

QEF to Close After 90 Years as Epsom MP Seeks Answers

20 November 2025



The Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People (QEF), the long-established disability charity based in Leatherhead, has announced it will enter administration after a 28-day wind-down period, bringing an end to more than nine decades of specialist support for people with disabilities in Surrey and across the country.

QEF said the decision follows "severe financial challenges" and comes after a year of exploring options to stabilise its position. The charity supports nearly 10,000 people annually through neuro-rehabilitation, mobility services and specialist residential care.

Founded in 1934 with the support of the then-Duchess of York (who became Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother), QEF has been a significant presence in the local community for generations. Its closure raises immediate questions about the future care of residents and clients who rely on its services, and about the national pressures facing the disability-care sector.

Local Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire said she was "deeply saddened" by the announcement, calling QEF "a cornerstone of our community in Leatherhead" and praising the "wonderful person-centred care" provided by its staff. She said she had seen the charity's impact first-hand during a visit earlier this year.

According to QEF's own statements, the organisation has faced rising staffing costs, recruitment pressures, and funding constraints from statutory bodies. The charity reported that despite efforts to improve its financial position, "there wasn't a viable solution" to meet the scale of the challenge.

Mrs Maguire said she has been in "regular conversation" with QEF leadership in recent days to see whether a last-minute solution was possible. "It was conveyed to me that, sadly, the shutdown process is already fully in motion," she said. She confirmed she has written to the Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, seeking an urgent meeting to discuss the circumstances of the closure and the wider lessons for the sector.

Her immediate focus, she said, is "ensuring continuity of care for both patients and staff". QEF has said the 28-day wind-down period is intended to give time for residential clients to be found suitable alternative placements.

The charity's closure will leave a notable gap in specialist provision in the region. QEF employed around 250 people and operated from modern facilities in Leatherhead after a major redevelopment earlier in the decade. Its departure will add pressure to already stretched NHS and social care services that rely on external specialist providers.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Image: QEF street sign. Google street view

Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network launches with community events and initiatives

20 November 2025



A new community movement is taking shape in the borough with the launch of the Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network (eeCAN) – a local volunteer group working to empower residents through inclusive projects that build resilience to climate change.

EECAN's mission is simple but ambitious: to help communities adapt and thrive in a changing world. Its projects focus on practical solutions, awareness-raising, and supporting climate-friendly policies. Everything the network offers at the moment is totally free and open to all, ensuring that everyone can take part in building a more sustainable, climate-resilient Epsom and Ewell. Users of the services will be given the opportunity to make any donations they feel they can afford if they want to help the charity do even more for their community.

"Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network has grown so much in the last 12 months as a result of the energy and commitment of volunteers wanting to help their local communities reduce Climate risks while saving money" says William Ward the Chair and co-founder of the group.

Epsom and Ewell Library of Things

Launching to the public in spring next year, this innovative "Library of Things" will allow residents to borrow items instead of buying them, reducing waste and promoting sharing. From carpet cleaners and wallpaper steamers to pressure washers and gazebos, residents will be able to borrow tools and equipment for free, thanks to donated items. Donations of nearly new equipment are now being sought. Those able to help are asked to contact eeClimateActionNetwork@gmail.com or visit <https://eecanlibraryofthings.myturn.com/library>.

eeCAN is developing this initiative in partnership with Surrey County Council Library Services (for front of counter service) and with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, in association with The Epsom Repair Café, who ensure that all electrical items are safe to use.

Bike Amnesty - Saturday 22 November 2025

Got a bike you no longer use? Donate it! Between 9am and 5pm at Epsom Methodist Church, Scout Hall, Ashley Road KT18 5AQ, residents can drop off unwanted bicycles to be refurbished and passed on to people who need them.

The scheme helps promote active, low-carbon travel while supporting those who might not otherwise afford a bike. Just turn up with your spare bikes. This free service is provided in partnership with Surrey County Council's "Active Surrey" team.

Contact: eeClimateActionNetwork@gmail.com

Climate Conversations - every 2nd and 4th Monday of the month

eeCAN also runs regular Climate Conversations at Birchgrove Lower Mill, Kingston Road, Ewell KT17 2DQ, from 10:30am to 12:30pm. These informal gatherings give residents a friendly space to learn, share experiences, and explore all aspects of climate change together.

One participant said, "I often feel so motivated after one of our meetings!"

The upcoming session on Monday 24 November will feature Dr Kristine Damberg, online presenting "*What can we eat for human and planetary health*", a talk exploring how our food choices affect both personal wellbeing and the planet.

Anyone can join in using this link: <https://meet2.organise.earth/rooms/95o-iug-ems-2p6/join>

Living Rivers Exhibition - April to May 2026

Looking ahead, eeCAN will host a *Living Rivers Art Exhibition* at the Ebbisham Centre, Epsom KT19, in association with The Royal Marsden. Running from 22 April (Earth Day) to 22 May 2026, the free exhibition will celebrate the beauty and importance of rivers and waterways.

Inspired by writer Robert Macfarlane's question "*Is a river alive?*", the exhibition will showcase artwork from local schools, community groups, and individuals.

Submissions (A4 max-sized drawings or paintings) are invited by 27 March 2026, with eeCAN volunteers offering to collect (and return) artworks directly from schools and art groups. Groups will be invited to see their work on display and participate in nature-themed activities.

Email eeClimateActionNetwork@gmail.com for participation details.

A community coming together

From swapping tools and donating bikes to sharing climate ideas and artistic expression, eeCAN's initiatives reflect a spirit of cooperation, creativity, and care for the environment.

Its organisers believe that by taking small, collective steps, Epsom and Ewell can make a big difference — helping local people live more sustainably while building resilience for the future.

For more information, contact eeClimateActionNetwork@gmail.com or follow eeCAN's activities through their upcoming community channels.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Surrey to get a higher level of heart care

20 November 2025



Heart patients and the tiniest and most vulnerable babies across Surrey are set to benefit from major investment in local specialist services, following confirmation of a £3.2 million upgrade at Ashford & St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in Chertsey. Although the improvements are centred at St Peter's Hospital, the effects will be felt across the county, including by patients who would typically access services at Epsom.

The investment is being funded largely by Runnymede Borough Council's Community Infrastructure Levy, and will see the cardiac catheter-lab at St Peter's upgraded to deliver more complex and less invasive heart procedures at a faster rate. It will be complemented by a £296,000 refurbishment of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, which is the only Level 3 neonatal facility in Surrey. Councillor Robert King, co-leader of Runnymede Borough Council, stated to the BBC's LDRS: "For families, the moments when a loved one needs specialist care are when the NHS matters most. That is why this investment we have championed at St Peter's Hospital is so vital."

Across Surrey, hospitals offer a range of cardiac services. Epsom provides extensive inpatient and outpatient cardiology care, including angiograms, non-complex stenting, pacemakers, complex device implants and heart-failure treatment. However, for confirmed heart attacks and the most complex interventional procedures, patients are transferred to the regional heart-attack centre at St George's in London. Other Surrey hospitals, including East Surrey Hospital and the Royal Surrey in Guildford, also run catheter labs and offer broad specialist cardiology care, though not all services are identical between sites.

The enhancements at St Peter's therefore represent a significant expansion of Surrey's own capacity to deliver more advanced, less invasive heart procedures locally, reducing pressure on London hospitals and improving access for patients across the county. In neonatal care, the upgraded Level 3 unit will strengthen Surrey's ability to care for the sickest and most premature babies, with facilities designed to improve comfort, privacy and support for families during long and emotionally demanding stays.

Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals CEO, Louise Stead, stated to the BBC's LDRS: "These improvements will strengthen our ability to deliver timely, life-saving care in modern, purpose-built environments." The funding, described as one of the most significant local healthcare investments in recent years, is expected to deliver the improvements within the next two years.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Image: St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey (Google)

From Ukraine to Epsom: How Music and Kindness Struck the Right Note

20 November 2025



When the Ukraine National Opera arrived in the UK on tour in early 2022, none of its musicians could have imagined how the world, and their lives, were about to change. Two weeks later, Russia invaded Ukraine. Many members of the orchestra, seeing the escalating conflict at home, made the painful decision to remain in the UK and claim asylum. Among them was clarinettist and saxophonist Vlad Voloshyn.

Now living in Epsom with local resident Nina Kaye, one of the founders of the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network, Vlad has continued to rebuild his life through music. Together with five of his former orchestra colleagues, he formed a brass ensemble called Freedom Pulse, which performs Ukrainian and classical repertoire across Surrey and beyond.

Alongside his performing career, Vlad is in his final year at the British Institute of Modern Music (BIMM) in Fulham, where he studies music and sound production and hopes to work as a sound designer after he graduates.

Recently, an extraordinary act of local generosity brought his story full circle. Vlad had long hoped to buy a tenor saxophone, an instrument essential for his expanding repertoire but out of reach financially. By chance, his host Nina, who also volunteers for Nucleo, a London-based social action charity that helps children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to music, received an email offering a donated tenor saxophone. Nina runs Nucleo's National Instrument Bank, which matches donated instruments with musicians in need.

The offer came from a donor in the Lake District. Determined and hopeful, Vlad took the long train journey north to collect what he thought was a tenor saxophone. Only on the journey home did he discover it was actually an alto sax, an instrument he already owned. Disheartened, he returned to Epsom unsure how to continue his search.

A few days later, Vlad was performing at a Ukrainian Music Evening in Epsom, attended by His Worshipful The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Robert Leach. Sitting beside the Mayor, Nina recounted Vlad's misadventure with the saxophone. Without hesitation, Councillor Leach said, "I've got a tenor sax at home which I haven't played for 30 years and he would be welcome to have it, if I can find it."

True to his word, after the concert Vlad was welcomed to the Mayor's home and given the instrument which left him both astonished and grateful.

What began as a story of loss and exile has become one of connection and kindness. From the national stage in Kyiv to community halls in Surrey, Vlad's journey shows how music continues to build bridges where politics and geography divide.

When Vlad plays his tenor sax in Freedom Pulse's performances, he will know that even in times of war and displacement, the power of human generosity, and of music itself, resonates far beyond borders.

Nina Kaye

Related reports:

[Music and dance for Ukraine at Epsom Methodist Church](#)

Surrey's Satellite bio-diversity project promoted at COP30 Brazil

20 November 2025



Surrey's Space4Nature project, which uses satellite data and community science to protect biodiversity across the county, is currently being showcased by the UK Government at the COP30 UK Pavilion in Belém, Brazil (10-21 November 2025). The display forms part of the UK's official presentation of research and innovation tackling global climate and nature challenges.

Coe-led by the University of Surrey's Centre for Environment and Sustainability (CES) in collaboration with Surrey Wildlife Trust, Buglife, and the Painshill Park Trust, Space4Nature brings together scientists, local communities and conservation groups to map and monitor key habitats across Surrey - from chalk grasslands to heathlands and acid grasslands that support some of the nation's rarest species.

Using advanced satellite imagery and artificial intelligence trained with data from local volunteers, the project can classify habitats to Level 4 of the UKHab system - producing one of the most detailed environmental maps of its kind. This allows conservation partners to pinpoint where biodiversity is under threat and

focus restoration efforts, such as reconnecting fragmented chalk grasslands – often called the “rainforests of Europe” for their carbon storage and rich biodiversity.

Surrey Wildlife Trust plays a central role in Space4Nature, leading the project’s citizen science programme, training volunteers and coordinating the collection of field data that makes its satellite and AI mapping possible. The Trust’s on-the-ground expertise connects technology and conservation, turning local knowledge into invaluable data for protecting Surrey’s landscapes.

Dr Ana Andries, Lecturer in Remote Sensing and GIS at the University of Surrey, and project lead, said:

“We’re using satellite data and artificial intelligence in a way that directly supports conservation on the ground. Citizen scientists help train our machine learning models, thus turning local field data into high-resolution habitat maps that reveal where biodiversity is under threat. To see our work featured on a global stage at COP30 highlights how our region’s innovation and collaboration can help shape the future of biodiversity monitoring.”

Andrew Jamieson, Space4Nature Project Manager at Surrey Wildlife Trust, says:

“It’s time for conservation organisations like ours to step outside traditional boundaries and focus not just on land management and individual species recovery, but also on delivering the tools and partnerships that will drive change on a landscape level. This project exemplifies that approach.”

Space4Nature was among the first projects in the United Kingdom to receive Space for Climate Observatory (SCO) accreditation from the UK’s Space4Climate network, recognising its excellence in using Earth observation data to tackle environmental challenges. This year, it has been selected as one of just 19 organisations featured in the UK Government’s Pavilion at COP30, with a video and QR-linked display presented by government representatives throughout the conference.

Dr Zoe M Harris, Director of Surrey’s Centre for Environment and Sustainability and Co-Director of the Institute for Sustainability, said:

“The Centre for Environment and Sustainability was founded on the idea that solving environmental challenges means bringing disciplines and people together. Space4Nature embodies that vision – combining engineering, data science and community insight to create practical tools for nature recovery. Seeing this work recognised at COP30 highlights Surrey’s role as a global leader in sustainability research and innovation.”

Surrey University



Image: Centre for Environment and Sustainability, University of Surrey

Epsom and Ewell Times adds – the Surrey project is one of only twenty presented by the UK at the COP30 summit. See the full list [HERE](#).

Epsom Hospital braces for strikes amid winter pressures

20 November 2025



Further strike action by resident doctors – formerly known as junior doctors – is set to add strain to NHS services just as winter illnesses begin to rise. The British Medical Association (BMA) has confirmed walkouts from 7am on Friday 14 November until 7am on Wednesday 19 November in what will be the latest round of industrial action in a long-running dispute with the Government over pay and working conditions. Hundreds of medics across St George’s, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group could join the five-day stoppage. The Trust says services are already under pressure from rising flu cases, which have climbed earlier than expected this year. Dr Richard Jennings, Group Chief Medical Officer, warned of disruption ahead and said hospitals are “always very busy at this time of year” and are experiencing “significant pressure” due to the combined impact of seasonal illness and the upcoming walkouts. He said consultant doctors and other staff will work extra shifts “to keep patients safe”, but appointments may still need to be rescheduled to safeguard care for emergency and critically ill patients.

Local impact so far

During the previous round of resident-doctor strikes in July, 144 elective procedures and 1,084 outpatient appointments were rescheduled across the Group. On an average strike day, 211 resident doctors were recorded absent across the Trust’s sites. The public will be contacted directly if their appointment needs to be rearranged, and the Trust emphasises that any appointment not specifically cancelled should be attended as normal. Emergency departments remain open for life-threatening conditions.

Why doctors say they are striking

The BMA has repeatedly argued that resident-doctor pay has been eroded by more than a quarter in real terms since 2008. Representatives say pay restoration is essential both to retain doctors within the NHS and to halt a pattern of experienced staff leaving for better-paid roles abroad. Doctors’ leaders also say the dispute is about patient safety: they claim chronic understaffing means resident doctors are covering too many gaps in rotas, working excessive hours, and taking on responsibilities that stretch beyond their training. The BMA says that improving pay and working conditions would reduce burnout and stabilise the workforce, ultimately shortening waiting lists. The organisation has also expressed frustration that talks with Government have repeatedly stalled, arguing that below-inflation pay offers fall far short of resolving the dispute.

Government position

Ministers have previously said that the level of pay demanded by the BMA is unaffordable in the current economic climate and would divert funds from frontline services. The Government maintains that it has accepted independent pay review body recommendations and has urged doctors to return to negotiations without pre-conditions. Officials also argue that strike action adds further pressure to already stretched NHS services and risks longer delays for patients waiting for operations and specialist appointments.

Advice for patients this week

The Trust is urging the public to continue using NHS services responsibly. NHS 111 online should be the first port of call for non-emergencies, pharmacies can advise on minor illnesses, and GP services are unaffected by industrial action. With flu infections rising, eligible residents are being encouraged to get vaccinated without delay, and people are asked to check in on vulnerable friends and neighbours. Dr Jennings emphasised that anyone with a life-threatening condition must still attend A&E or call 999.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Doctors’ strike to hit Epsom Hospital

Epsom Hospital workers to strike for equality?

Surrey braces for doctors’ strike

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council gears up for - you know what

20 November 2025



It’s that time of year again – Christmas is coming to Epsom! Join us on Sunday 23 November for the Christmas lights switch-on in Epsom marketplace, led by the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell and the cast of this year’s pantomime at Epsom Playhouse, *Aladdin*. Enjoy a day of festive cheer, with performances from local dance schools and a community choir, family-friendly rides, seasonal stalls, and a special visit from Inka the Polar Bear. The fun starts at 10.30am and the Christmas lights in Epsom marketplace will be switched on at 4.30pm.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village), Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said: “Seeing Epsom lit up for the Christmas season is one of my favourite moments in the community calendar. It’s heart-warming to see people from across the borough and beyond come together to enjoy seasonal, festive fun. The day would not be possible without the support of Go Epsom, and local Epsom & Ewell charities and community groups. Thank you to all those who have worked so hard to make it possible for us to hold the event again this year.”

The Paparazzi Guys will also join the festivities, providing the perfect opportunity for family Christmas pictures.

Find out about more events taking place in Epsom & Ewell over the festive period, including Christmas activities at Bourne Hall, What’s on | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Free parking days in Epsom & Ewell

Over the Christmas period, there will be selected days when it will be free to park in Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) managed car parks:

- 5 December: Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks – free from 4pm until 7am on 6 December
- 7 December: EEBC car parks – free all day
- 14 December: EEBC car parks – free all day
- 21 December: EEBC car parks – free all day
- 25 December: EEBC car parks – free all day
- 26 December: Dorset House and Ewell High Street car parks – free all day

Full details about EEBC-managed car parks are available on the council’s website. Please note; Hook Road car park is closed on Sundays and bank holidays.

Changes to council services

The Town Hall will be closed on 24, 25, and 26 December 2025 and 1 January 2026, and will close at 3pm on 31 December 2025.

Waste and refuse services

During the Christmas and New Year’s weeks, collections must accommodate the public holidays, and at a time when bins are much fuller than usual. Some services may not be available as usual, and your normal collection day may change.

- All planned changes can be found on the council’s website: Christmas and New Year collections | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
- Christmas week: there will be no refuse collections during Christmas week. Please leave out food and recycling (including glass recycling) only. During Christmas week, collection days may change. Please check the EEBC website for recycling and food bin collection days during Christmas week.
- New Year’s week: normal refuse collections start again in New Year’s week. However, collection days may change. Please check the EEBC website for collection days during New Year’s week.
- Before Christmas, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will place a label on resident bin handles with collection details for the festive period. If you are an Epsom & Ewell resident, please look out for this reminder about how services will be changing in your road over Christmas and New Year’s weeks.

Community support services

Opening times will differ over Christmas and the New Year. Please check the EEBC website for details: Council services over Christmas and the New Year 2025 | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Christmas tree recycling

In January, EEBC offer free real Christmas tree recycling for all residents. This is a fortnightly service – check your Christmas bin label for details of when real Christmas tree collections happen in your road. Don’t cut up your tree – it’s easier to collect whole.

- The Christmas lights switch-on in Epsom marketplace will take place at 4.30pm and there will be local performances from 10.30am. The fun fair and stalls will close at 10pm.
- *Aladdin* will be performed at The Playhouse, Epsom, from Friday 12 December to Sunday 4 January. Book tickets on the website: Aladdin | Epsom Playhouse

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council



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Epsom and Ewell 5th least obese 10 year olds in the UK

20 November 2025



Year six schoolchildren in Surrey have some of the lowest obesity rates in the country, with Mole Valley leading the way. The figures were published as part of the Government's National Child Measurement Programme, which covers mainstream state-maintained schools. Children in Year 6 are aged 10 to 11 and the data is based on the address of the child rather than their school.

Mole Valley, at 9.7 per cent, was the only borough in the country where fewer than one in 10 children were classed as obese. Three boroughs, Sandwell and Wolverhampton in the West Midlands and Knowlsey in the North West had rates above 30 per cent.

The complete top ten was:

- Mole Valley - 9.7 per cent
- St Albans - 12.0 per cent
- Richmond upon Thames - 12.1 per cent
- Cambridge - 12.7 per cent
- Epsom & Ewell - 12.8 per cent
- Elmbridge - 13.1 per cent
- Waverley - 13.1 per cent
- South Hams - 13.1 per cent
- Uttlesford - 13.2 per cent
- Guildford - 13.6 per cent

The remaining Surrey boroughs had the following obesity rates among year six children:

- Surrey Heath - 14.5 per cent
- Woking - 15.2 per cent
- Reigate & Banstead - 15.7 per cent
- Tandridge - 16.7 per cent
- Runnymede - 16.9 per cent
- Spelthorne - 18.2 per cent

Councillor Nick Wright, Mole Valley District Council cabinet member for leisure and community assets, said one of their priorities was to support residents to live healthy and fulfilling lives. He said: "These childhood obesity figures, which shine such a positive light on Mole Valley, are very encouraging for parents, carers and young people who live in our district. For our part in contributing towards these low obesity rates, we are proud of the work we do and the initiatives we provide which can only help participating children be healthier and more active. Examples include our popular free summer holiday activities programme, most recently run this past summer, and the wide range of indoor activities - such as the kids swim for a pound offer - available at Dorking Sports Centre and Leatherhead Leisure Centre, both run on our behalf by Better."

"Our sports club access scheme also provides up to £250 per eligible young person to cover all, or part, of a sports club membership and free taster session at that specific club. "The Mole Valley parkrun and junior parkrun initiatives that we helped to establish also continue to go from strength to strength, most recently highlighted by the junior park celebrating its sixth anniversary. "The funding opportunities we provide, for example our neighbourhood fund, are available for sports clubs or other youth projects to apply for money to help improve existing and build new facilities which young people can benefit from."

"Our commitment to improving our already impressive range of play facilities, including playgrounds and skate parks, across Mole Valley will always be a high priority for us, and a decision due to be taken by cabinet later this month could see several million pounds of Community Infrastructure Levy funding become available for a major parks and recreation ground enhancement programme."

Chris Caulfield LDRS

Epsom Hospital braces for flu spike

20 November 2025



Hospitals serving Epsom, St Helier and St George’s are warning of a potentially severe flu season as national data reveals the number of deaths linked to the virus in England more than doubled last winter.

Figures from the UK Health Security Agency show 7,757 flu-related deaths were recorded in 2024-25, compared with 3,555 the previous year. Child deaths rose from 34 to 53 — a 56 per cent increase — while fewer people took up the offer of a flu vaccination.

Last winter, local hospitals faced intense pressure from flu alongside RSV, Covid and norovirus outbreaks, which closed wards and stretched Emergency Departments to capacity. With flu cases now rising again after the school half-term, health leaders fear a repeat.

Chief Nursing Officer for St George’s, Epsom and St Helier hospitals, Elaine Clancy, urged residents to act now. “Last flu season was particularly nasty and we’re very concerned that this year could be even worse – we’re preparing for a spike of flu onto our wards,” she said. “We see people dying every year from flu and sadly thousands more will likely this year. I strongly recommend booking your jab now, as it takes up to 14 days to fully kick in.”

Local mother Amy Clare, from Sutton, knows how dangerous flu can be. Her five-week-old son Jonah was rushed to Epsom Hospital’s Emergency Department with the virus in December 2022.

“What started as a fever quickly escalated,” said Amy. “When the doctor told us we’d be spending Christmas in hospital, I was devastated. But he was in the best place to get better. The care we received from the moment we walked into A&E was fantastic – the staff immediately knew something wasn’t right and were with us every step of the way.”

Jonah was discharged the day after Christmas but continued to receive daily treatment until the New Year. “The care Jonah received saved his life,” said Amy.

Pregnant women are strongly advised to have the flu jab at any stage of pregnancy. It protects both mother and baby, but uptake remains low — only around one in three expectant mothers in England were vaccinated last year.

- Those eligible for a free NHS flu vaccination include:
- everyone aged 65 and over
 - people under 65 with long-term health conditions such as diabetes or heart problems
 - children aged two and three, and all primary school children
 - some secondary school pupils (Years 7 to 11)
 - residents in care homes
 - carers and those receiving carer’s allowance
 - people living with someone who has a weakened immune system
 - frontline health and social care workers

People can book or amend their flu vaccination appointment online: Book, change or cancel a free NHS flu vaccination at a pharmacy – NHS.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Bourne again Christmas lights

20 November 2025



Bourne Hall is delighted to announce the return of its much-loved Christmas Lights Switch-On event, taking place on Saturday 29 November from 4pm until 7.30pm.

This free, family-friendly celebration invites the local community to gather for an evening filled with festive entertainment, seasonal treats, and holiday cheer.

Event highlights include:

Live Music & Performances: Enjoy a lively programme of performances from local musicians and dance schools on the main stage. Special guests include Santa Claus and the cast of this year’s Epsom Playhouse Pantomime, Aladdin, bringing a sprinkle of theatrical magic to the festivities.

Market & Craft Stalls: Browse a variety of stalls featuring handmade crafts, unique gifts, and festive products – perfect for early Christmas shopping.

Food & Refreshments: Indulge in delicious seasonal fare from The Flying Saucer Café, offering warm treats and tasty bites throughout the evening.

Santa’s Grotto Grand Opening: Be among the first to visit the newly opened Santa’s Grotto, where children can meet Father Christmas and experience the joy of the season.

Christmas Lights Switch-On Ceremony: Be there for the magical moment at 5.15pm, when The Deputy Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Santa and beloved festive characters illuminate Bourne Hall with a dazzling display of Christmas lights.

Speaking of the upcoming event, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village), Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee, said: “We’re absolutely delighted to welcome back the Christmas Lights Switch-On at Bourne Hall – a cherished tradition that brings our community together in the most magical way.

This year's event promises festive fun for all ages, with music, entertainment, and of course, the grand illumination that marks the start of the holiday season in Ewell. I encourage everyone to come along and share in the joy."

This outdoor event is free and open to all, promising a heartwarming celebration for families, friends, and neighbours. Attendees are encouraged to dress warmly and arrive early to enjoy the full programme of festivities.

Visit Bourne Hall from 29 November for a whole host of festivities.

Bourne Hall Christmas Lights Switch On

Saturday 29 November, 4pm – 7.30pm. Free event.

A day of festive fun including:

- Live music and performances
- Market and craft stalls
- Food and refreshments
- Santa's Grotto Grand Opening
- Christmas Lights Switch On 5.15pm – The Deputy Mayor of Epsom & Ewell and Santa switch on the Christmas lights at Bourne Hall.

Santa's Grotto – Saturday 29 November to Saturday 20 December

Step into the magic of Christmas at Bourne Hall's enchanting *Santa's Grotto*!

Please note that Santa's Grotto is free to visit during the week but Saturday visits cost £1 per person

Grand Opening – Friday 29 November

Celebrate the launch of the grotto with a special evening of festive cheer!

Opening times on Saturday 29th November only:

- 16:00-17:00
- 18:00-19:30
- Entry: £1.00 per person (card payment only, payable at the door) due to the high footfall on this date, there is no pre booking option available, we will operate a first come first serve basis during the two time slots.

Pre-Book Your Visit – Saturdays 6, 13 & 20 December

Reserve your time slot online to guarantee your child's magical moment with Santa.

Spaces are limited, so book early to avoid disappointment!

Tickets are £1.00 per child and can be booked online by following the links below, please select the link for your desired date, this will take you to the booking page where you can select a ticket for your desired time slot:

Saturday 6 December: https://sessami.co/events/meetsantabounrehall?utm_medium=website&utm_sou...

Saturday 13 December: https://sessami.co/events/6529dc6f-1b2e-4c07-bd35-48c0c157cdde?utm_mediu...

Saturday 20 December: https://sessami.co/events/45c92d02-ab10-48c4-8e69-7836930592d4?utm_mediu...

Weekday Visits – Monday to Friday 10:00-16:00

Enjoy the grotto scenery at your leisure with **free entry** during the week.

Take festive photos, soak in the decorations, and write a letter to Santa to post!

Whether you're booking a weekend visit or popping in during the week, Bourne Hall's grotto is the perfect way to celebrate the season and make lasting memories.

For more information or to get involved, please contact bhevents@epsom-ewell.gov.uk or visit bournehall.org.

Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, Surrey KT17 1UF. 020 8393 9571. Bourne Hall is open Monday – Saturday, 10am – 5pm.

<https://www.bournehall.org>

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council



Image: Courtesy Bourne Hall Facebook – Epsom and Ewell Borough Council