

## Surrey Skills at the Summit

26 October 2022



**Surrey County Council** launches **Surrey Skills Plan** at **Skills Summit** November 10. A landmark event in Surrey next month will bring together education providers and businesses in a bid to turbo charge Surrey's local economy.

The Surrey Skills Summit at **Sandown Racecourse** on 10 November will give leading local businesses the opportunity to outline what skills they need in the years to come. Education providers including colleges and universities will be on hand to discuss tailoring vocational offers and training, with a view to developing Surrey's workforce of the future.

The event will also launch the **Surrey Skills Plan**, including recommendations and actions to help deliver the skills, jobs and opportunities for Surrey's economy to thrive.

The Summit will also include:

- Presentations from experts on the national skills landscape, including developments and their implications for Surrey businesses and training providers.
- Case studies from Surrey businesses who have taken creative approaches to meeting their recruitment, retention and skills needs
- The chance for businesses to have their voice heard to help build a world class skills system in Surrey that meets the needs of all businesses and residents.

Learn more and register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/surrey-skills-summit-tickets-415842374737>

**Matt Furniss**, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth, said:

"Surrey has the UK's second largest GDP after London and for decades has been a natural home for companies from across the world. As competition for talent becomes tougher and skills shortages become more pronounced, it's essential for Surrey to become more proactive in planning for the future. The Skills Plan and events like the Skills Summit are essential for growing a sustainable economy for Surrey. We need to come together to provide the right conditions for business to thrive, delivering skills, jobs and opportunity for all."

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## Surrey's Safe Drive Stay Alive returns

26 October 2022



To **Dorking Halls** next month, for its first live performances in three years. The live show has been performed in front of 190,000 young people between the ages of 16-19 since its inception in 2005 and is an emotionally engaging and thought-provoking education production, coordinated by **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service**.

Working with the other emergency services, the event aims to raise road safety awareness amongst young people and positively influence their attitudes to driving as well as their role as a passenger in cars.

The performance has been designed to engage an audience of young learner and novice young drivers, a group that is at higher risk of collisions, injury and death on the UK's roads and aims to make young people aware of their responsibilities as road users and the wide ranging and potentially devastating consequences should these not be taken seriously. The ultimate aim is to reduce the number of road traffic collisions involving young people and the number of deaths and injuries amongst this at-risk driver group.

The performances comprise a series of films featuring people recalling true stories and real-life impacts of road traffic collisions. Between each of these films, speakers, including personnel from the emergency services and members of the

public personally affected by a road death, recount their own experiences.

Over the last 17 years, 285 performances have been held, with, this year, 70 different schools, colleges, youth groups and even army bases from across the county attending. In the past two years, Coronavirus restrictions forced the event to be staged online, where an estimated 28,000 young people tuned in.

This year, Safe Drive Stay Alive are offering free tickets to the public performance on Wednesday 9 November, providing an opportunity to witness this impactful performance for yourself. Spaces are limited, so secure your today by visiting: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/safe-drive-stay-alive-tickets-430812460667>

The event has been supported by organisations including the **Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Surrey, Surrey RoadSafe, Toyota GB, esure and Sheilas' Wheels, Ringway, Surrey Educational Trust (SCC)**, as well as the **High Sheriff of Surrey, the Safer Guildford Partnership and Safer Surrey Heath**. Additional funding is provided by a large number of town and parish councils across Surrey. This funding allows the event to be put on free of charge, and cover venue hire and transportation costs for attendees to and from the venue. To find out more about Safe Drive Stay Alive, please visit: <https://safedrivesurrey.org/>

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## Surrey's challenges with social care

26 October 2022



**Surrey County Council** must work closely with independent care providers to meet the challenges facing social care and continue to improve choice for residents, Surrey's new director of adult social care has said.

In her first keynote speech to Surrey's care sector, **Liz Bruce** embraced the need for a new working relationship between the council and providers of residential, nursing and home-based care to help build for the future of social care including planning for the biggest care reforms in decades.

As well as preparing for the reforms - which are set to usher in a lifetime limit on care costs of £86,000 - the care sector in Surrey is operating in an "unprecedented" economic environment and dealing with recruitment pressures and the impact of Covid-19, Mrs Bruce said.



Liz Bruce new Director of Adult Social Care

Addressing the **Surrey Care Association's** autumn conference in Dorking, Mrs Bruce said new relationships and "new thinking" would enable the council and providers, along with their NHS partners, to move "together ahead".

Forging a closer relationship would enable the partners to better shape services around the needs of residents and communities and enhance the choice of care and support options available.

Earlier this year, Mrs Bruce became Joint Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Integrated Commissioning working across Surrey County Council and Surrey Heartlands integrated care system.

She told the conference: *"We need each other more now than ever. We're stronger together and we've got more in common together - we mustn't let people divide us. We're far more powerful and influential to central government if we're saying the same things.*

*"How we work together going forward is all based on relationships. We need to innovate together and to do that we've got to have a good relationship and have dialogue. None of us can do what we're trying to do on our own so we need to come together and work in partnership. I'm optimistic we can do that."*

Areas where there are opportunities to work together include on shared issues such as workforce and training. A key focus for adult social care is supporting providers and residents with better information, advice and guidance to help the make informed life choices, especially when considering or requiring care.

The county council's commissioning strategy for older people, covering the period until 2030 and drawing on input from providers and the NHS as well as residents and staff, aims to champion greater choice, quality and control for residents.

As well as supporting people to lead independent and active lives in their own homes and communities for as long as possible, the blueprint spells out how the council and partners will work together on ensuring intensive and personalised care options for people with more complex needs, in line with the council's ambition to tackle inequalities in health so that no one in Surrey is left behind.

Mrs Bruce took up her new role in Surrey in May from the London boroughs of Richmond and Wandsworth where she was Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health. She has previously held senior positions at London's tri-borough partnership - Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea - and at Manchester City Council and Warwickshire County Council.

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## National Polio Day marked in Epsom

26 October 2022



**Gina Miller** supported **Epsom Rotary's** fight against rising cases of Polio. Today is **National Polio Day** and on Saturday local Rotarians were raising awareness in Epsom's Market Square. They raised £300 from the Borough's generous public and that will be matched by the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**.

Gina Miller with Peggy Rowell of Epsom Rotary in Epsom Market Square

With the news reporting Poliovirus has raised its ugly head, here in the UK, it is a reminder how important the Rotary International PolioPlus campaign is. Not since 1984 has there been a case of polio in the UK, which was declared polio free in 2003. Although, no cases have been detected or confirmed and the risk of someone catching polio in the UK is low, it has come as a major blow to Rotary, that it has been identified, here, in the UK. The emphasis is being placed on trying to make sure that all children and unvaccinated adults have been fully immunised against the disease. This is because the poliovirus is opportunistic and will exploit gaps in population immunity.

The **Rotary PolioPlus campaign** was launched in 1985, becoming a founding member of the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative** in 1988. In this time, Rotary members, working with communities around the world, have contributed more than 2.1 billion US dollars and countless volunteer hours for the fight to end polio. Now polio is considered eliminated in most first world countries with Afghanistan and Pakistan being the only countries in the world where the infection is classed as an endemic.

The fight has to continue and as Rotarians we can play a key role in raising funds and awareness to achieve a polio-free world and ensure we protect the gains Rotary has worked so hard to achieve.

### Polio Outbreaks 2022

Poliovirus (Poliomyelitis) has been confirmed in non-endemic countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, India, the United Kingdom, and New York in 2022. In recent years, polio-endemic countries of Afghanistan and Pakistan have reported polio outbreaks, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

And on September 26, 2022, the U.S. CDC issued a global Alert - Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions, regarding polio outbreaks and poliovirus detections in various countries.

On September 13, 2022, the WHO added the USA to a list of about thirty countries where circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) has been identified in 2022. This action is related to genetic sequences in July 2022 from a polio (Acute flaccid myelitis) patient in Rockland County, NY, and wastewater specimens collected in various New York counties, linked to poliovirus samples collected in Israel, and London, indicating multi-country, community transmission.

Our own correspondent

# Benches mark the victims of Co-Vid across the Borough

26 October 2022



**Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** is installing 14 memorial benches across the Borough to commemorate all the lives lost in the Covid-19 pandemic. Metal benches have been placed at Alexandra Receptions Ground, Long Grove Park, Nonsuch Park, Shadbolt Park, Stoneleigh Broadway and The Grove in Ewell Village.

Mayor Clive Woodbridge, College Ward Councillors Julie Morris and Nigel Colin, Cllr Hannah Dalton and Elena Ciesco. Acting Borough Chief Executive Jackie King also attended.

More metal benches have been or are in the process of being installed at Auriol Park, Ewell Court Park, Mounthill Gardens and The Wells Centre. Wooden benches will also be placed at Epsom Common, Grandstand Road, Horton Country Park and Hogsmill by the steppingstones at a later date. Flowers will also be planted around the benches where appropriate.

Funding for the benches was provided via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Councillor **Hannah Dalton**, who put forward the CIL bid, said, "The past two years have been extremely hard for everyone in the Borough, but more so for those who have lost loved ones. These benches are our permanent memorial to all those affected by the pandemic. "I hope they will bring comfort to grieving families, ensuring that their loved one will always have a place in and be remembered by our community."

Councillor **John Beckett**, Chair of Environment and Safe Communities Committee, added, "While these benches memorialise the pandemic, they also represent a time for reflection within the Borough. I can't think of a more fitting tribute to those we have lost, than to have something to remind us of and generations to come."



A Robin is a feature of the Co-Vid victims memorial bench

One of the benches, for each of the Borough's Wards, was the place of a moving speech by **Mayor Clive Woodbridge** on Saturday morning 22nd October. In **Alexandria Park** The Mayor spoke of the loss so many across the Borough have suffered during the pandemic. As of the week ending 7th October 2022 the UK Government funded **LG Inform** states that 474 persons have died of Co-Vid in Epsom and Ewell.

Mayor Woodbridge recognised how deep the bereavement is felt by relatives who came to the bench this day especially as he had this year suffered the loss of a son. As an example of the reality of loss he read a tribute to one Epsomian who succumbed to the virus.



Elena Ciesco who campaigned for memorials in the Borough

**“Luigi Ciesco** was born in Italy in 1941 and at the age of 19 he moved to England in 1960 to start a new life. He met Vincenza his wife, at a wedding in Italy and soon after, they were married, settling first in Hook Road and then in Alexandra Road in Epsom for 45 years. They went on to have 4 children and 8 grandchildren and were married for 57 years. He was an amazing, fun loving and cheeky man, a real character and he was known and loved by so many. He loved his family, and he loved his Italian music and he loved to dance. He was an extremely hard-working man and worked in the NHS. He grew all his own vegetables and was an expert gardener and wine maker.

The Covid memorial benches mean a great deal to the bereaved families. The world seems to have moved on from Covid but they have not moved on, they are forever changed. The benches show the reality of how cruel this virus is and how it does not discriminate from young to old. We all hope that it makes people stop and think about our loved ones never to be forgotten.”

## Inspirational Surrey Syrian awarded

26 October 2022



**Surrey Arts** inclusion music teacher **Raghad Haddad** has won the Inspirational Music Leader Award at the Youth Music Awards 2022. Raghad received her award on 19 October in Troxy London in recognition of her work for Surrey Arts as a diverse leader of refugee background, supporting vulnerable children in Surrey.

Raghad Haddad is a viola player from Yabroud, a small town in the mountains north of Damascus. Since being granted asylum in the UK in 2018 she has performed at numerous charity events in London and Brighton and recently performed with Damon Albarn, The Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and The Orchestra of Syrian Musicians.

On behalf of Surrey Arts Raghad has worked on multiple projects supporting vulnerable children including SEND and refugee children and has been the executive producer of a major international music project involving the United Nations and 120 participants from around the world.

After finding out she won the award, Raghad said: *“I was speechless when they announced my name as the winner of the Inspirational Music Leader at the Youth Music Award 2022 this week!*

*“It’s such an honour to have received this award and I’m so grateful to my colleagues at Surrey Arts for the support they have given me since I arrived in the UK from Syria.*

*“Thank you for giving me the opportunity, not only to rebuild my own life but also the privilege to help others affected by war, poverty, climate change and discrimination. Sadly, the need to support displaced communities is not getting smaller*

*and I look forward to supporting more of your transformational projects in the months and years ahead."*

**Kavyan Hajirostami** also won the Young Leader Award for their work with Big Leaf. Big Leaf support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) across Surrey and work closely with Surrey Arts on a range of music and arts projects. You can find more information about Big Leaf here: <https://www.bigleafoundation.org.uk/>

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## Anyone for tennis and computers?

26 October 2022



Pupils at Shawley Community Primary Academy **Epsom Downs** will put their racket skills to the test this half-term and take part in an exciting afternoon of tennis coaching and computer-based learning activities, with education charity, **Rackets Cubed**.

The unique initiative combines racket sports with science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) lessons at the local Sutton Sports Village, rounded off with a well-deserved and nutritious hot meal for the budding athletes and computer whizzes.

Supporting all children to be healthy, happy and ambitious learners is at the heart of Shawley Primary Academy's approach. The school has partnered with Rackets Cubed to help widen access into sports and STEM learning for more children in the borough, empowering each pupil to realise their full academic and sporting potential.

The charity aims to improve the lives of children and young people across the UK and raise aspirations through its integrated programme of sport, education and nutrition learning. As part of the enriching afternoon, pupils in years 5 and 6 will be getting served with:

- Racket sports - a structured coaching session with a professional sports coach
- STEM activities - one hour of fun and engaging computer-based activities delivered alongside the sports coaching, to complement the core school curriculum
- Nutrition - A healthy and hearty meal will be provided at the end of the session to help the children re-energise, whilst learning about the importance of nutrition for classroom and sporting achievement

While tennis fans bid farewell to old legends such as Serena Williams and Roger Federer this year, the future is looking bright with newcomers such as Naomi Osaka and Emma Raducanu. This makes it a perfect time to introduce more local children to the sport and nurture the next generation of diverse tennis talent.

By providing pupils with the opportunity to try extracurricular opportunities that otherwise might not be easily accessible, Shawley and Rackets Cubed are working to help children dream bigger, develop their skills and discover new passions.

**Sports Lead at Shawley Community Primary Academy, said:**

*"We are very excited here at Shawley to begin this partnership with Rackets Cubed and help break down barriers to sports and STEM learning. The positive growth and self-fulfilment of our pupils is central to what we do, so being able to align ourselves with a charity that is also driven by these aims was incredibly important to us. Sports can create an infinite number of opportunities and benefits when it's regularly engaged in, so it wonderful to work with Rackets Cubed and help our pupils access professional coaching and training, which all contributes to their wider success."*

For more information about Shawley Community Academy, please visit: <https://www.shawleyprimaryacademy.co.uk/>

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## Insurers against poverty?

26 October 2022



**Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell (CAEE)** has launched a crowdfunding scheme with the **Aviva Community Fund** to raise money to deliver critical Cost of Living advice to local people. Aviva has selected CAEE to be part of the Aviva Community Fund where Aviva employees can allocate £25 (donated by Aviva) to their chosen charity project on the scheme. The crowdfunding scheme is not limited to Aviva employees - the public are encouraged to donate towards community fund projects. In addition, Aviva has pledged to match donations (one per donor) up to the value of £250 to help tackle the Cost of Living crisis.

**Lisa Davis**, CEO, CAEE said: "The Cost of Living crisis is affecting all of us with rising prices and concerns about the future. But for some, the crisis is truly devastating. People coming to us are understandably very worried about paying their bills, heating their homes and looking after their families. Demand for our services is predicted to grow this winter so this campaign is crucial to help us support the local community during this difficult time."

CAEE is an independent charity and needs to raise funds to keep its services running for the benefit of the community of Epsom & Ewell. It gives free advice and information about many different issues including debt, benefits, housing and employment advice. This can include crisis support such as vouchers for the local food bank and funds to help with fuel payments. CAEE can check that people are claiming all the benefits and other money that they are entitled to and help with budgeting skills whether they are in debt or worried about managing their money effectively.

Please visit the CAEE crowdfunding page for more information and to donate: <https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/citizens-advice-epsom-ewell-cost-of-living-advice-services>

Or visit the CAEE website [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

About Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell CAEE is a small, local charity offering free advice and information for all who live, work and study in the borough of Epsom & Ewell. All advice is free, confidential, impartial and independent. As a small charity we are responsible for raising our funds. It costs, on average, £60 for each client that we help. To make a donation please visit [www.cae.org.uk/donate/](http://www.cae.org.uk/donate/)

Just £5 per month could enable us to help another client this year. If you need advice, please contact our friendly team at Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell on 0808 278 7963 (Mon-Fri, 10am - 4pm) or see our website: [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk)

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## Epsom Pantry breathing life into the community

26 October 2022



**Epsom Pantry** is a member-led community hub and food shop opened by **Good Company** (Surrey). Opened to create a network of support and a much-needed source of affordable grocery shopping within our community. The Pantry is a means of strengthening people's financial and emotional resilience while also helping to reduce the dependency on food banks. The cost-of-living crisis means more and more households are struggling to make ends meet. The Pantry offers vital financial savings, access to healthy nutritious food and the opportunity to be part of a growing community of support during a time when it is most needed.

Image: *Volunteers Faye and David in the Pantry*

Since officially opening back in July they now have 170 members, supporting a total of 299 adults and 258 children. The Pantry membership has grown very quickly, far exceeding its aim of reaching 100 members in a year!

**Bex Loomes**, Epsom Pantry Manager said “With growing numbers comes a great sense of community. As soon as the shop opens there is a buzz and a lovely atmosphere. We have seen long lost friends reunited, shoppers sharing new recipe ideas, and people sitting down to chat with new friends, in a space they feel is their own. If you are in Epsom Monday to Friday, do pop in and say hello. We are open for limited hours but there is often someone in the shop ready to show you around.”

Epsom Pantry works through a membership system. Anyone can apply online to become a part of Epsom Pantry or be directly referred to the Pantry by Epsom & Ewell Foodbank. The Pantry offers an alternative food-aid that is available to anyone we see at our food banks centres. They also help people before they are in that crisis situation.



*Maggie and Harris showing off the allotment fruit and veg*

For £5 members get to choose 10 items from the shelves. Each week this includes meat, dairy, fridge, and freezer items, as well as all the store cupboard basics and toiletries. Fruit, vegetables, eggs, and bread are all given out for free! Our members are taking home over £30 worth of food shopping for just £5, meaning they are saving an average of £1,000 a year on shopping bills.



*All smiles in the Pantry with Jane, Sarah and Faye*

When not open for shopping, they are running community activities. So far these have included free children’s cooking classes with Jayne from Grow, Cook, Enjoy; energy advice consultations and top ups with Dave from Surrey Community Action; and adult low-cost, low-energy cooking classes with Chef Renu.

Newest staff team member **Jane** (Pantry Co-ordinator) will be heading up these community activities going forward, engaging with local agencies, and involving the wider Epsom community in what Epsom Pantry do here.

**Epsom Pantry**  
24 South Street  
Epsom  
KT18 7PF

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## Epsom Councillor challenges County “community”

## funding

26 October 2022



Questions have been raised about a community cash project and whether it is reaching those in Surrey who are most in need. **Surrey County Council** plans to allocate £100million over five years, with residents and community groups pitching for money for their areas. At its last cabinet meeting on September 22, £586,000 was allocated from the council's Your Fund Surrey community fund for the rebuilding of **Ripley Village Hall** and £982,000 was given to the **Old Woking and District Community Centre**.

Image: More than £500K was awarded for a community shop and cafe in Normandy from Your Fund Surrey. Credit Surrey County Council.

But a motion put forward at the authority's full council meeting on Tuesday (October 11) called for the fund to be paused in next year's budget, in a financial climate that is "very different" from when it was established. **Epsom** Councillor **Jan Mason** (Residents Association, West Ewell) said in her area she had two of the county's most deprived estates, and among the lowest car ownership, meaning people couldn't necessarily travel to community facilities elsewhere. She claimed the money had been "wasted", saying she was sure some councillors had "lovely clubs" for people in middle-income areas.

**Cllr Mason** added: "You've taken the money from the people in my area that are on low income, and they are paying their rates, they're not getting out of that. But they're actually paying for things that no one asked them do they want to have?" Cllr Mason took issue with councillors being told to work with their communities on getting the funding and has spoken out before on the lengthy application process to get the money. She added: "I know what it's like, so don't say to people like me: 'What you've got to do Jan, is work with your communities.' Yes I do, and I've always done for 20 years."

Cllr **Denise Turner-Stewart** (Conservative, Staines South and Ashford West), cabinet member for communities and community safety, said the fund had so far given 14 projects £4.5million, with another seven applications worth more than £3.75m which could be decided by the end of the year. She added: "Many of the projects funded have focused on early intervention and prevention by promoting the health and well being of residents. "Funded projects have provided residents with a safe space to exercise, socialise and learn new skills. Bringing communities together on projects has helped reduce social isolation and there are numerous examples where projects have led to new connections being build out in our communities."

She also announced that £50,000 would be allocated to each member for their area, aiming to simplify the fund from early 2023. Cllr **George Potter** (Liberal Democrat, Guildford East) called the announcement a "rabbit pulled out of the hat" and questioned if it should come in the middle of a debate and not via a leader's statement or at a select committee. He said he welcomed the simplification of the process, hoping it might help some of areas of high deprivation in his division, though he raised concerns about rising costs of borrowing on the fund.

Cllr **Nick Darby** (Dittons and Weston Green Residents, The Dittons), putting forward the failed motion to pause the funding, said it was a question of "affordability, pure and simple" and not a question of not wanting to support communities. He said: "We are borrowing £100m or would be if it goes all the way through, and we cannot afford at the moment to do this."

Council leader Cllr **Tim Oliver** (Conservative, Weybridge) called the "knee-jerk" move "premature at the very least", saying the next year's budget would be looked at over the coming weeks and a decision could be made. He said the council would continue to be prudent in budgeting, prioritising services to the most vulnerable children and families, but that the administration would not "abandon our residents and communities".

Cllr Oliver added: "We should be optimistic in our ability to overcome these challenges. We have a track record of facing up to issues and finding solutions."

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## Epsom's Mental Health Week

26 October 2022



Epsom and Ewell based charities **Love Me Love My Mind** and **The Friends of Horton Cemetery** joined forces with Surrey County Council Youth Workers and others this week. In Epsom Market Square on Saturday 8th October local residents and visitors took part in the “**Out of Sight, Out of Mind**” Project. This **Historic England** supported project raises awareness of the **Horton Cemetery** in Epsom. There are buried 9000 patients of Epsom’s five now closed psychiatric hospitals. The largest asylum cemetery in Europe.

Borough and County Councillor **Bernie Muir** joined in the Market Square painting of memorial flowers.



Cllr Bernie Muir paints a flower

The painting continued during a day of reflection and celebration on **World Mental Health Day** 10th October at **St Barnabas Church** in Temple Road, Epsom. Activities included a walk to Horton Cemetery beside Hook Road and a song and dance performance by students from Epsom’s **Laine Theatre Arts** School.



Mayor Clive Woodbridge paints a flower

Mayor **Clive Woodbridge** joined the event and painted a flower. 900 ceramic flowers are being individually painted by young and old throughout the Borough over the year. Workshops will be held to discuss the significance of the Cemetery and the lives of those who ended up in this paupers' graveyard. The aim is to plant the flowers near the Cemetery on Mental Health Day 2023. The site was sold by the NHS to a property speculator in 1983 and has been neglected ever since.

## “Sorry” is not such a hard word for Surrey

26 October 2022



**Surrey County Council's** leader said the authority will “learn lessons” from problems which left 150 families without school transport. Issuing an apology on behalf of the council, **Councillor Tim Oliver** said the authority had to “hold its hands up” after children, many with additional needs, had to find alternative travel arrangements. The cabinet member for education and learning, **Councillor Clare Curran** (Conservative, Bookham and Fetcham West), echoed his apology to the “families who have had such anxiety and delays” since the start of term.

Image: Tim Oliver Surrey County Council leader - credit Surrey Live

In a full council meeting on Tuesday (October 11) Cllr Oliver (Conservative, Weybridge) said a change in policy, along with increased demand and driver shortages, led to a backlog in processing applications. He added: “This has been a very complex and difficult situation and we have to hold our hands up on occasions like this to say that we have let some people down. However, I know that the home to school transport team have been working day and night alongside our customer services team to help as many families as they can.”

He committed to members that the authority would learn lessons from the beginning of the school year. At the start of term, nearly 150 families were left without school transport as the authority attempted to work through more than 500 applications.

Parents came forward to the LDRS\* with stories of long journeys on public transport and children who weren't able to stay for the whole school day because of sibling pick ups and drop offs. A council spokesperson at the time said there had been an increase in staffing as well as temporary financial allowances being given to families to make alternative arrangements.

**Cllr Nick Darby** (Dittons and Weston Green Residents, The Dittons) thanked local media for bringing attention to the

issue and said there had been a “woeful lack of communication” with families when transport was withdrawn or delayed before the start of the school term. He added: “Lessons need to be learned, and quickly, to avoid any repetition. Sufficient resources in place well in advance, regular communication. This year [there was] none of that, the problem could have been identified months ago. Sorry may be the hardest word but here it is entirely appropriate, as you have said leader, addressed to our numerous left-behind children, their left-behind and stressed parents, our left-behind officers doing their best to sort out the problems.”

**Cllr Curran** said it was not the intention that a new policy, which said individual transport would only be agreed in extenuating circumstances, would push more parents through the appeals process.

Meeting documents also showed that no SEND (Special Education and Needs Disability) children had had their solo transport removed since the new policy was implemented. She said: “I repeat and reinforce the leader’s apology to those families who have had such anxiety and delays in the recent weeks related to home to school travel assistance.”

Saying the council chamber had been turned into a “political environment”, Cllr Oliver admitted that though the authority’s ambition was to ensure that no one in Surrey was left behind, “that isn’t currently the case”. He added: “But it is our ambition and it will remain our ambition to make sure that we do look after every vulnerable member of this county, whether that’s a family or a child or any resident.”

Cllr Curran confirmed a review was being carried out into what had gone wrong.

See our earlier report: Families ‘in limbo’ as SCC fails on school transport

\*LDRS BBC’s Local Democracy Reporting Service with which Epsom and Ewell Times is in partnership

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## Epsom College top independent school 2022

26 October 2022



**Epsom College** has been judged **Independent School of the Year 2022** at an annual awards ceremony that celebrates the very best in education and student experience in UK independent schools. The winner of the overall Independent School of the Year Award is seen as a standard-bearer for the sector. This year’s esteemed judging panel of industry experts selected Epsom College, stating that the school is a ‘beacon of excellence’ and showcases the benefits of an independent education in the UK.

The award is not one that can be applied for. The judging panel looks at schools from across the country who are shortlisted for one of the 22 award categories for the Independent Schools of the Year awards and selects the school that has impressed them the most as the overall Independent School of the Year winner.

**Dr Helen Wright**, Chair, Independent Schools of the Year Awards 2022, said: “Epsom College is a shining example of all that is best about independent education in the UK. Epsom College is renowned as achieving academic success whilst delivering an exceptional student experience to its pupils of all ages, skills and backgrounds. The College is a worthy winner of the overall Independent School of the Year 2022 accolade and I congratulate all the students and staff who have helped to make the school the beacon of excellence which it undoubtedly is.”

Epsom College was also named as the winner of the **Student Wellbeing Award** at the ceremony, hosted at the Royal Thames Yacht Club on Tuesday 11 October. The judges were hugely impressed by the evidence of the whole-school approach to mental health and the wellbeing of both its staff and pupils. Especially the supreme importance of such support in the 2021-22 academic year and beyond, as school communities continue to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

Independent schools are part of their local community and the College’s commitment to its outreach and service programme was found to be a shining example of best practice in that area.



Emma Pattison head of Epsom College - c. John Wildgoose

**Emma Pattison**, Head of Epsom College, said: “What an incredible honour to be named Independent School of the Year. This Award acknowledges what a fantastic school Epsom College is. The founding principles of the school, benevolence and excellence, are two things we live by every day. We put focus on time, space and heart and spirit to give all the young people in our care everything they need to become the best version of themselves - in the classroom, on the sports field and in any field of interest that lights that spark within them. There is so much amazing work to be celebrated in the industry at the moment, so this is a real privilege to be named the best of the best. I am incredibly proud to be Head and we will display this award with real pride!”

Emma Pattison, who joined Epsom College at the start of this academic year, takes over from the previous headmaster **Jay Piggot** after a ten-year tenure.

**Epsom College** was officially opened in 1855 by **Prince Albert** and granted Royal Patronage by Queen Victoria the same year. The reigning monarch has been Epsom College’s patron ever since. The College - originally known as the Royal Medical Benevolent College - first opened its doors to 20 pensioners, who were either qualified medical men or their widows. They were provided with free accommodation and an income. The College also looked after 40 foundation scholars; these were the sons and orphans of medical men who were fed, clothed and educated by the College.

Today, Epsom College provides a rounded education to 1,100 girls and boys aged 11-18, where excellent results are aligned to a breadth of opportunity outside the classroom. The school is in the top 1% in the UK according to data from the Department of Education. Its co-curricular programme has been voted for six years running among the ‘Best of the Best’ in UK independent education by The Week magazine.

## Lighting up for menstrual dignity

26 October 2022



On Tuesday 11 October **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service** lit up Guildford Fire Station in a show of support for **Binti**, an international menstrual dignity charity based in Weybridge, Surrey. The service will be looking to supplement **Surrey County Council**’s ground-breaking initiative, as the first UK council to provide free period products across the county and eradicate menstrual stigma and taboo whilst normalising the conversation.



Surrey Fire and Rescue Service are to explore the distribution of Dignity Packs where needed when carrying out community engagement activities.

The event at Guildford Fire Station was attended by representatives from the Service, including Acting Chief Fire Officer, **Dan Quin**, and Chief of Staff **Bernie Beckett**. They were joined by actor and Binti ambassador **Nina Wadia**, star of TV programmes including *Eastenders*, *The Outlaws*, *Dr Who* and contestant on last year's series of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

The lighting up of Guildford Fire Station coincided with **International Day of the Girl Child**, which seeks to highlight the challenges faced by young females to their education, their physical and mental wellness, and the protections needed for a life without violence across the globe. 2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the International Day of the Girl, following its establishment by the United Nations. They note that over the past 10 years, there has been increased attention on issues that matter to girls amongst governments, policymakers and the general public, and more opportunities for girls to have their voices heard on the global stage. Yet, investments in girls' rights remain limited and girls continue to confront a myriad of challenges to fulfilling their potential; made worse by concurrent crises of climate change, COVID-19 and humanitarian conflict.

Surrey County Council initially worked with Binti to host collection and donation points at 35 Surrey buildings, including libraries and County Council buildings upon the launch of the partnership in May 2021. Since then, the initiative has spread to a total of 55 collection and donation points where people can take period products to enable Period Dignity.

Other organisations in Surrey have also come onboard, including Morrisons branches in Woking and Weybridge, as well St James Church in Weybridge.

Commenting on their support for Binti, Acting Chief Fire Officer, Dan Quin, stated: "We are delighted to be supporting Binti. As a Surrey-based charity with a global impact, they share our passion to support and protect those in need. I look forward to seeing the partnership develop, and hope that our communities will benefit from our planned work with Binti, as they have from the scheme established by our colleagues in Surrey County Council, and in particular Surrey Libraries."

**Manjit K. Gill MBE**, CEO and Founder of Binti commented, "We believe period products should be available like toilet paper is and Surrey County Council are leading the way to create this change. With the cost of living crisis impacting many the campaign has been designed to ensure everyone has free access. Surrey is having menstrual conversations every day and working with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is so exciting because we think period stigma will become a thing of the past."

Binti was the first period charity registered in the UK, they have offices in India, US and The Gambia. They have now opened a period charity shop the first of its kind in Walton on Thames. Girls can buy period products and discuss all things related to menstruation. Binti's vision is to provide menstrual dignity to all girls, all over the world. This means facilitating access to pads to ensure menstrual health, educating girls about what menstruation is and what they can expect from it, and dispelling stigma, taboos, myths and negative perceptions around menstruation.

For more information on how to donate and collect and ways to get involved, visit Surrey County Council's Period Dignity webpage or the Binti website.

Surrey County Council news

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## Princess Anne's Epsom visit kept a bit secret

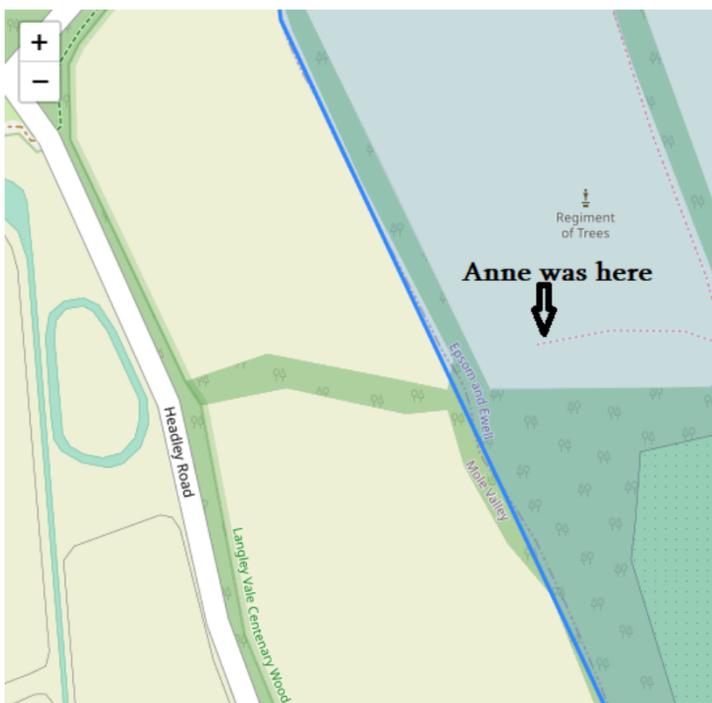
26 October 2022



**Epsom and Ewell Times exclusive:** 21st June 2022 **HRH The Princess Royal** entered the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. The Court Circular states: Her Royal Highness this afternoon opened the **First World War Centenary Woods' "Regiment of Trees"**, Langley Vale Wood, Langley Vale Road, Epsom, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey (**Mr. Michael More-Molyneux**).



The **Epsom and Ewell Times** requested **The Woodland Trust** to explain activity at the Headley Road Car Park entrance that day. The owners of the Centenary Wood fell silent. Our investigation reveals that no “song-and-dance” has been made of the Royal event as the car park cannot open until electric vehicle charging points are working.



Map showing part of the Centenary Wood and where the Princess Royal was on 21st June 2022

As today's photos show, they are nearly ready but the car park remains closed. Walking is the best way to get to the Wood at the moment. The narrow country roads that surround the wood have no safe places to park.



Car Park closed during normal hours at the Centenary Wood



Line of electric vehicle charging points waiting for power.

The 650 acre Centenary Wood at Langley Vale is the English site of the four for the four nations of the United Kingdom. Epsom and Ewell is very privileged to have this extraordinary amenity at our doorstep.



Ed: This story was ready to break just before Queen Elizabeth II died. Out of respect for the Royal Family we put a hold on publication until after the State Funeral. The car park remains closed as of today.

## Can we be sustainable?

26 October 2022



**Sustainable Epsom and Ewell** is an independent, apolitical and entirely volunteer led environmental group aiming to raise environmental ambitions in the Borough. Sustainable Epsom and Ewell was founded in late 2019.

As a group they organise events for local residents, have a website with useful local information and tips for residents, and take action with our Council. They also have a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.

At Sustainable Epsom and Ewell they feel strongly about our local environment and want to share their resources and extensive local knowledge to get more residents involved and taking action. They have high ambitions for our Borough and believe the Council can and should take a greater lead and bolder actions to address, mitigate and adapt to the Climate and Environmental Crises.



Over the past years they have organised several events including **“Green Friday”** to raise awareness about the excessive consumption culture promoted through Black Friday events, a Cycling themed debate where both Surrey and Local councillors spoke as well as committee members of the **Epsom and Ewell Cycle Action Group**.

However, their biggest events to date have been two **Eco Fairs**, organised in partnership with **St Martin of Tour’s Church** in 2021 and 2022. The aims of the Eco Fair are threefold:

- 1) to highlight and showcase the groups active in our Borough as well as Council teams active in the environment fields,
- 2) to inspire local residents and groups to volunteer, take action and share experiences,
- 3) to highlight the strong proportion of residents keen to take personal action whilst encouraging the Council raise their green ambitions through action.

The 2022 fair included over 14 different groups, including Surrey Wildlife Trust, Epsom and Ewell Tree Advisory Group, the Lower Mole Partnership, Oxfam, the Epsom Repair Cafe, Dr Bike and the Epsom Civic Society as well as local green businesses.



Sustainable Epsom and Ewell and St Martin's Eco Fair 2022  
MP Chris Grayling with the Sustainable Epsom and Ewell Team  
Photo: Emma Ward

This year in addition to the many residents who attended, the Fair attracted a visit from MP **Chris Grayling** and Epsom and Ewell's Mayor **Clive Woodbridge**.

In the short-term future, they hope to continue to expand their reach to residents, campaign for real, ambitious and proactive Council measures in the environmental fields and provide opportunities for local groups and residents to meet and engage through events.

[www.SustainableEpsomEwell.co.uk](http://www.SustainableEpsomEwell.co.uk)

Facebook/Instagram: @SustainableEpsomEwell

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## Surrey's Fire Service sends 4×4 to Ukraine

26 October 2022



Two **Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)** staff members set off to Poland yesterday (Thursday 6 October) to donate another 4×4 Land Rover to the **Ukrainian Fire and Rescue Service**.

This donation is part of the National Fire Chief Council and UK charity FIREAID's convoy 4. Convoy 3, which was delivered in May this year, also saw a donation of two 4×4 Land Rovers by SFRS.

The vehicles, which have been decommissioned by the service, are typically used for off-road/rural firefighting. The service has worked with its Fire Authority, Surrey County Council, to prepare and release the vehicle.

The two staff members who have volunteered, will meet other UK Fire and Rescue Services who are donating items, they'll then handover the vehicles in Poland next week.

**Acting Chief Fire Officer, Dan Quin, said:** "I am proud to be able to continue our support to the people of Ukraine during this incredibly difficult time. Thank you to all organisations who are supporting these efforts and to Chris, who also donated the equipment during the last convoy, and Lee from our Engineering team, who are supporting the delivery. Chris will be taking us on the journey over on our Instagram channel, so please do follow us so you can witness another historic effort from UK Fire and Rescue Services."

**Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety (which includes Surrey Fire and Rescue Service), Denise Turner Stewart, said:** "Surrey County Council's priority is to ensure no one is left behind and supporting yet another national convoy does just that. I am so pleased that we are able to support this national effort and we would like to sincerely thank all involved." Surrey County Council has a lot of information available on [surreycc.gov.uk](http://surreycc.gov.uk) for communities who'd like to support, as well as guidance for Ukrainians coming to Surrey.

Surrey County Council News

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## Will "Top Tory" Surrey County lobby Coffey?

26 October 2022

A council chief has called on select committee members to use their status as a "top Tory" authority to influence health

spending at government level. Calling ambulances backed up outside hospitals “dangerous” and saying “we don’t want old people on trolleys in corridors”, one of the council’s health directors said it would take everyone working together to get through the winter.

Surrey County Council’s adults and health select committee heard on Wednesday (October 6) from representatives from Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS), South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb) and Frimley Health and Care ICS.

As the health organisations set out their plans for winter pressures, and commitment to working together to cope, members heard of current issues including Frimley Park hospital beds being nearly 100 per cent full most of the time and systems issues causing delays in ambulance handover times.

**Liz Bruce**, joint executive director for adult social care and integrated commissioning (Surrey County Council and Surrey Heartlands ICS), said she “absolutely agreed” that ambulances backed up outside hospitals was “high risk and dangerous to everybody else in the community”. She said: “We don’t want old people on trolleys in corridors, and therefore we’re all in this together.” She highlighted the importance of the “whole system” working together, saying improvements were “everybody’s responsibility”.

The director said: “What can this committee do to help us? A Conservative council, a top Tory council, you can help us by influencing government around funding nationally for hospital discharge and social care, and how we support sick people safely to go into hospital and come out again. Because we don’t want to see elderly people go into long term care when they don’t need to.”

While the government had announced £500million for health care over the winter, she said it was not yet clear how it would be allocated or if it was “truly new money”. Saying she expected the winter to be “extremely challenging”, she added: “It’s very obvious that we’re going into significant and stark problems in our system for people in discharge. I’ve asked [my team] to build, very quickly, a business continuity plan around with winter discharge.”

The meeting heard from **South East Coast Ambulance** and **Surrey Heartlands** representatives about what was being done to improve ambulance handover times. Moving towards electronic patient records, virtual wards and daily meetings were all hoped to help with delayed handovers which were made worse by sicker patients and “systems problems”.

SECAmb’s deputy director of operations **Mark Eley** said he was having to balance offering staff overtime, particularly in the current financial situation, with the risk they might “work too hard, wear themselves out” and go off sick. He said: “Staff are becoming very weary and worn from the last two years, so I’m not pushing too hard because as I increase my overtime, I can increase my sickness if I’m not careful.”

The issues with Frimley Park hospital beds being full “almost all of the time” were also said to be caused by not being able to discharge patients who were well enough to go home.