

Tadworth Youth Club reduces crime

17 November 2022



A youth club in one of Surrey’s most deprived neighbourhoods is teaching children business skills, getting them birthday cakes and has seen kids queuing out the door to get in. The Friday night club, which can see up to 70 children in a week, also serves food to the kids, has them running their own tuck shop and deciding what to do with the profits, and aims to teach them things they may not learn at school.

Image: Councillors, Surrey Police officers, Surrey's deputy police and crime commissioner with staff and children at the MYTI Club. (Credit: LDRS)

The **MYTI club** runs each week and during school holidays at the **Phoenix Youth Centre** in Tadworth, and was set up by **Tony Britto** when he pitched to **Surrey County Council** after a call out for people to use the space. The LDRS (*Epsom and Ewell Times’ news partnership with the BBC*) visited the youth club, where police officers were playing table tennis with the children, burgers were served for dinner, and everyone joined in with a rendition of happy birthday for two of the kids.

The deputy police and crime commissioner for Surrey and two county councillors were also there, showing just how much support this project has, as it takes steps towards gaining charitable status to take some of the strain off Tony’s pockets. He’s put a lot of his own money into the club, which costs around £70,000 a year to run, but that’s no longer sustainable and getting charitable status would mean access to more funding streams. ‘Parents can’t believe how confident the kids have become’

Tony’s own past is what has pushed him to want to pass on skills to these young people. After his dad died and Tony was taken into the care system in London, he said he started drinking from a young age and was “up to no good, getting into trouble, fighting”. You had an inkling of something that you shouldn’t be doing, I was probably up to it,” he said. But he stopped drinking nearly six years ago, and alongside working for his own roofing company, is running the club with **Megan Ferguson**, the managing director.

Tony remembers something he was told when he was 13 years old that has stuck with him ever since: “Tell me, I forget; show me, I remember; involve me and I understand.” It’s what makes him want to get the kids deciding what they do with the profits from their tuck shop (they put them back into the club), help them foster good relationships with the police, and teach them the value of things in life.

They also get great feedback from parents, Tony said: “They can’t believe how the kids change, how confident they’ve got. And if there’s ever an issue, they come to us.”



External view of Phoenix youth club in Tadworth, where the MYTI club is held each Friday and in school holidays. Credit: LDRS

A heat map shared on the club Instagram account (also run by the children) shows a drastic drop in anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the club when its doors are open. Surrey Police could not provide more up to date information at the time of publication.

Kids would be down the ‘wrong path’ without the club. Megan is clear that were it not for the club many of the children would be going down the “wrong path”. The Tattenham and Preston neighbourhood, where the club is, ranks 7th in Surrey for overall deprivation, according to figures from the county council. Nearly 20 per cent of the children in the area are in absolute low income families, which compares to 8.8 per cent in the borough of Reigate and Banstead, and 7.7 per cent in Surrey as a whole.

Ellie Vesey-Thompson, Surrey’s deputy police and crime commissioner, said getting the kids in from eight years old is an important factor and praises both the impact on the children and the fact they are “diverted” away from getting drawn into crime and exploitation. But she’s clear that a similar set up wouldn’t work in all parts of Surrey in the same way, even if she did have the budget to do so. She said: “It’s not just about the building, it’s the environment they’re creating. If you put one of these all across Surrey, it wouldn’t have the same effect without having a Megan and a Tony in it.”

Megan not only knows all the kids’ names, having grown up in the area she also knows a lot of their parents too. With young children of her own, she fits the role around her family, and contrasts the difference between what they are running compared to the “dirty, grotty” youth clubs she went to as a youngster. She said her role is not the same as the kids’ teachers or parents, and is happy to remind them that if they don’t want to be there, they should leave. Saying it’s important to teach the kids how much things cost, from bouncy castles the club hires to trips out, she said they start to appreciate how expensive the real world is.

With kids coming from as far afield as Leatherhead, Guildford, Kingston and Croydon, Megan says the space is a “privilege” for the children, and that’s what makes them want to stay. She added: “Some of these kids don’t have a voice in their life, they don’t feel like it but we give it to them and we give them that power. All we can do is guide them along to making the right decisions.”

Surrey County Councillor **Rebecca Paul** highlighted the strong relationship between those running the club and the children there. She said: “This is just a club that the local community feel real ownership for and, as a result, the kids really want to be here. They want to participate.”

Epsom and Ewell remembers...

17 November 2022



Epsom and Ewell came together for the annual **Remembrance Day** service at Epsom's Clocktower, Friday 11th November. The Mayor's Chaplain reflected on the history of Remembrance Day. The first was held in the grounds of Buckingham Palace in 1919 when the two-minute silence was observed. In 1921 the poppy became a symbol of Remembrance. The Second World War saw the commemoration being held on a Sunday, to avoid disruption of ammunition production should the 11th of November fall in the working week. The Chaplain mentioned how the reality of today's television coverage of wars was inuring many to the horror of war.

The service was attended by a full complement of Councillors of all parties, servicemen and boys and girls from Blenheim School and other local schools.

The full service is reprinted below.



**An Act of Remembrance to mark 11.11.11 - Armistice Day
Friday 11 November 2022**

The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Clive Woodbridge leads the civic party to the Clock Tower

The Mayor's Chaplain, says:

We meet in the presence of God.

We commit ourselves to work in penitence and faith for reconciliation between the nations that all people may, together, live in freedom, justice and peace.

We pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of fighting and terror.

We remember with thanksgiving and sorrow those whose lives, in world wars and conflicts past and present, have been given and taken away.

Act of Remembrance

Read by The Royal British Legion:

*They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old:
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*

*Read by a Cadet: At the going down of the sun and in the morning
we will remember them."*

All: We will remember them.

Non-uniformed male personnel to remove headwear, please

Bugler will play *The Last Post*

11.00: Two Minute Silence

Bugler will play *Reveille*

The Kohima Epitaph, read by the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment
*When you go home, tell them of us and say,
for your tomorrow we gave our today.*

The Mayor will lay a wreath on behalf of the citizens of the Borough



We Shall Keep the Faith — By: Monica Michael 1918
 read by Cllr Clive Woodbridge, Mayor of Epsom and Ewell

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Oh! You who sleep in
 Flanders' Fields
 Sleep sweet — to rise anew:
 We caught the torch you
 threw,
 And holding high we kept
 The faith with those who died.</p> | <p>2. We cherish, too, the Poppy red
 That grows on fields where
 valor led.
 It seems to signal to the skies
 That blood of heroes never
 dies.
 But lends a lustre to the red
 On the flower that blooms
 about the dead
 In Flanders' fields.</p> |
|--|--|

And now the torch and Poppy red
 Wear in the honour of our dead
 Fear not that ye have died for naught:
 We've learned the lesson that ye taught
 In Flanders' fields.

Reading: *Goodbye Young Soldier* - By: Sgt John Norbury, Afghanistan, January 2010
 read by Representative 135 Geographic Squadron

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 We said goodbye tonight
 To a soldier whom I did not know
 He did his duty well
 But sadly he had to go</p> | <p>2 He did not travel this far
 To leave behind family & friend
 He came to do his duty.
 He did not know it would be his
 end</p> |
| <p>3 His short life was just that
 A soldier's ultimate commitment
 he gave
 This earth deserved him longer
 He sent too early to his grave</p> | <p>4 He is one of many heroes
 Another poor young soldier
 For he is not alone
 No years left in which to grow
 older</p> |
- What comfort lies for those he left
 Never again to be by their side
 A gallery of happy memories
 And deservedly this Nation's pride
- | |
|---|
| <p>6 So farewell young soldier
 Whilst here you did just right
 I hope your life was not a waste
 Farewell young soldier, sleep tight</p> |
|---|

The Chaplain: 'Reflection'

Readings -

In Gratitude of Silence - By: Debbie Holick read by a pupil from
 Blenheim High School

*Silent now the soldiers sleep, their tales long laid to rest.
 I knew them not yet still I weep and place a poppy o'er my breast.
 They were husbands, brothers, fathers, sons; so valiantly they fought.
 On shores stained red, on hands and knees; it was our freedom that they sought.
 Courageously they stood their ground, but freedom carries a cost.
 Thousands of men were wounded, and countless lives were lost.
 So, in gratitude of silence and all those who have served,
 sleep now, you have earned it. Your peace is well deserved.*

Remembrance Day - read by a pupil from Rosebery School

*We wear a poppy
 On Remembrance Day,
 And at eleven
 We stand and pray.
 Wreaths are put
 Upon a grave.
 As we remember
 Our soldiers brave.*

Prayer for Peace - read by a pupil from Ewell Castle School

*Let us know peace.
 For as long as the moon shall rise,
 For as long as the rivers shall flow,
 For as long as the sun shall shine,
 For as long as the grass shall grow,
 Let us know peace.*

The Lord's Prayer (all can join in):

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come;
 thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily
 bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass
 against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For
 thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*



Act of Commitment

The Chaplain says:

Let us pledge ourselves anew to the service of God and our fellow men, women and children: That we may help, encourage, and comfort others, and support those working for the relief of the needy and "for the peace and welfare of the nations.

Response:

God of peace, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all people, in the cause of peace and reconciliation and for the relief of want and suffering. Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom; give us courage; give us hope and give us perseverance now and always. Amen

The National Anthem

God save our Gracious King!
Long live our noble King
God save the King
Send him victorious
Happy and glorious
Long to reign over us
God Save the King!

The Chaplain concludes the service:

Ever-living God, as we remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples and establish harmony among the nations. Amen.

End of Service

The Mayor, Councillor Clive Woodbridge, would like to thank all those who joined us in today's Service and hopes you will keep a special thought for those military personnel, past and present, who gave and continue to give their service for our country.

Epsom woman gets out of a mango pickle

17 November 2022



A woman was sent home from **Epsom General Hospital** with a sliver of mango seed stuck in her throat, leading to an update of guidance around patients who have been eating soft foods. The 57-year-old went to Epsom hospital emergency department saying she was having trouble swallowing after eating mango pickle. A doctor looked at her, but could not see anything obviously wrong, with the patient not drooling, still able to swallow and no foreign body visible on examination. The patient was sent home with the advice that it could be a scratch or gastritis, and told to return if she was more unwell.

A board meeting of the Epsom and St Helier hospital trust heard she then came back four days later unable to swallow at all and with a sore throat, but still nothing visible to doctors. On a slide titled "the deadly mango" in a learning from complaints presentation, board members heard how the hospital then discovered an oesophageal tear and air in her chest after a CT scan.

Documents show there was "low level of risk" given she had been eating soft food, and that sharp foreign bodies causing problems are usually only related to fish or broken bones such as in chicken, so this was not considered. There are no guidelines either nationally or at the trust for this sort of situation.

After discussions with other hospitals, she went for surgery in Guildford, where a mango seed sliver was removed from her oesophagus and she stayed for a week on intravenous antibiotics. Luckily the patient made a full recovery, but did make a complaint against the hospital trust.

The board meeting heard that the unnamed patient had been informed of the investigation into the incident and how new guidelines had been drawn up at the trust, to look at the symptoms patients were suffering, and not just the foods they had eaten.

Dr Richard Jennings, group chief medical officer, said that from something ridiculously obscure and exotic and unlikely ever to happen again, the trust had created pragmatic and useful learning points. He added: "I was also very happy, having felt anxious reading the title, to find it was a "potentially deadly mango".

The meeting heard that assessment of the patient was done correctly, though the investigation showed the patient probably should have been discussed with ear, nose and throat [department] if symptomatic

She also should have been told to return within 24 hours if there were no improvement.

A presentation said it was "every rare to have sharp foreign body injury following soft food and usually due to foreign bodies in them", such as glass or plastic. As well as new guidelines for staff, a discharge leaflet would be created for patients who were going home with this condition.

Local refugee cash appeal

17 November 2022



Epsom Refugee Network: **WE URGENTLY NEED HELP FOR UKRAINIAN FAMILIES** – Please can you take 3 minutes to watch this video to spread the word and help us find more sponsors and properties for Ukrainian refugee families.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT :

We are very fortunate to have secured funding for some paid positions within the charity and this will make a huge difference to the support we can offer and our large team of volunteers will work alongside these paid staff. We do, however, urgently need funds for our day to day costs to support the following:

- Teaching materials and books for students.
- School accessories and equipment for newly arrived children
- Volunteer expenses like petrol and travel costs.
- Out of school activities for children to help them build confidence and make friends
- Organising social events

If you can help please can we ask you to donate any amount, large or small, via this link – or contact us for bank details if you would like to make a direct payment or set up a direct monthly debit.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS :

We are lucky to have many volunteers who give their time and talents to support others. However, with the ever increasing numbers of refugees arriving in our area, we urgently need more volunteer support. Please click on this link to see our latest list of urgent volunteer needs.

MUSIC EVENT :

There is another Ukrainian Music Evening organised by Epsom Music on **Saturday 12th November** at the Epsom Methodist Church, 11 Ashley Road, KT18 5AQ where you can hear outstanding Ukrainian musicians giving the third in this series of concerts (see details here). The evening starts at 6pm with a social get together before the concert begins at 7pm. Everybody is welcome and entry is free – and we would encourage people to bring some food to share.

Thank you all for your continued support.

Jo and Nina

Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network

Trading favours for Epsom’s Foodbank

17 November 2022



Surrey Trading Standards with Buckingham have donated 1,760 items and over £550 for the **Epsom & Ewell Foodbank**. The items donated include food, household cleaning supplies, personal care items and cash.

The donations are in celebration of Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards reaching the milestone of 150 **Primary Authority Partnerships**, making it the largest regulatory provider of Primary Authority services.

Image: Jonathan Lees of Epsom and Ewell Foodbank

Primary Authority is a means for businesses to receive assured and tailored advice in meeting various regulations through a single point of contact. This is invaluable for start-up businesses to get it right from the outset and enables all businesses to invest with confidence in products, practices, and procedures.

The landmark achievement comes off the back of Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards also winning the **“Service Excellence Award”** at the BEIS Regulatory Awards 2022.

Michele Manson, Business Team Manager at Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards said: “We’re delighted that we and our partners have been able to collate so many donations for Epsom & Ewell foodbanks. The work they do is so vital and it’s great that we have been able to aid them like this. We were determined to celebrate our recent achievements in a meaningful way that supported our local communities, and this has been the perfect way to do that.”

Jonathan Lees, Managing Director and Founder of Epsom and Ewell Foodbank said: “It’s great that Bucks & Surrey trading standards have worked with their business partners to make this donation, cooperation like this helps us to continue to provide vital emergency support to people in the local community.”

James Lowman, Chief Executive Association of Convenience Stores said: “Entering our partnership with Bucks & Surrey Trading Standards was one of the best decisions we have made, and it has continued to deliver every year. The quality of support from the team, has been consistently professional, pragmatic, and engaged. This has helped us to tackle new and existing compliance challenges with confidence.”

Business partners who have helped contribute donations include:

- Green Motion Car and Van Rental
- Delphic HSE Ltd.
- Natural Instinct Limited
- Coca Cola Europacific Partners
- Global Manuka UK
- E Scooter Professional LTD
- Solution EU Limited
- Bahlsen LLP
- Sports Supplement Ltd
- Creative Nature

For more information on Primary Authority Partnerships, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-authority-overview>

For more information on Epsom & Ewell foodbank please visit: <https://epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk/>

Surrey County Council News

Concerned with driving for ages

17 November 2022



Age Concern Epsom and Ewell are fortunate to have many volunteers that give up their time to help provide various services to support members of the older community in the borough of Epsom and Ewell. One of these services is its well used transport service which takes clients to medical appointments across the borough and further field. To provide this service, they have a wonderful small team of volunteers who carry out around 1000 trips a year.

Stuart Kendrick (L) and **Alan Carlson** (R) and Mayor Clive Woodbridge celebrate long-service

Two of these drivers, **Alan Carlson** and **Stuart Kendrick** have each been driving for us for over ten years, and this month they will both have reached an amazing milestone of completing 2000 drives.

Alan, a retired special needs teacher, and previous mayor of Epsom and Ewell in 2001/2002, has lived in the borough most of his life. He started driving for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell in 2012, he'd not long retired and wanted to do something useful with his time and his large car! He appreciates that the transport service can help take away the anxiety that some clients feel and aims to provide calm reassurance when driving our clients to their appointments. He really enjoys meeting people and hearing their interesting stories and he's been able to build up good relationships with many of them.

Stuart, a retired minicab driver, originally from South London started driving for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell following his retirement because his wife suggested he might like to go and do something useful! He really enjoys meeting our clients and gets a sense of fulfilment knowing that he is doing something that they really appreciate. His wife now often accompanies Stuart on his drives, and they all love the chats that they have on the way to appointments.

Age Concern is extremely grateful to all their volunteers but would especially like to thank Stuart and Alan for completing 2000 drives for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell and on 24th October held an informal lunch party for them with invited guests.

If you would like more details about the Age Concern Epsom and Ewell Transport Service, please contact Transport Desk, Monday - Friday 9.00am - 12.30pm on 01372 732 456.

Alternatively, if you would like to like to volunteer for Age Concern Epsom and Ewell, please contact Jane Hodgson, Volunteer Coordinator Monday - Wednesday 9.00am - 3.00pm on 01372 732 458 for an informal chat.

More cash for Ukraine refugee hosts

17 November 2022



Epsom Refugee Network welcomes the promised increase in cash to those local residents who take into their homes individuals and families who have had to flee Ukraine. It is hoped the extra money will attract more hosts in an increasingly difficult situation. **Jo Sherring**, leader of the Epsom Refugee Network, told Epsom and Ewell Times: "As we launch an appeal for new sponsors in the area, we welcome the news of the increased thank you payments which we hope may encourage more families to consider offering a place of safety to a family fleeing Ukraine. We are also desperate to find sponsors for families who are already in the UK and are having to move on from their first sponsor and find a new host family. If you are thinking of hosting and have questions please, please get in touch". www.epsomrefugeenetwork.org

Surrey County Council and local district and borough councils who are managing the "**Homes for Ukraine**" scheme locally have agreed an additional thank you payment, to be paid monthly to host families from end of November 2022 to March 2023. This is acknowledging that the financial circumstances faced by host families in Surrey, who welcomed Ukrainians into their homes, will have changed from the time they agreed to host Ukrainian families to our current economic situation in the UK.

Currently, host families are paid £350 a month for being sponsors, this payment will be increased by £250 to £600 a month from end of November 2022. This is to compensate for the rise in energy, food and fuel bills in this cost-of-living crisis. This applies to existing hosts who are already in receipt of thank you payments, and new hosts who complete all the checks satisfactorily going forward. This funding comes from DLUHC (**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**) via the County Council to the district and borough councils to pay the sponsors directly once they have passed all the relevant housing, DBS (**Disclosure and Barring Service**) and safeguarding checks.

Surrey County Council leader **Cllr Tim Oliver** said "We are forever grateful for the unerring warm welcome and support that communities, charities, and district and boroughs continue to offer our Ukrainian guests here in Surrey. But in particular to those sponsor families who have opened their homes up to welcome Ukrainian families to live alongside them and their families. As if this sacrifice were not enough, we now need to ensure that they are not being penalised financially and can continue to offer support as sponsors in this current economic climate. Unfortunately, the conflict in Ukraine continues and so there is still a need for host families. SCC has taken the decision to increase the thank you payments after fears many people wouldn't be able to afford to extend their current six-month agreements as winter approaches and the cost-of-living bites."

Additional reporting from Surrey County Council news.

Surrey Ambulance employee woes far from over

17 November 2022



An NHS chief executive has never in her career seen employee relations cases of the “volume and a complexity” as at her current troubled ambulance trust. **South East Coast Ambulance Service** (SECAmb), the NHS trust which covers Surrey, is on an improvement journey, after an “inadequate” rating for how the service was led in June and a report this week which downgraded its overall rating.

The trust’s interim chief executive, **Siobhan Melia**, said though she was not happy with the pace of the progress on improving the culture at the trust, she understood why it was not moving quickly. She told a board meeting on Thursday (October 27): “I have never in my career seen a volume and a complexity of [employee relations] cases that we are dealing with.” She said she understood why limited staff resources and an “incredibly high case load” were contributing to this.

The meeting heard what progress was being made against two warnings given in the June report, which found a culture of “bullying, harassment and sexualised behaviour” at the trust.

A report published this week by the **Care Quality Commission** downgraded the trust’s overall rating, finding that staff were “burnt out”, working beyond their hours and not always getting breaks. But the area of “caring” was given a “good” rating in the latest report, with patients found to be treated with kindness and compassion.

Thursday’s meeting focused on the two warning areas of four highlighted in the June report, namely risk, clinical governance and quality improvement, and of a culture of bullying. The latest report will be addressed at future board meetings of the ambulance trust, which covers Surrey, Kent, Sussex and parts of Hampshire.

According to meeting documents, the trust’s planned outcome for concerns around culture centred on a “significant reduction in bullying and harassment”, and staff feeling empowered and supported to raise concerns.

The interim chief executive said there needed to be “absolute clarity” on there being zero tolerance on behaviours that did not align with trust values, and a “decisive position” taken that sexually inappropriate behaviour would not be tolerated.

She said the backlog of cases meant people were getting “frustrated” at the length of processes because the trust was “running to catch up”. Ms Melia said she had found herself “challenged” as a woman chief executive in 2022 to have taken a sexual safety workshop in the last week. She added: “I’m listening to the lived experiences of female members of staff at SECAmb, who are talking quite openly in that workshop about some of the things that are happening. So we simply have to get more decisive, more strong in the actions that we take and continually say: ‘We will protect you as we should when you’re an employee of SECAmb’.”

Saying decisions on sanctions in proven cases needed to be “much faster”, she added that the trust needed to “deliver the actions in a much more overt way” to match words and communications that were being put out.

The trust’s executive director of human resources and organisational development, **Ali Mohammed**, said that 25 per cent of employee relations cases involved bullying, harassment or sexual safety.

He said once the initial work had been done on meeting targets set out after the CQC report and clearing the backlog of cases, more of a “learning culture” needed to be brought in at the trust. But he said ultimately it would be the staff that would be able to tell leaders if things had changed for the better. He said: “Are we winning in terms of people feeling that there’s a different culture within the organisation? That’s the key thing in the end, asking the individuals themselves because they are the best judge of it.” He said there was an “individual and collective responsibility” on all board members, managers and “every single individual within the organisation” to push the same message and the same culture. He added: “This isn’t something one person could do in isolation. I think it’s a test we should hold ourselves to as a board, and as a senior management community, that it is something that we personally will be pushing forward.”

The board’s chairman **David Astley** said the trust needed to “root out” inappropriate behaviour. He said all staff needed to feel confident and safe at work, whether on the front line or in other areas. Mr Astley added: “They’ve got to feel safe, so they can do the best job they can for their colleagues, and more importantly, the patients.”

Surrey to SEND £40m for special schools

17 November 2022



A £40 million project to improve education facilities for some of Surrey’s most vulnerable children has moved to its next stage. **Surrey County Council** is currently not providing enough spaces in its “alternative provision” schools, which cater for children who have been excluded from mainstream schools or have additional educational needs. [Ed. SEND = special educational needs and disability.]

The current facilities are also described by the council as in “extremely poor” and “dilapidated condition”.

It is hoped that being able to provide places in council-run facilities will unlock more than £1m a year because the cost of a place with private providers is around £30,000 more per year than in an authority setting.

A meeting of Surrey County Council’s cabinet on Tuesday (October 25) heard from the authority’s cabinet member for education and learning that the new and redeveloped sites would be “first class”.

Councillor **Clare Curran** (Conservative, Bookham and Fetcham West) outlined plans for sites across Surrey which would be redeveloped, demolished or built from scratch to aim to increase the authority’s capacity.

Currently, according to council documents, the authority can only provide 196 spaces, out of a total of 240 that are required by law.

Legally, the county council must secure suitable, full-time alternative education for children who, because of reasons including illness or exclusion, would not be in education unless it was arranged for them.

It must also make sure there is provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have Education, Health, and Care Plans in place.

Alternative provision is often a short-term solution until a child can return to mainstream education or move to a dedicated school, but in some cases is a longer-term solution.

Cllr Curran said the new sites would provide an environment where children would feel valued, could access high quality curriculum and get the emotional, health and well-being support they needed.

She said: “These short-stay schools can include some of the most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people that are in the county. We really want to ensure that we’re providing them not only with first-class accommodation, but a first-class learning experience.”

The plans, which would add 44 alternative provision places, include new sites in Elmbridge, on a council-owned site at Thamesfield Farm North, in either Surrey Heath or Runnymede and a new school on a new site for Reigate Valley College.

There are also plans to demolish the current Fordway School in Spelthorne, with the school relocating temporarily to Wey Valley College in Guildford while a new school is built, and plans to requires remodel and expand the Wey Valley College site.

The targets for the school sites are autumn and winter 2024.

An officers’ report said: “The current assets are in extremely poor condition and lack capacity to provide adequate places in appropriate locations across the county. Existing accommodation across the current nine buildings is significantly undersized and the buildings are in a dilapidated condition which is likely to render them unusable within the next two years. As such, the existing accommodation does not enable the provision of a full statutory educational offer that meets the educational needs of Surrey’s most vulnerable learners.”

Cabinet members approved the £43.2m budget for the project, which should also generate £5.77m in capital receipts when current council land is sold off.

The officers’ report showed that the average cost of a child going to an independent facility was around £52,000 per year, compared to £22,000 per year for a place at a maintained specialist school.

The additional places in council-run schools would mean a difference of £1.32m a year to the council’s budget.

Good King Wenceslas comes to Epsom and Ewell

17 November 2022



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

If you would like to know more about donating your Winter Fuel Payment, please contact Epsom Rotary via their website or Ewell Rotary via their website and search for Project Wenceslas.

If you are struggling with fuel bills, then contact Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell on 0808 278 7963 (Mon-Fri, 10am - 4pm) or see the CAB website : www.caee.org.uk