73 %	11.48	18.05	18.67
Knollmead Primary	Very High	82 %	12.02	18.66	21.34
Linden Bridge	Very High	83 %	12.15	18.82	21.60
Malden Parochial	Very High	88 %	12.21	19.11	24.96
Mead Infant	Very High	82 %	12.23	18.89	20.18
Meadow Primary	Very High	80 %	12.06	18.73	19.81
Nescot	High	72 %	11.42	18.02	18.40
Nonsuch Primary	Very High	81 %	12.05	18.77	20.40
Riverview Primary	Very High	81 %	12.17	18.79	20.29
Rosebery	High	67 %	11.29	17.76	16.75
Shawley Community	Significant	50 %	10.38	16.79	14.98
Southfield Park	High	72 %	11.54	18.07	18.10
St Christophers	High	70 %	11.42	17.97	17.66
St Clements	High	79 %	11.94	18.59	19.70
St Josephs	High	68 %	11.38	17.86	16.91
St Martins	High	68 %	11.31	17.82	17.06
Stamford Green	High	68 %	11.33	17.80	17.14
Wallace Fields	High	67 %	11.24	17.75	17.22
West Ewell	Very High	81 %	12.15	18.78	20.18

Image: The school run © Robert Ashby cc-by-sa/2.0 Geograph Ireland

Bloomin' marvellous for Epsom and Ewell

1 November 2023



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Go Epsom Business Improvement District, and dedicated volunteers from across the borough were delighted to pick up a number of awards for Nonsuch Park, Epsom Town Centre and Ewell Village at this year's South & South East in Bloom awards.

For the first time, Nonsuch Park picked up two awards, a prestigious Gold Award for Large Conservation Area and a Silver Gilt Award for Heritage Park.

Judge **Peter Holman**, who is also Chairman of the South & South East in Bloom scheme, praised the efforts of the Nonsuch Voles Volunteering Group, and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Operational Services and Countryside Team, who all work together for the overall benefit of the park.

Mr Holman said, "Woodland management, planting new trees and beds, and uncovering and restoring horticultural features all add value. Since my last visit, it's good to see progress and the natural areas of the park are an excellent example of what can be achieved to benefit wildlife."

Ewell Village kept its Silver Award status in the Large Village of the Year category and was congratulated on the efforts of the community volunteers who help maintain the Gertrude Longhurst Memorial Garden and Bourne Hall Park.

The council's work at Bourne Hall was also praised. The judges said, "With its historic grounds, Bourne Hall showed noticeable improvements to the area at the rear of the building, which now forms an outdoor extension to the café area. It is understood that planting to soften its appearance is planned along with a new children's play area. Adjacent to the pond, a new pollinators bed has been successfully planted and looked attractive.

"The Wheatsheaf public house was pleasing to see and welcoming. Also of note was the work at Gertie's garden."

Epsom Town Centre entered the Business Improvement District category and retained its Silver Award status. The judges noted the planting schemes in Rosebery Park, the 'Pocket Park' in South Street and the new planters outside TK Maxx, they were also impressed with the murals around the Town Centre and the Lidl Living Wall in Upper High Street.

Councillor **John Beckett**, Chair of the Environment Committee, said "I am pleased to see the hard work and dedication of the council, Go Epsom, businesses, residents and volunteers has been formally recognised at this year's South & South East in Bloom awards.

"Maintaining our standards by winning Silver Awards in Ewell Village and Epsom Town Centre again and improving on last year's awards tally by winning Gold and Silver Gilt for Nonsuch Park is a brilliant achievement.

"Plans are already being put in place for the borough to take part in Bloom next year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who is committed to ensuring our borough is the best it can be for the local community, visitors and wildlife all year round."

Karen Pengelly, BID Manager at Go Epsom said, "Epsom is a lovely town, and the introduction of planters, murals and general greenery are welcome additions to our street scene. Visitors and local workers have commented on how much they appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in making Epsom look even better. Onwards and upwards for 2024 - there's always more to do!"

The awards were held at RHS Wisley on Friday 29 September 2023.

South & South East in Bloom is part of Britain in Bloom and runs annual competitions across the counties of Kent, Surrey, East & West Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, East & North Dorset and East Wiltshire.

Related reports:

[Bloom awards for Epsom and Ewell \(2022\)](#)

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Guildford centre of the cosmos for a day

1 November 2023



Budding astronauts and space engineers are set to be wowed and inspired on Saturday 7 October, when space researchers at the University of Surrey take over Guildford town centre.

The University and its event partners, the Institute of Physics, will offer activities for children and adults to try in the Tunsgate Centre and on the High Street.

Thanks to the UK Space Agency, there will be space suits to try on, Winchester Science Centre will host a pop-up planetarium, and there'll be a working model of a mini Mars rover.

Experts from Surrey Space Centre will be in the Tunsgate Centre.

Laura Cox from the University of Surrey's Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences explained what people can see. She said:

"Come along to see inside a small satellite and have a go at steering it. You can also help spot illegal fishing boats on satellite images, a crime which costs over \$15bn annually.

"At the mobile ground station, visitors can see signals from satellites in real-time and the decoded data they are sending from space. And you can learn about different types of space rocks and handle 3D-printed models of real asteroids, comets, and planetary moons."

Astrophysicists from the School of Mathematics and Physics will be answering astronomy questions, running a constellation activity, offering an escape room-style activity and more.

Local employers in the space sector will also participate, including Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL), who will show off models of spacecraft and components of the satellites they make, including a propulsion tank, circuit boards and samples of the exterior panels we see in photos.

Dr Nicola Baresi, an astrodynamist who plans efficient routes for spacecraft to travel in space, including to the Moon and to other planets in our solar system, says:

"It's going to be a fun day for people of all ages with lots of space-related activities and experiments to try. Space is a hugely exciting sector and is a thriving industry across Surrey and Hampshire. There are plenty of opportunities for rewarding careers in this area, yet significant skills shortages, something we help tackle at the University of Surrey with our research activities and educational programmes. We're keen to inspire people and help them realise that they could get a job in the space industry."

Glyn students brighten the Borough

1 November 2023



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and **Glyn School** have come together to transform an unused building on the site of the Upper High Street car park with a community mural funded through the Government's Safer Streets initiative.

Ten local secondary school students recently worked in collaboration with the council and international graffiti artists from **Positive Arts** to create a large scale mural celebrating the biodiversity within our borough. The artwork has dramatically improved the aesthetics of the building, which previously looked tired and in need of renovating.

Giving support to the project, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said: "It is a goal of the council to ensure that our natural environment is both celebrated and accessible to all. This project showcases how culture and creative practices can help to elevate the natural landscape of

our borough in new and colourful ways.

“This type of project sits within the emerging Cultural Strategy for the council, which seeks to nurture and champion the creative talents within our community while increasing access to creativity for all to enjoy and engage with. The students’ teamwork has also been extremely impressive and is something to be proud of”.

Julian Phethean from Positive Arts said, “The young people were really determined to produce something they could be proud of and that’s exactly what they achieved!

“All of the students worked well in a team, made a positive social impact, and displayed a high level of creativity, focus and drive.”

A spokesperson for Glyn School said: “The students involved thoroughly enjoyed this unique experience to give back to the community in a very different way.”

From “Princess” to Pauper’s grave in Epsom

1 November 2023



9000 patients of Epsom’s cluster of now closed psychiatric hospitals were buried between 1899 and 1955 in a now abandoned Cemetery. The Friends of Horton Cemetery are writing their life stories and seeking to reclaim the five neglected acres from a property speculator.

The **Horton Cemetery** is located between Horton Lane and Hook Road, **Epsom**.

On **10th October 2023** from 1.00pm The **Mayor Cllr Robert Geleit** (Labour Court Ward) and Mayoress of **Epsom and Ewell** will lead councillors, Aldermen of the Borough and the public in commemorating the lives of the 9000. The commemoration will begin beside the Horton Cemetery. Parking is open in the Hook Road Arena. Ceremonies will start at 1.00pm so the public is advised to park no later than 12.45 to allow time for the walk.

If you intend to attend the event you are requested to complete this simple online RSVP form.

If you are attending you should read the advice of The Friends of Horton Cemetery on the ground conditions and lengths of walks involved. Click [HERE](#).

Here is a taster of just one of the hundreds of life stories written by the volunteer team of the Friends of Horton Cemetery charity. **Steve Johnson**, one of the research team leaders, delved into the extraordinary story of a Polish aristocrat who’s family’s lives were upturned in the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Felicja Staszewicz, daughter of Aleksander Skirmunt and Teofila Skirmunt (née Lubańska) was born c1873 - the seventh of nine children - at the family country estate of Porzecza, Piński (now Belarus), the family having retained its Polish heritage despite the partition of Poland in 1795.

At the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Felicja and Piotr, together with their family, moved to Vilnius where they remained until the end of WW1. Tragically, Marta-Karolina committed suicide at the outbreak of the revolution.

It is unclear where Felicja and Piotr moved to after WW1, but Piotr died in 1929, and by 1939 we find Felicja living in Teklinopol (her country estate near Vilnius which she had inherited from her mother) with her youngest daughter, Matylda, who had moved there in 1923 after her marriage to Jan Myśliński (also from a notable family that traces back to 1670).

On the 17th September 1939 the Russian army crossed the border and Felicja and Matylda, together with her two young daughters, Janina and Jolanta, were forced out of their home and moved to the nearby village of Wilejka.

On the 13th April 1940, in the middle of the night, the family were arrested and, together with thousands of others, taken by cattle train into Russia as slave labour. Two of Felicja’s sons, Aleksander and Jan Leon were taken by the Russians and were amongst the mass murder of thousands massacred in the forests of Katyń.

Read the full story [HERE](#) on www.hortoncemetery.org

Epsom Common Association: A History of Conservation and Biodiversity

1 November 2023



Founded in 1974 by local residents deeply concerned about the state of Epsom Common and the looming threats to its existence, the **Epsom Common Association** has since been a stalwart defender of this natural haven. The roots of their mission trace back to the 1930s when borough and county planners contemplated the construction of an Epsom bypass, with a road cutting across the Common at the forefront of their plans.

By the 1960s and 70s, these proposals began to take concrete shape, much to the dismay of the community. In response, determined local individuals rallied to form the Epsom Common Association, a pivotal moment in the ongoing debate that would rage on throughout the following decades.

One of their early triumphs was the restoration of the Great Pond, a landmark achievement completed in 1979. Yet, their work encompassed a broader range of objectives:

1. Preserving the Common: The Association was committed to safeguarding the Common from any potential housing or construction projects, road developments, or encroachments.
2. Enhancing Amenity Value: Their mission extended to preserving and enhancing the Common's amenity value for all users.
3. Conservation of Biodiversity: Recognizing the Common's unique status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), they sought to maintain and enhance a diverse range of habitats for various wildlife species.
4. Nature Reserve Status: Their efforts also aimed at maintaining the Local Nature Reserve status and advocating for National Nature Reserve status.
5. Contributing to Conservation: The Association played a vital role in conservation work through their volunteer team, ECoVols. These volunteers were engaged in various tasks, including scrub clearance, charcoal burning, tree planting, and bracken reduction.

To keep their members informed, the Association produces three newsletters each year, covering recent activities, wildlife observations, news, and potential threats. They also maintain an active online presence through their website and a Facebook page. See www.epsomcommon.org.uk

The Association's governance is facilitated by a Committee, elected annually during the AGM. This Committee includes representatives from **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** and the **Lower Mole Partnership**, ensuring collaboration and effective management.

Membership of the Association is just £3.00 per household, and an additional £2.00 for postal members, making it accessible to a wide range of residents.

Epsom Common, though no longer a pristine wilderness untouched by human influence, has been integral to the local community for centuries. From its historical use for grazing animals and gathering firewood to wartime cultivation, the Common has a rich heritage intertwined with human activity.

To guide its future as a public nature reserve and promote biodiversity, the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council unveiled a Hundred Year Management Plan (2016-2116), approved by **Natural England**. The Association wholeheartedly endorsed this long-term approach and commitment to biodiversity conservation.



In their bid to create a mosaic of habitats and maintain a balance between grassland and woodland, the Association undertakes various management activities. These include the removal of young secondary woodland to restore lost grassland and heath, as well as the reintroduction of summer cattle grazing.

A success story of their strategy lies in the thriving butterfly population on the Common. It now hosts a range of butterfly species, from woodland dwellers like the Purple Emperor and White Admiral to grassland species like the Meadow Brown and Marbled White.

The diverse habitats have not only benefited butterflies but also thousands of other flora and fauna, including plants, fungi, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.

The Association ensures active engagement with its members through events such as two annual evening meetings featuring guest speakers on topics related to the Common's heritage and natural history.

Additionally, they organize natural history walks led by experienced naturalists, covering topics like butterflies, wildflowers, bush crickets, birds, fungi, and bats. These walks provided valuable insights into the richness of the Common's ecosystem.

The Association's commitment to conservation extends to the welfare of cattle on the Common, with members responsible for daily health and security checks.

Another intriguing facet of their work is charcoal production, a monthly endeavor from February to November. The charcoal is made from felled trees on Epsom and Ashted Commons.

Finally, conservation task days, carried out from January to May and September to November, involve both hand tools and some power machinery. These efforts are conducted in close coordination with the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and Natural England.

As the Association looks ahead, their plans include the removal of young trees to enhance wetland meadows, continued scrub and young tree removal to improve habitat for heathers and flowering plants, and hand-pulled bracken during the summer months to encourage grasses, meadow flowers, and heathers.

In sum, the Epsom Common Association stands as a shining example of community-led conservation efforts, dedicated to preserving the beauty, biodiversity, and heritage of the Epsom Common for generations to come.

You can get involved in the upcoming activities:

Sunday 15th & Monday 16th October at the Great Pond:

Removal of young trees along part of the eastern margin to open up a small wet land meadow for benefit of wild flowers and water fowl.

Sunday 19th & Monday 20th November at Bramble Heath:

Removal of scrub and young trees to maintain the open area and improve habitat for heathers and flowering plants.

Related reports:

[Epsom Common Green Flagged again](#)

[Epsom Common Bird Walk Poem](#)

[Uncommon commitment to the Common](#)

Local action to tackle global climate crisis

1 November 2023



According to the **Eco-Friends of Epsom** we are in an era marked by the increasingly pressing issue of climate change. The urgency of understanding its scientific underpinnings and potential solutions cannot be overstated.

Join The Eco-Friends of Epsom for a discussion with **John Mackintosh**, local expert in environmental matters, who serves as the Environment Manager at Mole Valley District Council and an Environmental Consultant at GreenGoals.

On Wednesday 27th September at 7.30 in the **Methodist Church, Ashley Road, Epsom** a meeting open to the public will take place. The event is not just about delivering information—it's about fostering a deeper understanding. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with John, probing him with questions to better grasp the challenges and solutions.

Neil Dallen, who is a local RA councillor and active in Eco-Friends said: "Climate change knows no boundaries, and its impact is being felt across the globe. Unusual weather patterns have led to a surge in natural disasters, including floods, extreme temperatures, and debilitating droughts. While the causal link between specific events and climate change can be debated, the stark reality is that thousands of lives have already been lost, and countless more have seen their homes and possessions reduced to rubble.

"The evolving landscape of our planet demands immediate attention. While some may harbour doubts about whether it's too late to reverse the course, one thing is unequivocal: doing nothing is not an option. Our actions, or lack thereof, will profoundly influence the lives of future generations."

"The question that looms large is, "What is the right course of action?" This quandary is not one that any individual or nation can resolve in isolation. Climate change is an international predicament, and governments worldwide must come together to find viable solutions.

"You might be wondering, "Can I, as an individual, truly make a difference?" The answer is a resounding yes. Change begins at the grassroots level, and each of us can play a part in mitigating the impacts of climate change. By coming together as a community and sharing knowledge, we can embark on a journey towards a sustainable future."

Mr Dallen added: "Join us for an enlightening evening with Eco-friends in Epsom, where we'll explore answers to these pressing questions and more. Together, we can take the first steps towards a better-informed, more sustainable future for our planet and generations to come."

Related reports:

[Classic growth versus environment dilemma](#)

[Surrey schools going solar](#)

[Time for us all to slow down?](#)

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Epsom and Ewell's Technology College 70 years young

1 November 2023



The **North East Surrey College Of Technology (NESCOT)**, situated in **Epsom and Ewell**, Surrey, England, traces its

roots back to the 1950s when it was known as Ewell Technical College. As NESCOT marks its 70th anniversary in 2023, it's worth delving into its intriguing history.

Originally christened as Ewell County Technical College, the institution welcomed its first cohort of students in September 1953, with an official inauguration following in March of the subsequent year. The college's establishment was notable not only for its academic pursuits but also for its geographical footprint, occupying what was purportedly the largest arable field in all of England. The construction of this educational institution came at a price tag of £250,000.



Ewell Technical College

Ewell County Technical College earned distinction as an early advocate of "liberal education." During the mid-1960s, students at the college devoted their Wednesday afternoons to an eclectic array of supplementary courses, ranging from sailing to folk dancing. Additionally, it made strides in student welfare, being among the pioneering technical colleges to appoint a dedicated staff member for this purpose. Today, this commitment to student well-being is upheld through various support services, encompassing Advice and Guidance, Student Finance, counseling, healthcare, childcare, security personnel, and specialized assistance for students with a history of being in care.

In its inaugural academic year, Ewell County Technical College enrolled 789 students, organized into three departments: Building, Science, and General Education. By the mid-1970s, this institution had burgeoned to accommodate a student body of 4,000. Tuition fees for students above the age of 19 ranged from £72 to £120 per academic year, while those under 18 were entitled to claim travel expenses amounting to 15p per return journey.

In 1973, a devastating fire swept through the newly-constructed extension, causing extensive damage estimated at £100,000. The fire, which originated in a science laboratory, left the exact cause shrouded in mystery.

The transformation into NESCOT occurred in 1975 when Ewell County Technical College underwent a name change. Subsequently, in 1988, the college acquired the former Epsom High School. Notably, NESCOT's theatre bears the name of Adrian Mann, who served as the college's inaugural chairman of governors. Mann's dedication to NESCOT extended even after his retirement as chairman in 1963, as he continued to serve as a governor for another decade before being conferred the title of Governor Emeritus.

Throughout its history, NESCOT has been a host to a diverse range of artists and events. Notable musical acts such as Queen, Genesis, Black Sabbath, Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, and Ralph McTell graced the college's premises. In 1977, Shepperton Studios chose NESCOT as a filming location for scenes in "The Revenge of the Pink Panther."

Among the illustrious alumni of NESCOT is the renowned naturalist David Bellamy, who both studied at and later worked as a laboratory technician at the college. Bellamy credited his teachers at NESCOT with kindling his passion for biology. Additionally, Frank Hampson, the celebrated cartoonist behind the Dan Dare comic strips and a recipient of the "best postwar comic illustrator in the world" title in 1975, served as a technician at the college. Dr. Guy Vine, father to the famous Vine brothers, Jeremy and Tim, imparted knowledge in civil and structural engineering at NESCOT.

Over the years, NESCOT has offered a diverse array of courses, reflecting its commitment to comprehensive education. These courses have spanned a wide spectrum, from Advanced Domestic Cookery and Air Conditioning Design to Bacteriology, Biblical and Religious Studies, Certificate in Home Economics, Flower Arrangement, Drug Toxicity, Law, Nursing, and Guest House Management. Additionally, NESCOT has provided classes and refresher courses in Shorthand and Typing.

Notable alumni from NESCOT include Anthoni Salim, a prominent businessman, investor, and money manager; Professor Peter Saville, distinguished psychologist; Joe Wicks, the renowned fitness coach; and Jane Wilson-Howarth, an accomplished author.

As NESCOT enters its seventh decade, its storied history stands as a testament to its commitment to education, innovation, and the cultivation of talent across a diverse range of fields.

Image: Courtesy NESCOT



All welcome in Epsom's parish church

1 November 2023



St Martin's is the Parish Church of **Epsom**. It is rather hidden from the bustle of the town between Church Road and Church Street where the main entrance is opposite the **Olde King's Head**. Paths lead from Church Road and Grove Road through the churchyard. It well repays the effort of finding it, an oasis of peace just minutes away from the town centre.

The present building is not the one mentioned in the Domesday Book, but its north west tower is the oldest building standing in Epsom. It is not easy to appreciate that, as it was disguised after the rebuilding with cladding to match the rest of the new church. The mediaeval church was demolished in 1824 as being too small as well as needing major repair. The only other remnant of it is the 14th century font.

Enlargement was necessary again in 1907 and an intended complete replacement was begun at the east end. It stopped there due to lack of funds! The place were the two parts join still shows the original intention. Inside the two parts are married well and now we have a large airy building, light because of the clear windows in the body of the church where the acoustics are well suited to its musical tradition. It is the venue for performances of many choirs as well as our own. In the rebuilt East end are some marvellous stained glass windows as well as the 1892 window by F.E.Oldaker a former pupil at Epsom College. Once the east window it is now behind the minstrel's gallery. In the east end and in the nave are monuments as fine as any in Westminster and by the same sculptors. There is a fine organ by Norman and Beard in 1909 which has since been rebuilt by Corbett and Balby, an Epsom firm, in 1966-67, and Principal Pipe Organs of York in 1998.

Overall St Martin's is a traditional English Parish church and the pattern of worship is recognisably Church of England. The Prayer Book services of Morning and Evening Prayer are sung once every month and the Holy Communion services on other Sundays are also enriched by our choir who often sing in cathedrals in the south-east when their choirs are away. There is time for fellowship around the coffee bar at the west end of the church after services. We strive to be welcoming and inclusive and are one of the few churches which has passed a resolution calling on the Church of England to amend its law so as to allow same sex weddings to happen in church.

The church is open for exploration and private prayer every morning and on Sunday afternoons. All are welcome at all times.

Free concerts (retiring collection) are sponsored by our Director of Music and we regularly host performances by the Epsom Choral Society, Ashted Choral Society and Epsom Chamber Choir.

Howard Bluett, Reader at St Martins

Mayor endorses Citizens Advice in Epsom & Ewell

1 November 2023



As Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell (CAEE) publishes its Annual Report 2022/23 today, Epsom & Ewell Mayor Cllr Rob Geleit expressed his support for the charity, having chosen it as one of his charities of the year. He said: "CAEE wants and

needs to be here for another 85 years and this year I want to do my part in helping that to happen. I have chosen this charity as I greatly support the work that it does and the outcomes that it achieves for local people.”

The Mayor attended CAEE’s Annual General Meeting on 19 September where staff, volunteers, funders and local supporters gathered to celebrate the achievements over the last year. In 2022/23, CAEE helped 2,660 people in the borough, addressing 8,256 issues and gained £1,008,032 of income for their clients. Top issues that were addressed are benefits and tax, debt, housing, relationships and family, and charitable support.

CEO Lisa Davis, calls for more volunteers to help boost its face to face and outreach service. Lisa said: “A key unique selling point for us is our face to face and outreach services and our aim this year is to extend this part of our offering. Our focus going forward is the recruitment and retention of a diverse group of volunteers to help that happen.”

“Currently, the people of Epsom and Ewell can access CAEE services by phone and email, and drop in to the office in Epsom on a Tuesday or Thursday. Increasing our capacity and extending this to four days a week would greatly help those in the borough who are affected by the rising costs of living, are vulnerable and often have nowhere to turn,” said Lisa.

CAEE provides an outreach service, with regular sessions being held at the Epsom Refugee Hub, Methodist Church’s Warm Hub last winter and has recently started at the Epsom Pantry for its members.

Sue, who’s been volunteering with Citizens Advice in the local community for over 25 years in various roles, says: “I enjoy the comradeship, which because of the nature of the volunteers, creates a better than average office environment. I like the brainstorming nature of giving advice - seeing how one thing affects another. Our work provides a window into part of our community which is hidden to a lot of people living in what appears to be an affluent area.”

Volunteering for CAEE is a rewarding experience with many having been helping their community for several years. For those interested in learning more, get in touch with CAEE to talk to a volunteer or read more on the website.

Photo of Yvette Ball (Chair of Trustees of CAEE), Epsom & Ewell Mayor Cllr Rob Geleit, Lisa Davis (CEO of CAEE)