



Should go to Specsavers not Epsom Hospital?

29 September 2022



Our special correspondent shares his local experience.

In the good old days before Covid 19 you could visit the surgery to book to see a doctor, or instead telephone. You can do neither these days; now you have to fill an online form in and in a day or so the doctor will get back to you. If you are lucky, you will be able book a face-to-face appointment with the doctor provided you do not have a temperature or any other of the dreaded symptoms of Covid.



Malcolm Howard is a retired accountant and lecturer in Financial Management at the University of Surrey. In 2008, his book 'Accounting and Business Valuation Methods' was published by Elsevier. As an accountant he specialised in making the best use of available resources.

There is one exception to this; if you have an eye problem you book an appointment at Specsavers as (at least in this area) they act on behalf of the NHS. They do an excellent job; for minor problems they will sort it out. If not, they will send you off to the eye hospital to be seen straight away as a lengthy wait to see a consultant may result in more damage.

I have been a type 2 diabetic for twenty-five years and because of this annually I have my eyes screened; photographs are taken of the back of the eyes. When I started this was done at **Epsom Hospital**. I got there by bus and the procedure was tiresome, as they put drops in your eyes which make your sight blurry. But it had to be done! Then after a few years the technician gave me some good news; they had a modern machine and drops in the eyes were no longer needed. Absolutely brilliant. On top of that she would put your mind at ease and tell you not to worry.

Then someone in government decided to privatise the operation and accepting the lowest bid without having regard to anything else the service went into rapid deterioration. The new equipment was sold off and outdated technology returned. Years later, the privatised version of diabetic eye screening is still using equipment that became obsolete twenty years ago. Now you are advised:

- * plan how you'll get to and from the test - do not drive, as your sight may be blurry for a few hours afterwards.
- * you might want to bring someone with you or ask someone to collect you after the test.
- * During the test you'll be asked to read some letters on a chart first.
- * Drops are then put in your eyes. This may sting for a few seconds. The drops make your sight blurry after about 15 minutes. After that you'll be asked to look into a camera.
- * After the test you will not get the result on the day. You will get a letter about your result within 6 weeks.

Screening can take place at various venues, such as community centres, as well as hospitals.

I could have my eyes screened at **Epsom Hospital** without spending a penny on transport as the 166 bus would drop me outside. However, I choose not to because I do not need to waste a few hours being unable to see properly. Instead, I have my eyes photographed at Steven Harris Opticians in Beckenham. I get there by train and tram, but if I did not want to spend any money, I could take the 166 to Croydon Bus Station and get another bus from there to Beckenham. They take a number of photos in each eye (not just one in each eye) and the consultant shows me these and what they mean; he says we are looking for consistency with last year. No drops and a fantastic service.

Of course, other opticians, including Specsavers, have the latest equipment also.

I keep on being harassed by Surrey's Diabetic Eye Screening Programme (DESP). They insist that if I opt out it means I don't have my eyes screened and they will inform my GP. They simply don't understand that there are better services out there.

Anyone over 60 can have a full eye test, including a retinal scan FOR FREE under the NHS. Those under 60 can go privately and the same procedure costs around £45. In my view, such a fee is worth every penny. After all, it would relieve the anxiety of waiting six weeks to know if there were a problem or not.

The NHS would save a fortune if they scrapped this privatised service and organised screening through qualified opticians.

[Do you have a view? Write to us. Ed]

Epsom Advice Bureau Board boost before bad times

29 September 2022



Four new trustees have joined Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell's (CAEE) Board to guide and lead the charity as it approaches what will undoubtedly be a very difficult winter.

Peter Edwards, chair of the Trustee Board, said: "I'm delighted to welcome four new and very talented trustees who will strengthen the Board at a challenging time for our charity, as we are already seeing rapidly rising demand for our services, inflationary pressures on costs, and fewer resources. With inflation rising steeply, the cost of living is a major concern for us all, and especially for the people we are here to help. Families on the lowest incomes will be hit hardest by spiraling price increases and our frontline advisers are already supporting people who are finding it difficult to get by."

Photo from left to right back row: Andrew Heffernan, George Bell, Ian Davison, Shaun Jones, Patrick O'Driscoll. Front row left to right: Fiona Taylor, Lisa Davis, Yvette Ball, Hardik Trivedi and Peter Edwards.

Joining the Board as new trustees are Yvette Ball, Hardik Trivedi, Fiona Taylor and Andrew Heffernan. Yvette's professional career was with the Probation Service culminating as Chief Officer of the service in Gloucestershire and then Surrey. With retirement her voluntary career has included Chair of Faith in Action Merton Homelessness Project and then of Refugees at Home before joining CAEE. In these roles Yvette led the organisations to achieve success, changing dysfunctional groups into high functioning teams and enabling the charities to thrive. She gained good knowledge of governance from experience as an Honorary Secretary. She understands disadvantage and brings her passion to tackle it as incoming Chair designate.

Hardik is an experienced consultant with Duetsche Bank and has a track record in delivering transformation projects across different industries in government and commercial organisations. Prior to consulting, he was a systems engineer within the UK Ministry of Defence. Hardik holds an MBA from University of Warwick and a MEng in Aerospace Engineering from Queen Mary University of London.

Fiona has 35 years' experience in the transport industry including 13 years with her current employer, Network Rail, holding a number of director and senior leadership roles. Fiona spent several years as a self-employed consultant, working on a range of transformation, business improvement and commercial bidding assignments.

Andrew started his career in brand marketing for a number of blue-chip organisations, following which he took a break from the corporate world to qualify as a teacher. Andrew then worked for an educational charity before taking on the role of Membership and Marketing Director for a leading membership body in the social care sector.

Those who have departed are Alison Cribbs, vice-chair, who had been a trustee since 2015, Ian Davison who joined the board in October 2016 and chaired the HR committee, Bernie Watson who joined the board in 2018, and Alexis Marz and Hony Premial who both joined in 2017 and sat on the Finance and HR committees respectively.

Citizens Advice is made up of the national charity Citizens Advice; the network of independent local Citizens Advice charities across England and Wales; the Citizens Advice consumer service; and the Witness Service.

Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell (CAEE) is a small, local charity offering free advice and information for all who live, work and study in the borough of Epsom & Ewell. All advice is free, confidential, impartial and independent.

Each year CAEE helps around 3,000 clients with issues such as benefits, housing, debt, fuel poverty, family issues and much more. Our outcomes are extremely positive not only for the clients we serve, but also for the wider community. During 2020/21 we secured income in excess of £1.2m for our clients. Our added value to society totalled £1.06m in fiscal benefits by reducing health service demand and maintaining employment and housing. The wider economic and social benefit of our work during 2020/21 totalled almost £8m.

As a small charity we are responsible for raising our funds. It costs, on average, £60 for each client that we help. To make a donation please visit www.caee.org.uk/donate/ Just £5 per month could enable us to help another client this year.

To get advice please use our freephone advice line 0808 278 7963 or visit our website where you can get advice by emails and also find details of our drop in service.

Council's memorial benches to Co-Vid victims

29 September 2022



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is installing 14 memorial benches across the Borough to commemorate all the lives lost in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Metal benches have been placed at Alexandra Recreations Ground, Long Grove Park, Nonsuch Park, Shadbolt Park, Stoneleigh Broadway and The Grove in Ewell Village.

More metal benches are in the process of being installed at Auriol Park, Ewell Court Park, Mounthill Gardens and The Wells Centre.

Wooden benches will also be placed at Epsom Common, Grandstand Road, Horton Country Park and Hogsmill by the stepping stones at a later date. Flowers will also be planted around the benches where appropriate.

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

Councillor Hannah Dalton, who put forward the CIL bid, said, "The past two years have been extremely hard for everyone in the borough, but more so for those who have lost loved ones. These benches are our permanent memorial to all those affected by the pandemic."

"I hope they will bring comfort to grieving families, ensuring that their loved one will always have a place in and be remembered by our community."

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



Strengthening Epsom's Seniors

29 September 2022



Epsom Strength and Balance is celebrating five years of helping seniors in the local community stay stronger and keep upright longer. **Karen Willson** changed career to one in the fitness industry after medically retiring from working at City Hall. She trained thanks to **Instructability**, which trains disabled people and helped her get a job at a local leisure centre in 2014. Enjoying helping people improve their health, she later trained as a personal trainer and Otago instructor. This allowed her to start Epsom Strength and Balance [ESB] in September 2017. Gradually classes increased in size and more classes were required. Now, after the pandemic, she is rebuilding her business and reconnecting with people in our community. She just loves to see people 'stay strong and keep upright longer'.



Karen Willson

The ESB community has improved their strength and balance by doing activities in fun weekly group classes. This has improved their posture and mobility, which reduces their risk of tripping and falling. They learn how to safely get up off the floor and how to recover their balance so they do not fall. This allows us to safely do the things we enjoy.

We are all getting older each day and we can improve our quality of life during our later life. These weekly classes have helped reduce the severity and number of trips into hospital following a fall. ESB classes are now delivered at home via zoom and as group classes in Ashtead and Epsom.

Is it time you reduced your risk of falling by improving your posture and mobility?

Some people prefer to move to music. **Sit and Stay Fit** is a class of gentle movement to music from the 60s and 70s and this can be done sitting down. You'll be surprised how beneficial it is for the whole body.

Join Karen:

Ashtead St George's Christian Centre Mondays at 1:45 or

Epsom Methodist Church Wednesdays at 11:30 & 13:30.

Email Epsomstrengthbalance@gmail.com or call Karen on (07771 647132)

Sit and Stay Fit Tuesdays at Epsom Methodist Church 14:00

email Sitandstayfit@gmail.com or call Karen on (07771 647132)

Visit: EpsomStrengthandBalance.com



Surrey Art for Ukraine

29 September 2022



ShedArt Gallery will be painting for **Epsom** based **Surrey Stands With Ukraine** during **Mole Valley Arts Alive** in October. There will be paintings of sunflowers and other subjects in different media and sizes. All proceeds from the sale of these paintings will go towards a bus pass for a local Ukrainian family and the rest will go directly to the charity.

In addition to the Ukraine-themed paintings, there will be over 100 other works on display including from two new artists who have recently joined the Gallery. These events are always a lot of fun for everyone and it's a chance to meet the local artists and see how they work.

One artist has welcomed a Ukrainian family into her home and the gallery has become aware of how difficult it is for them to live in a different country and not able to speak English and hence not able to work. They decided to help by dedicating wall space in their gallery to Ukraine. Some of the artists have chosen sunflowers as their theme. Some will donate a piece of their existing work to this cause.

In addition to the Ukraine-themed paintings, there will be over 100 other works on display including from two new artists who have recently joined the Gallery. These events are always a lot of fun for everyone and it's a chance to meet the local artists and see how they work.

ShedArt Gallery is located in Harlow House Barn, Dukes Road, Newdigate RH5 5BX Telephone: 07851 71395
(Do not use Post Code on SatNav. Enter from Rusper Road end - no entry from Partridge Lane)

There is free parking and toilets, with complementary tea and coffee available. Please note that there is a small flight of stairs to access the studio.

Admission is FREE.

www.shedartgallery.com shedart@shedartgallery facebook.com/Shedartgallery Instagram.com/Shedartgallery

Epsom Beavers away in Surrey woods

29 September 2022



Beavers and adults from **8th/14th Epsom (Air Scouts)** and **3rd Epsom (St Martins)** joined over 400 Beavers and leaders from other Surrey Scout groups. **Beavers Go Wild** is an overnight camp which is held at Bentley Copse Activity Centre, south of Guildford, which is owned by Surrey Scouts.

During last weekend over 50 activities were on offer including Zip Line, Go Karts, climbing, caving, bouncy castles, making large bubbles, giant games, target slingshot paintballing, assault course and many more. In addition, young Beavers got to learn about Rail Safety by Network Rail who brought their train set, which is part of giving Scouting "skillsforlife".



Denise Iverson, Assistant County Commissioner (Beaver Scouts), said: "Fun and Friends, it was great seeing all the children and leaders meeting new and old friends".

Beaver Scouts are 6-8 years old, the next section on from Squirrels which are 4-6 years old.



Barnaby a Beaver Scout aged 6.5 from **Epsom & Ewell**, said: "I liked the campfire because it was nice and toasty." **Evelyn** a Beaver Scout aged 6 from Farnham, said: "I liked the Zip Line as it feels like you are flying when you are doing it." **Matthew** a Beaver Scout aged 7 from Pyford, said: "I liked doing all the activities with my friends."

Finley a Beaver Scout aged 6.5 from Haslemere, said: "I liked the cave maze because there was lots of different ways out and campfire because there was lots of singing." **Jayden** a Beaver Scout aged 7 from Sunbury, said: "I liked the cave maze because I like the dark." **Rory** a Beaver Scout aged 7 from Farnham, said: "I liked the rock climbing as it was fun and challenging." **Vivian** a Beaver Scout aged 7 from Farnham, said: "I liked the arts and crafts and I made some rope."

All genders, races and backgrounds are welcome at Scouts. Every week, it gives almost half a million people aged 4-25 the skills they need for school, college, university, the job interview, the important speech, the tricky challenge and the big dreams: the skills they need for life.

Scouts helps members gain these skills by encouraging them to ask the big questions and listen with wide open minds. It helps them to take a deep breath and speak up, think on their feet, ignore the butterflies and go for it. With Scouts, young people don't give up - they get back up and try again, often with the support of the friends they've made there.

Scout volunteers contribute more than 50 million hours of voluntary work each year to their local communities.

Painting the Town Purple against Polio

29 September 2022



The **Rotary Club of Epsom** will mark historic progress toward a polio-free world while urging the community to help end the paralyzing disease. On Saturday 22nd October 2022 Epsom Rotary members are taking action for **World Polio Day** (24th) to raise awareness, funds, and support to end polio, a vaccine-preventable disease that still threatens children in parts of the world today.

There will be a stand in the **Epsom Market Place**, by the Clocktower, with members of the Epsom Rotary Club providing information on polio and the work being done to eradicate it. The Epsom Clock tower will be lit-up purple. The colour purple stems from a symbolic purple dot painted on the fingers of children to show they have been vaccinated.



When Rotary and its partners launched the **Global Polio Eradication Initiative** in 1988, there were 350,000 cases of polio in 125 countries every year. We've made great progress against the disease since then. Today, polio cases have been reduced by 99.9 percent, and just two countries continue to report cases of wild poliovirus: Afghanistan and Pakistan. And we remain committed to the end.

With polio nearly eradicated, Rotary and its partners must sustain this progress and continue to reach every child with the polio vaccine. Without full funding and political commitment, this paralyzing disease could return to polio-free countries, putting children everywhere at risk. Rotary has committed to raising US\$50 million each year to support global polio eradication efforts. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has pledged to match that 2-to-1, for a total yearly contribution of \$150 million.

Past Epsom Rotary Club President, **Veronica Smith**, is organizing the event and hopes that members of the local community will come and visit the stand and give support to this very worthy cause.

Rotary has contributed more than \$2.2 billion to ending polio since 1985.

About Rotary

Rotary is a global network of 1.2 million neighbours, friends, leaders, and problem-solvers who unite and take action to create lasting change in communities around the globe. For more than 115 years, Rotary's people of action have used their passion, energy, and intelligence to improve lives through service. From promoting literacy and peace to providing clean water and improving health care, Rotary members are always working to better the world. Visit endpolio.org to learn more about Rotary and the fight to eradicate polio.



Ukrainian refugees made welcome by King's rep.

29 September 2022



Vice Lord Lieutenant of Surrey Sir Stephen Lampert came to Epsom Saturday 24th September. Addressing an audience in Epsom Methodist Church he condemned the aggression of Russian President Putin. He welcomed to Surrey those refugees from Ukraine who have come. He applauded the work of local charities, including Surrey Stands With Ukraine.

His speech was followed by 90 minutes of classical music performed by Ukrainian musicians. Sergei Sinkovski and Yevheniia Semydilko played Bartok duets on violins and Vivaldi. Kateryna Bolkunyevych sang Casta Diva from Bellini's opera Norma and Song to the Moon by Dvorak. Her powerful voice filling the vaulted Worship Hall. She was accompanied by pianist Bogdana Ravliuk who played Ukrainian composer Lysenko's elegy.

Epsom poet Audrey Ardern-Jones, who's Ukrainian mother fled Kiev in WWII to escape the Nazi occupation read three poems including a haiku. Translated and read in Ukrainian by the evening's co-presenter Darina Dvorinchenko.

Young star of Surrey's Yehudi Menuhin School of Music, Vadym Perog, born in Odessa, played a Mozart sonata for violin accompanied on the piano by Svitlana Kosenko.

The evening was crowned by Juliya Komyshyan who brought tears from the standing audience with the Ukrainian national anthem. She played and sang other music using the traditional Ukrainian bandura instrument; to the amazement of all.

Bloom awards for Epsom and Ewell

29 September 2022



It has been announced yesterday that Epsom & Ewell have both won silver in the annual South & South East in Bloom competition. **Stoneleigh** was awarded a commendation in this year's competition.

This is the first year that Ewell has taken part in the competition and the second consecutive year that Epsom has won an award. Last year Epsom town centre entered for the first time and won a silver award.

Councillor **John Beckett**, Chair of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee, said "It has been an absolute joy to see the contributions to this year's Epsom & Ewell in Bloom. We're over the moon that both Epsom and Ewell have won silver awards, Epsom for the second year running.

"I extend my sincere thanks to all the residents, volunteer groups, schools and businesses who made this year's Epsom & Ewell in Bloom such a huge success.

Ewell Village saw 'blooming' themed windows in shops along the high street and beautifully knitted floral decorations, created by the Ewell Yarn Bombers, on post boxes.

Ewell Castle School re-used wellies to create fabulous displays and St Mary's Church in Ewell produced stunning floral displays.

Volunteers populated cast iron troughs with flowers creating welcome splashes of colour in Epsom town centre, planted bulbs on street verges, and have been helping to keep displays watered over the summer.

Jubilee themed planting schemes in Rosebery Park, depicting a crown and a colourful feature bed, were planted by U3A volunteers.

Plans are already being formulated for Epsom & Ewell to take part in South & South East in Bloom next year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who is committed to ensuring our Borough is the best it can be for the local community, for visitors and for wildlife, all year round".

New Surrey home for young with mental health needs

29 September 2022



A £10million mental health unit which will allow young people to be treated nearer to home is under construction in Charlwood. The new facility will have 12 beds for young people aged between 12 and 18 years old, providing in patient care for those with acute mental health needs.

Funding for the unit has come in the form of around £6m from NHS England as part of a national programme to make sure specialist services are available for the needs of local populations, and £4m from private company Elysium Healthcare.



The mental health unit will prioritise young people in Surrey and, where possible, across other south east regions. It will be built and managed in a partnership between Elysium Healthcare and Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, a provider of mental health, learning disability and drug and alcohol services for people of all ages across Surrey, Hampshire, Croydon and Sussex.

According to the trust's website, when completed the unit will provide, for the first time in more than ten years, inpatient care in Surrey for young people with acute mental health needs, closer to their home and community.

On the site of April Cottage, Farmfield Drive, which was previously owned by Surrey and Borders, the facility will have 12 inpatient beds for young people as well as communal living and outdoor spaces to encourage socialising and independence.

There will also be an on-site school for the young people to continue with their schooling during treatment.

Graham Wareham, chief executive of **Surrey and Borders**, said the trust was pleased to be partnering with Elysium Healthcare to "transform the care experience for young people needing inpatient services in Surrey."

He added: "Young people need to be cared for close to home when they are at their most vulnerable with acute mental health needs. The opening of this new unit will help us provide care and treatment for many young people, so they get the support they need without having to travel far from their families, carers, and friends."

Joy Chamberlain, chief executive officer of **Elysium Healthcare**, said the project would "create a new benchmark for the future". She added: "I am delighted that Elysium and Surrey and Borders Partnership are collaborating on this joint venture. We are bringing together expert knowledge, clinical acumen, innovation, and capital to deliver the best care for the young people of Surrey."

The facility is due to open at the end of 2023.