

Epsom and Ewell MP's Christmas message

20 December 2023



This has been a particularly challenging year for many people locally, and so in my Christmas message I want to pay particular tribute to all of those working for local voluntary groups who do so much to help those who are struggling. We are very fortunate to have so many people locally who are willing to give up their time to help the multitude of local charities and other groups who make such a difference.

You may remember last year that I worked with Citizens Advice and the Good Company, which runs the local foodbank, to provide extra support for people struggling with high energy bills. Thanks to the generosity of local people we raised around £50,000 to help those who needed it. The Epsom and Ewell Energy Support Scheme provided help to local families who were struggling with energy bills to make their homes more energy efficient. In total so far the scheme has helped nearly a thousand people with short term financial help, energy advice and the purchase of low energy appliances. This is what some of those who took part said afterwards.

- *"I found the workshop very helpful and really enjoyed talking to the other participants, sharing tips on how to save energy. The takeaway tips are also very informative. Thank you so much for your kindness and giving me really useful information about the cost of energy and how to reduce usage and keep warm and safe this winter, which like many people has been scaring the life out of me."* (Denise, group workshop)
- *"The scheme is very helpful and opened my eyes to certain areas of wasted electricity in my home. I certainly think more about what appliances are on and what we don't need to use.... Have already used air fryer and not had oven on for a few days. Great help, thank you."* (Tim, 1-to-1 consultation)
- *"I found the consultation very helpful – definitely more conscious of how you can save money... Because of my mental health, I find phone calls to these big companies very daunting, and they kindly offered to sign me up to a friendlier way of getting through with a specialist team if I need to get in touch... Thank you also for the top up and offer of appliances to help me save on my bill. So grateful for the opportunity."* (Michele, 1-to-1 consultation)

We are running the scheme again this winter, and would be very grateful for contributions, however small. Details of the scheme and how to contribute are at www.justgiving.com/campaign/epsomewellenergysupportscheme

This will be my last Christmas message as your local MP, as I am not standing again at the election. But I will be there doing what I can to help with local issues right through to the election as always.

In the meantime, though, I hope that you and your family have a good Christmas and that 2024 proves to be a good year for everyone.

With best wishes

Chris Grayling

Magic Table for Adults with Dementia

20 December 2023



Residents and staff at Banstead Library celebrated the launch of the award-winning innovation from the Netherlands. The Tovertafel (Dutch for "magic table"), is a ceiling mounted projector that projects light games onto a standard table surface. These games are interactive, immersive games that can be played sitting down by a group of people, they encourage social contact, movement and are both relaxing and fun!

Banstead library staff held an open day last week where members of the public got the chance to see the technology in action and try it for themselves.

The Tovertafel supports people living with dementia as well as adults with learning disabilities. The games and activities respond to hand and arm movements and are designed to stimulate physical activity and social interaction, inspiring those living with dementia to be more active.

Banstead library was chosen as the location for the Tovertafel as it is part of a working group to help make Banstead a dementia friendly village. The aim is to work with organisations such as Age Concern, care homes, the local Community Link Officer, and Community and Prevention Officer to bring together community workers and organisation who will support and help residents living with dementia, and their carers.

Surrey County Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities Councillor Denise Turner-Stewart said: *"We are delighted to introduce the Tovertafel at Banstead library and offer this vital immersive experience to local residents and their families – it's a fantastic tool that will be not only be a source of joy and entertainment, but which will also make a valuable difference to the lives of residents with dementia in Surrey."*

"The installation of the Tovertafel demonstrates Surrey County Council's commitment to creating a dementia friendly community where no one is left behind, and showcase our libraries are re-imagined spaces that provide so much more to residents than just books."

To find out more about The Tovertafel, or to register your interest, please contact Banstead Library via banstead.library@surreycc.gov.uk.

Find out more about Dementia support in libraries: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/health-and-wellbeing/dementia>

Epsom and Ewell Borough of Sanctuary

20 December 2023



Epsom and Ewell is now poised to be a Borough of Sanctuary. Largely due to the extraordinary efforts of **Nina Kaye** and **Jo Sherring** of the Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network our Town's welcome to and support for refugees of all nationalities is recognised by this new status. Tuesday 12th December the Council approved a motion to establish the title of "Borough of Sanctuary."



Janice Baker leads English classes in central Epsom for refugees of all nationalities.

Proposing the motion Cllr **Neil Dallen** (RA Town Ward) said: "The Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network has been now going for over 10 years. 700-plus people have signed up to receive information on a regular basis from the Refugee Network. There are over 200 refugees registered, there's approximately 40 hours a week given for people whose first language is not English, and there are 85 refugees that take advantage of that. They are part of The Good Company, which is the Food Bank, Epsom Pantry and East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission. These are organizations that are good in their own right. They're saving the borough money, doing an enormous amount of good work, and providing a humane service to refugees that happen to end up here."

Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Labour Court) seconded the motion and said "Everyone deserves a safe place to live where they can thrive, build the life they want, and get the support when they need it. This government is creating a hostile environment for many people living in our communities by pursuing policies that divide and exclude people with migrant and refugee backgrounds."

"Shouldn't Epsom be offering a positive vision of a culture of welcome and hospitality to all? Create opportunities for relationships of friendship and solidarity between local people and those seeking sanctuary. Recognize and encourage partnership working and network development across the borough. This government's policy is to send people who are fleeing persecution and conflict to Rwanda. It says it gave £140 million to Rwanda last year, and on December 7th, the Home Office civil servant said that a further £100 million had been given, with a payment of £50 million anticipated for next year. Today, I hear it's actually £400 million. Now we hear the Home Office has earmarked at least £700 million to manage the arrival of migrants in small boats."

"So, they've just allocated £700 million to supporting these policies that are hostile, muddled, and expensive, with no benefit for people seeking sanctuary in this country. The Borough can contribute to changing the narrative of this government. The sanctuary movement not only offers a chance for individuals and groups to challenge the way the asylum debate is framed in the UK, but is also concerned with creating a culture in which the virtues of welcome and hospitality are valued and through which asylum seekers and refugees are free to make a full contribution to their cities and to engage with local communities."

Cllr **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village) said "Last year as mayor, I got some insights into the work of the Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network and our own team, the Community Development Team, in their work with refugees, and I think it was quite inspiring, but also to actually meet some of those refugees and see what we do for them, we the community, and how much it's appreciated. I think over the last year or so, working together, Epsom and Ewell Council and the Refugee Network have done some exceptional work delivering extremely positive outcomes, helping refugee households settle within our borough."

The Homes for Ukraine scheme launched in March 2022, and since then, we've supported over 160 Ukrainian families. Working together, Epsom Council and the Refugee Network have provided extensive support to those families, some of whom have had very complex needs and have been through some traumatic experiences. There's no doubt that the consequences of the war in Ukraine triggered a step change in the borough's requirements to support refugees, which was fairly small-scale when it was limited to Syrian and Afghan families. But collaborative working has been crucial to our ability to scale up our responses and to do some proactive work in sustaining the relationships between hosts and guests, which has had an enormous impact. I think only two or three families are presented as homeless, so that's a remarkable achievement when you think that Ukrainian families have been living with host families since the onset of the war and it saved us, as well as giving them security, it saved this Council a lot of money."

Responding to the decision Nina Kaye told the Epsom and Ewell Times: "We support over 200 families with over 400 refugees and EERN provides over 40 hours of English lessons each week.

"We are delighted that Epsom & Ewell Borough Council have overwhelmingly passed a motion pledging to work with us to make Epsom & Ewell a Borough of Sanctuary as part of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network (<https://la.cityofsanctuary.org/>). We work closely with EEBC to support refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and persecution. We are very pleased that the Council want Epsom & Ewell to be recognised as a Borough of Sanctuary. We feel this reflects the huge support we receive in this area to help those who have been forced to flee their countries and find themselves in our community."

Related reports:

Hosts of Ukrainian refugees appreciated

Flight of refugees: history repeating?

Breaking the mould for Ukrainian refugees

Local refugee cash appeal

Image: Raimond Spekking

Doctor struck off where police found insufficient evidence

20 December 2023



A Surrey doctor who used his position to gain the trust of a woman before choking and sexually assaulting her has been struck off. Former Royal Surrey County Hospital doctor Adnan Sadiq texted the woman saying “I’m a doctor, I save lives”, “You can trust me”, “I’m a nice guy” and “you don’t have to worry” before meeting with the woman during lockdown and assaulting her.

The Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service found that he placed both hands on the woman’s neck, anonymised as Ms A, and applied pressure. He also pushed Ms A’s head towards his exposed penis, before asking if he could ‘put it in’ or words to that effect during the November 2020 predatory attack. When questioned Ms A told the tribunal: “I genuinely feared for my life and was glad to escape... it took me a while to realise that what had happened was not ok.”

Dr Sadiq initially denied choking was his kink, but later accepted he liked it in a sexual context, according to the tribunal report. Allegations he sent explicit images over snapchat were not proven but overall his behaviour was so egregious that he was struck off as a doctor.

The report read: “Dr Sadiq’s actions would undermine public trust and confidence in him, as well as in the medical profession.” Dr Sadiq qualified in 2020 from University of Szeged, Hungary, and moved to Britain to take up his first medical post in October 2020. A month later he began texting the woman before going on to sexually assault her. During evidence he gave answers that were “too implausible to be truthful”.

He also contradicted himself in relation to his predilections and other topics. For example, when asked about kissing Ms A, he said: ““We both kissed at the same time... because her face was coming towards me and I didn’t want her to feel awkward.”

The report added: “The tribunal considered Dr Sadiq’s actions to amount to sexual assault, with an element of violence. The tribunal was concerned as to his apparent continued lack of insight into the seriousness of his actions and their consequences for (the woman) and public confidence in doctors.

“Erasure is the only appropriate and proportionate sanction sufficient to maintain public confidence in the medical profession and to uphold standards of conduct for doctors.”

The tribunal determined that Dr Sadiq’s name should be erased from the medical register.

The General Medical Council suspended Dr Sadiq in September 2023 and he was immediately stopped from working at Royal Surrey. The full tribunal process concluded in November and he was erased from the medical register.

A spokesperson for the hospital trust said: “In May 2021 the General Medical Council informed the Royal Surrey County Hospital that an allegation had been made against Dr Sadiq regarding inappropriate sexual conduct outside of the trust. Since then we have followed clear and robust processes in a timely way, appropriately reflecting the investigations and decisions taken by the GMC and Surrey Police at each stage. While this incident occurred outside of our work place, we expect anyone employed by our trust to uphold the highest moral standards and would like to express sympathy for the distress caused to the complainant in this case.”

A spokesperson for Surrey Police said they received a sexual assault report in February 2021 and later arrested a 30-year-old man. The spokesperson said: “Following our investigation, officers concluded there was not sufficient evidence to proceed with the case. The victim was kept informed throughout and supported by officers. The man arrested was a medical professional at Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust and Surrey Police provided information to the General Medical Council about the investigation.”

Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (image Google)

Community Football hero retires

20 December 2023



Christ Church United Football Club is a community club that has been coaching the children of **Epsom** since the early ‘90’s.

□ The club that’s always welcomed both boys and girls was set up by the Rvd. Clive Potter over 30 years ago.

□ Now Reverend Potter is due to retire and the club want to thank him for leaving a lasting legacy of real community football in the area.

A popular community football club founder is hanging up his cassock after over 30 years at the St John’s Evangelist Church in the Surrey village of Milford. Local Vicar, the Rvd. Clive Potter, also founded the **Christ Church United Football Club** which has been coaching the children of **Epsom** since the early ‘90’s

Having arrived at the parish, Rvd Clive was looking for somewhere for children to play, but the problem was that youth football traditionally takes place on a Sunday morning and this prompted him to start thinking about starting a club.

Having been involved with football all his life he got the idea during a church service one morning to set up a team. He approached the vicar at Christ Church who initially suggested a cricket club instead. However, being an Eastender by birth, with a working-class background, he felt much more comfortable starting a football team.

Current coach, Paul Wilson, takes up the story: “They started in September 1992 with just 12 kids in the first week. At the end of the first session, he asked all the children to bring a friend the following week, saying that if they did and then they all also brought a friend they would get to about 50 children and that would be enough for a club. And that’s how it began.”

The membership grew to over 100 children, but it wasn’t easy. Getting a pitch was the first task. They played at a local primary school, Stamford Green, before growing out of that and moving to Blenheim High School, where the club remains to this day. Like now, the coaching staff was made up of volunteers and he began convincing people to do coaching courses to take the club to the next level.

Rvd Clive then began the missionary work to take the ideas to others in the community. He became a sports advisor for the diocese and encouraged the setting up of many more clubs. Other clubs

bought into the opportunity for competition with a Bishop's League, a Bishop's Cup and a Bishop's Shield.

The Christ Church United Football Club was then affiliated with the Football Association with an aim to become professional in style if not attitude. The club still holds its affiliation to the FA and coaches benefit from training on many of its Coaching and Safeguarding courses.

Rvd Clive met Ted Powell, the then England U18 Coach, who came to a presentation evening, and they formed a long-lasting friendship. Rvd Clive got involved with organisations like Christians inSport and the British Sports Trust until, in late 1996, he moved to Guildford and repeated the process.

Speaking about his role, Rvd Clive said: "The vision was always to relate the church to the community, to build a good ethos and to develop friendships. I'm delighted to see the club still running after all this time, it's brilliant for the community."

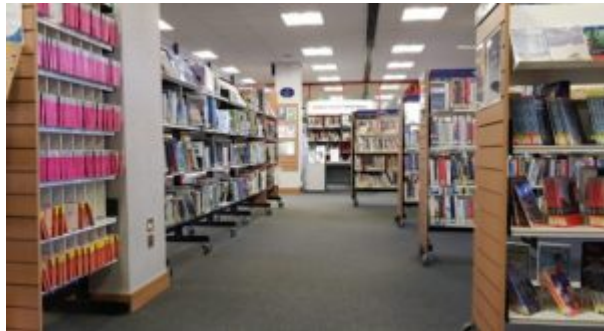
Paul added: "He was delighted to hear that today's Christ Church United Football Club embraces much of that first ethos. The fees are still affordable and the club is open to girls and boys regardless of ability. Some of our current coaches are kids who were once players at the club and the club is also providing support to the Refugee Network with players being drawn from the Ukrainian community in Epsom. We want to thank Rvd Clive for having the foresight and drive to create the club, and we are hoping for another 30 years and beyond of kids (and their families) enjoying the beautiful game. We're always looking to welcome new members so please get in touch if you are interested."

The club trains at Blenheim High School every Saturday morning during term time, from 9:00-10:30

Paul Wilson

RAAC's latest victim

20 December 2023



Redhill Library has had to close with immediate effect following further investigations of the known reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in the building. The closure of the library will allow more detailed assessments and immediate safety measures to take place to ensure the building is safe to reopen to residents.

We understand the short notice closure of the library will cause disruption for library users and staff. However, as residents would expect, safety is our top priority.

At present, as the discovery of RAAC in the library building is very recent, further urgent work will need to be undertaken before we can provide any details on mitigation measures or timelines for re-opening.

Further announcements and updates regarding Redhill library will be shared via the **Redhill Library web page**.

Merstham Library and **Reigate Library** remain open for residents.

Redhill Library is a Surrey County Council designated warm space, alternative warm spaces in Redhill can be found **here**.

Dedicated Epsom tree-man

20 December 2023



Dedication event at Alexandra Recreation Ground honours local hero Mike Ford Epsom & Ewell, 3rd December 2023. In a heart warming event volunteers from Friends of Alexandra Park and the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board (EETAB), local councillors Steven McCormick, James Laurence and Bernie Muir, the Epsom & Ewell Tree Officer and the Mayor, Councillor Rob Geleit gathered on December 3rd at Alexander Recreation Ground to pay tribute to a beloved local figure, Mike Ford, affectionately known as 'Mr. Tree.'

Mr. Ford has been a cornerstone of our community, dedicating countless hours to the preservation and enhancement of our natural environment. His unwavering commitment to the cause of tree conservation and environmental stewardship has left an indelible mark on Epsom & Ewell.

The dedication event served as a poignant moment to recognize and express gratitude for his exceptional contributions.

The event was opened by Howard Gregory the chair of EETAB with words from Kevin Greening and Simon Alford, EETAB members, before introducing the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell. The Epsom and Ewell Tree Officer then presented Mike with a collection of photographs taken when the original copse was planted.

In his speech Mayor Rob Geleit said "Mike is firmly rooted in his conviction that planting a tree today is an investment for the whole community, combating climate change and helping biodiversity as well as a thing of beauty in itself. His and the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board's aim is ensure that they pass on to future generations a borough that is at least as leafy as the one we have all inherited."

As well as speeches, the event included a symbolic tree layout for the planned rejuvenation of the Ford copse, and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque to forever mark Mike Ford's contributions at Alexander Recreation Ground.

The event concluded with a sense of community pride and a commitment to carrying forward Mr. Tree's legacy.

For further information about Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board:

epsomandewelltab@gmail.com
 www.eetab.org.uk/
 Facebook: @EpsomEwellTreeAdvisoryBoard

Local HIV testing proves its worth

20 December 2023



Tens of thousands of patients going to St George's, **Epsom** and St Helier's emergency departments (EDs) have been tested for HIV in the past year, thanks to a pioneering scheme that helps people with the virus start treatment more quickly.

All three hospitals offer the opt-out testing – and carried out nearly 130,000 checks between April 2022 and September 2023. As a result, 33 people were diagnosed with HIV and able to receive effective early treatment and reduce onward transmission, and a further 19 previously diagnosed patients were re-engaged in care.

It also means people were able to access other support they may need, such as appointments with health advisors or psychologists who can help them come to terms with the diagnosis.

The figures have been released to mark World Aids Day, a global movement to unite people in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and comes as St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group sign up to become a founding organisation for the HIV Charter Mark. The charter has been established by the National Aids Trust to address HIV stigma and poor knowledge of HIV within healthcare settings.

Dr Richard Jennings, Group Chief Medical Officer at St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group, said: "HIV is a long-term manageable condition and people living with HIV have full healthy lives, but the earlier someone with HIV is diagnosed the better. An early diagnosis means effective treatment can be started, and effective treatment means a person cannot transmit HIV to other people and can stay well themselves.

"We have put a lot of work into routinely offering HIV testing to people who attend our emergency departments, and we are committed to increasing awareness, reducing stigma and training up our staff. It doesn't stop there, however – we are on hand to deliver results to any patients who test positive and to talk through the developments in HIV care and the improved outcomes with treatment. We also offer free routine care and treatment to people who are living with HIV, and we offer psychological support."

St Helier Hospital has been offering testing since 2019, though it had to pause it at points during the pandemic.

It has one of the highest testing uptakes in South London, with 90% of eligible patients having a blood test that can detect the virus – compared to just 11% in April 2022. In the six months alone between April and September 2023, 11,785 tests were carried out at the hospital.

Dr Olubanke Davies, a GUM/HIV Consultant based at Sutton Health and Care's Rosehill Clinic, which is based at St Helier Hospital, said: "The earlier someone with HIV is diagnosed, the better. An early diagnosis means that they can start treatment and reduce the risk of developing severe illness.

"With the help of our colleagues in the emergency department, we've put a lot of work into routinely testing patients, increasing awareness and training up staff."

To find out more about HIV – including getting tested, the symptoms, and living with the virus – visit:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hiv-and-aids/>

St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group

Image cc Unicef

Sunak in Surrey

20 December 2023



The **University of Surrey** welcomed Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and **Guildford MP Angela Richardson** to campus on Thursday (30 November).

Epsom and Ewell Times notes the Guildford Parliamentary Constituency is rather marginal. The 2019 General Election result was:

Conservative Angela Richardson 26,317
 Liberal Democrats Zöe Franklin 22,980
 Labour Anne Rouse 4,515
 Independent Anne Milton 4,356
 Peace John Morris 483

During their visit, the Prime Minister and Ms Richardson met nursing students and staff from the School of Health Sciences, where they observed practical lessons taking place. They also toured Surrey's world-class facilities, including a unique immersive simulation suite which digitally replicates different healthcare settings. The Prime Minister also took the time to personally speak to Surrey's students to learn more about their journey in becoming nurses and why they chose to pursue the profession.

Professor **G Q Max Lu**, President and Vice-Chancellor, of the University of Surrey, said:

“I am honoured to welcome the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak and Angela Richardson MP to the University of Surrey campus. Our reputation for training highly skilled and inspiring health care professionals precedes us. The strength of our excellence in teaching and student support makes Surrey an exceptional place to study. We are delighted to have this opportunity to showcase some of our state-of-the art facilities to our distinguished visitor.

“As part of our commitment to producing the sought-after health professionals for the future, we are pleased to be welcoming our first cohort of medical students in 2024. Combined with the innovative biomedical and healthy living research undertaken at Surrey, we are steadfast in our contribution and support to the NHS and our communities.”

The School of Health Sciences, which sits within the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, at the University of Surrey continues to go from strength to strength. The calibre of nursing programmes at the school are both nationally and internationally recognised, being ranked seventh in the QS World University Subject Rankings and eight in the UK (The Times / Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024). This builds on an established history of the school, which recently celebrated 40 years of educating nurses at Surrey.

Professor **Paul Townsend**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey, said:

“It is an enormous privilege to have the Prime Minister and our local MP visit us.

“Surrey is not only the home to cutting edge research but is a world leader in educating health professionals of the future. Our team of dedicated teaching staff work hard to ensure that our students have the knowledge and skills needed to care for patients and that they embody the culture and values of the NHS. It is a great honour to be a part of the Surrey family and to witness our students succeed in their studies.”

Jackie McBride, Associate Professor, Head of Department: Professional Preparatory Programmes at the School of Health Sciences at the University of Surrey, said:

“I am delighted that the Prime Minister has met some of our future healthcare professionals here at the University of Surrey. I am beyond proud of our students and of everything they have and continue to achieve. Nursing is more than a job, it requires dedication, empathy, knowledge, and skills, and I know the Prime Minister will have seen today all these attributes in our students.”

Surrey University Press Office

Well trained Father Xmas coming to Epsom

20 December 2023



Epsom Rotary are pleased to confirm the dates for this year’s street collections with Tilly the Train and Father Christmas around Epsom Town and we are excited to confirm we have added new routes this year. Tilly the Train has been a feature of Epsom Rotary Street Collections for a number of years and has brought many smiles on faces over time, along with Father Christmas able to chat to children and bearing a small gift. Christmas is a special time for us all and the monies collected will go to local charities, to include Epsom Pantry and Epsom Girl Guiding, who will also take part in some of the collections. Tilly the train was invented as long ago as 1970 by a group of apprentices from Epsom Coaches and has been the highlight of the Epsom Rotary Christmas Street collections and the approach will be by Christmas music and a band of Christmas elves!

There will be nine street collections this year from Sunday, 09 December to Sunday, 17 December 2023 as well as some collections at the Ashley Centre with carols by various local schools and local choir group.

Dates for the Ashley Centre Carols/by the Clock Tower are:

Wed, 06 Dec 2023 – from 10.30am with Stamford Green School and 2.00-3.00pm with Rosebery School – Ashley Centre

Thurs, 07 Dec 2023 – from 20.30am – 12.30pm With Epsom Choral Society, 1.00 -2.20pm with The Vale School and 2.00-3.00pm with Meadow Primary School – Ashley Centre

Wed, 13 Dec 2023 – 1.00-2.00pm with St Martins Junior School – The Clock Tower Epsom

Tilly the Train and Father Christmas Street Collections are:

Sun, 10 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Hazon Way and Miles Road and area

Mon, 11 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Parklawn Avenue and area

Tues, 12 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Langley Vale and area

Wed, 13 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Hookfield area

Thurs, 14 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Woodcoote area

Fri, 15 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Mopsey Crescent and area

Sat, 16 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Horton & Manor Park area,

Sunday, 17 Dec 2023 – from 4.30 – College Ward area

We hope to see many wonderful people along the way and thank you for supporting.

Maria Anstiss – Epsom Rotary

Image: Rotarian Elves welcome the arrival of Father Christmas to the Tilly Train garage (early hours 25th December 2022).