EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

12th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Epsom foodbank charity aims to raise £11,300 in Christmas appeal

7 November 2026



Fourteen years after local churches and community groups opened the first Epsom & Ewell Foodbank centres, the Surrey charity that grew out of their work is asking residents to help raise £11,300 for its foodbanks and community pantries this Christmas. Good Company

Good Company (Surrey) is taking part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge for the first time. Its *Living with Hope* appeal aims to raise £5,650 in public donations between noon on Tuesday 1 December and noon on Tuesday 8 December. Pledges from existing supporters and the Reed Foundation will match those donations, taking the total to £11,300 if the target is reached. Epsom and Ewell Foodbank

From two local foodbank centres

Good Company traces its roots to a public meeting in July 2012, when more than 70 people turned up to discuss whether Epsom and Ewell needed a foodbank. Some doubted there was enough need in the borough to justify one. By October, two centres had opened, one in Epsom and one in Ewell, with support from Generation Church. Leatherhead and Tadworth followed in 2013, and Banstead in 2014. In April 2022, the foodbank became part of the new charity, Good Company (Surrey), while keeping its original name. Good Company

The charity still provides emergency food, alongside one-to-one support, counselling and help with energy costs. It runs Epsom Pantry, a member-led community food shop, and Banstead Pantry. Its wider work includes the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network and the East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission, launched in 2019 to give people with first-hand experience of poverty a say in how local organisations respond to it. Good Company says 535 households came to one of its foodbank centres for the first time in 2025. Good Company

What the Christmas appeal will support

The appeal will help fund the charity’s foodbanks and pantries. In its Christmas newsletter, Good Company shared the experience of a pantry member who said spending less on basic essentials had made it easier to pay off other debts. Another person, who had received one-to-one support, said: “It changed my life really. I got a sense of dignity back. It changed everything.”

The artwork for the appeal was drawn by Alison, a community commissioner from the charity’s most recent Poverty Truth Commission, and is available as an electronic Christmas card. Good Company is encouraging residents to hold coffee mornings, schools to organise cake sales and businesses to consider donating a share of a day’s takings. Readers can sign up for a reminder on the charity’s Big Give Christmas Challenge page. Epsom and Ewell Foodbank

Lionel Blackman

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Epsom Foodbank warns of summer holiday pressure as donations fall

7 November 2026

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Families facing the school summer break are increasingly worried about affording extra meals and snacks for children, according to Good Company Surrey, which says donations to its foodbank operation are down by 20 per cent compared with the same period last year.

In its latest newsletter, the charity said that while many people look forward to the holidays, the approaching break can bring anxiety for families already struggling financially.

Dafne, Good Company's Operations Manager, said the concern was not simply about the cost of food during the weeks away from school, but also the additional expense of preparing for a new school year.

She wrote: "For many of the families and individuals we support, however, the approaching summer holidays are not associated with a well-earned break or time away. Instead, they bring anxiety about providing extra meals and snacks during the long school holiday, guilt over what they cannot afford to give their children, and worry about the additional costs that come with preparing for a new school year."

The charity, which incorporates Epsom and Ewell Foodbank, said foodbanks and partner organisations can only meet demand where essential supplies are available. It appealed for donations, saying that even small contributions could help ensure local people did not go without during the summer.

The newsletter also highlighted wider support offered through Good Company's network. Epsom Pantry held its first peer-support meeting for parents of neurodiverse children on 10 June. Three members attended the initial session, which was intended to reduce isolation and allow parents to share information about services and activities. Another meeting is planned.

Good Company's three Advice Cafés — at St Barnabas in Epsom, Merland Rise in Tadworth and Leatherhead Community Hub — recently met to develop their work. The service says it has supported nearly 2,200 clients in the past two years, with benefits and grants, debt, and the cost of living among the main reasons people seek help.

The newsletter also carried a personal account from Sharon, a member of the Banstead Pantry Steering Committee, who described the pantry as a place where people could obtain affordable food but also find advice, companionship and a non-judgemental environment.

She said: "Banstead Pantry is a community that works within the local community, it is a real life line, it is a place where you can be yourself regardless of background and situation."

Good Company is also encouraging residents to support its work through fundraising challenges. Jonathan Lees, the charity's founder and Managing Director, is due to cycle 100km in Ride Reigate on 12 July, while Run Reigate follows on 20 September, offering 5km, 10km and half-marathon routes.

The charity's newsletter says donations, volunteering and community fundraising all remain important as it prepares for increased pressure over the school holidays.

Lionel Blackman

Energy debt fears rise as Epsom's Good Company's support steps up

7 November 2026



Rising energy costs could push more households into debt this year, with local support services warning of growing pressure on low-income families.

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Good Company (Surrey), which runs the Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, says many of the people it supports are already struggling to keep up with bills. With further increases in gas and electricity prices expected when the energy price cap is reviewed in July, concerns are mounting about the impact on vulnerable households.

Energy debt among clients is already significant, averaging around £900 per household. The charity says this is placing “enormous pressure” on families trying to manage day-to-day living costs.

To help address the issue, Good Company has expanded its programme of energy support workshops. These sessions offer practical advice on reducing energy use and costs, alongside providing items such as energy-efficient appliances and heated blankets to help people stay warm at home.

One participant described the sessions as eye-opening, saying: “So many things! Learning about radiator reflectors, energy surveys, how much a shower costs per hour. Being provided with further info to go away and look into. The £50 voucher and the appliance were a fabulous surprise. Thank you!”

For households already in arrears, the organisation is also offering access to an intensive debt relief programme, working with specialist energy advisers to help people find a sustainable path out of debt. Tom, Participation and Prevention Director at Good Company, said: “At Good Company, we can’t control global events — but we can help local families reduce their energy use, ease the burden of debt, and feel more secure at home.”

Employment support under review

Alongside energy concerns, the charity has been reviewing how well employment and skills support is working locally.

A recent event brought together advisers and senior leaders from local services to discuss findings from research into clients’ experiences. The study found that access to good quality work can make a major difference to financial resilience and wellbeing, but that support is not always reaching those who need it most.

While some people reported positive experiences and success in finding new roles, others highlighted gaps in awareness of available services. There were also concerns about continuity, with some clients losing support when advisers move on, and difficulties accessing training in specific sectors. Some felt held back by a lack of qualifications.

The findings have prompted discussions about improving promotion of employment support through community touchpoints such as GP surgeries, strengthening adviser handovers, and increasing awareness of local training opportunities. Ellie, Community Researcher, said: “This has been a great exercise for us, inspiring us to think about where we can improve our service and maybe even add in some new initiatives.”

New platform aims to join up services

In a further step to improve support, Good Company has launched ReferSurrey, a secure referral platform designed to connect people with a wider network of local services.

The system links users to advice, health and community organisations, with the aim of addressing the underlying causes of financial hardship through more coordinated support. Fifteen agencies have already joined, with a further 22 due to come on board shortly.

Call for community support

The charity is also appealing for donations, warning that demand for foodbank and advice services remains high across East Surrey despite the area’s perceived affluence.

Rising living costs, accessibility barriers and ongoing inequalities are continuing to drive need, while food donations have fallen. Good Company says regular contributions, even small ones, can help ensure local people are able to access essential support.

“Every contribution, however modest, helps ensure that local people can access the help and support they need, whatever their circumstances. Together, we can build a fairer, more compassionate community where no one is left to struggle alone.”

Sam Jones – Reporter



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Epsom and Ewell pledges to end poverty

7 November 2026



Following the 2024 lead of Surrey County Council, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council also has formally adopted the End Poverty Pledge, committing itself to pay the Real Living Wage, review accessibility of key public venues, and embed poverty considerations into future policy decisions. The pledge was endorsed at Full Council on 10th February 2026 as part of the same meeting that approved the council's final budget before local government reorganisation, following earlier approval by the Community and Wellbeing Committee on 13th January, and forms part of a wider Surrey initiative led by the Epsom-based charity Good Company.

Under the pledge, the council has committed to pay the Real Living Wage to all council staff from April 2026, provide training to staff to improve understanding of poverty, review accessibility of community venues such as Bourne Hall, and include poverty considerations in Equality Impact Assessments for all future policies. Council leader **Hannah Dalton** (RA Stoneleigh) said: "As a council, we are committed to supporting all our residents, including ensuring that those facing financial pressures are not left behind. The End Poverty Pledge helps sharpen our focus on understanding the barriers some of our residents face and working with our partners to remove them, so that Epsom & Ewell is a place where everyone feels supported and included. We also recognise the wellbeing of our workforce as an important part of that commitment. By adopting the Real Living Wage, we aim to help staff more reliably meet living costs, contributing to a better quality of life for those who deliver our services every day."

Community and Wellbeing Committee chair **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village) said: "We know that rising costs continue to affect many individuals and families across the borough. At Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, we have a long history of supporting vulnerable residents. Our Health & Wellbeing Strategy continues to deliver a range of initiatives aimed at improving mental and emotional wellbeing, alongside community services and support for key voluntary organisations including Age Concern and the Citizens Advice Bureau. We want every resident to feel included, and the pledge ensures that compassion, awareness and practical support remain embedded in everything we deliver for our community."

The council will work alongside Good Company, which operates food banks and led the borough's recent Poverty Truth Commission. Its founder **Jonathan Lees** said: "Good Company started its operations in Epsom & Ewell nearly 14 years ago; sadly, there is still a real need here. It's fantastic that the council has officially committed and signed up to work with us and other partners to address poverty in our community."

Although Epsom & Ewell is widely seen as prosperous, council data shows stark inequalities, including a seven-year difference in life expectancy between wards, with Ruxley, Court and Town wards performing worst, and significant numbers of residents relying on food banks or subsidised food schemes. Socio-economic factors account for about 40% of health outcomes, underlining the impact of income on wellbeing even in an affluent borough.

The Real Living Wage, which the council has pledged to adopt, is independently calculated each year by the Living Wage Foundation based on the actual cost of living and currently stands at £12.00 per hour nationally compared with the statutory National Living Wage, set by government, which is lower and forecast to reach £11.89 per hour from April 2026. The Real Living Wage is voluntary and intended to reflect what workers need to meet everyday living costs rather than the legal minimum employers must pay.

It remains unclear how many, if any, EEBC staff are currently paid below the Real Living Wage, as most council employees fall within nationally negotiated salary scales that already exceed that level. The pledge may therefore have limited direct financial impact on many existing staff, although it could affect lower-graded roles, casual workers or future contracted staff depending on procurement decisions.

Some of the pledge's commitments focus on awareness and culture rather than direct financial support, including training staff to recognise poverty issues and reviewing how welcoming Bourne Hall is to residents facing hardship. The council will also ensure poverty is explicitly considered when developing future policies through Equality Impact Assessments, which could influence decisions on service delivery and access.

The pledge was adopted during the same meeting that approved a 2.98% council tax increase, the maximum allowed without a referendum, raising questions about whether such increases could worsen financial pressure for some residents. In practice, many of the poorest households receive Council Tax Support, which reduces or eliminates their bill, meaning they may be shielded from the increase, but residents on modest incomes who do not qualify for support may still feel the impact.

The End Poverty Pledge reflects growing recognition that poverty exists alongside affluence in Epsom & Ewell, and while its commitments may influence how the council operates and makes decisions, its real significance will depend on whether those commitments lead to measurable improvements for residents facing hardship. As Jonathan Lees observed, there remains "a real need here," and whether the pledge marks a turning point or remains primarily a statement of intent will become clearer as the council approaches its replacement by the new East Surrey unitary authority in 2027.

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Sam Jones – Reporter



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Image: Mart Production

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Handmade in Epsom and Ewell: local makers unite to support Epsom Foodbank

7 November 2026



Handmade in Epsom and Ewell (HiEE) will hold its first community event, *The Festive Makers Fair*, on Saturday 29th November 2025 from 10am to 3pm in the Youth Hall at Epsom Methodist Church, Ashley Road (KT18 5AQ).

The fair will offer an affordable platform for local artisans to showcase their handmade products while supporting a vital community cause. All proceeds from the event, apart from stallholder sales, will be donated to Epsom Foodbank.

HiEE was founded by a group of local makers keen to create a space where craftspeople from within the borough can share their work and at the same time raise funds for charity. The organisers are particularly encouraging new makers to take part, alongside some of the area’s more established names.

Visitors will find a range of handmade gifts and festive items including soaps, ceramics, upcycled furniture, art, jewellery and metalwork, all produced in Epsom and Ewell. Prices will range from pocket-money treats to larger special gifts. Twenty-two local makers are already confirmed, including Annette’s Gemstones Jewellery, Bird & Bear Soaps, Colour and Sparkle, EpsomPots, H for Handmade, Martha Moon Creations, Surrey Woodcraft and Wadey Smithing.

Adding to the festive spirit, The AMP Voices choir from Nescot College will perform in the Roots Coffee Shop at the Methodist Church, which will be open for refreshments and cakes throughout the day.

All funds raised from event profits and entrance donations will go directly to Epsom Foodbank. Entry is by a suggested £1 donation. Attendees are also invited to bring non-perishable food items for the foodbank’s Christmas drive. A list of items particularly needed can be found at epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food.

Organiser Janice Heyes said: “We really hope the Epsom and Ewell community will support this event which is taking place right in the heart of town. Shoppers will find unique handmade Christmas gifts made with care and passion while giving something back via the Epsom Foodbank. This really is an event run by the community for the community.”

The event is being coordinated by volunteers Imogen Curran, Janice Heyes, Jo Jones and Helen Worwood, supported by local craftspeople and small businesses. The group hopes that this first fair will be the start of an annual tradition, with future events expanding the initiative’s reach and community impact.

For more information visit www.handmadeinepsomandewell.co.uk or follow @Handmadeinepsomandewell on Facebook and Instagram. Enquiries can be sent to handmadeinepsomandewell@gmail.com.

Event details
Date: Saturday 29 November 2025
Time: 10am–3pm
Venue: Epsom Methodist Church, Ashley Road, KT18 5AQ
Admission: Suggested £1 donation

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Parking: Please walk, use public transport, or park in town centre car parks. Limited on-site parking for Blue Badge holders only.

Keeping Good Company

7 November 2026



Over the past 3 years we've been increasing our work to address the root causes of poverty in our community, while continuing to support those who need our help. This has hopefully contributed to a slight fall in foodbank use this year, although numbers are still much higher than a few years ago.

We have now opened our second Pantry and there have been increasing opportunities for us to influence and work with other organisations towards our vision of ending poverty in Surrey.

However, as we enter this Harvest season we are facing a number of challenges. Overall, our food donations are down, some of our funding has dried up, we have to be prepared in case foodbank use goes up again (with energy prices due rise) and we have both a higher number and more complex cases in our support work. Poverty is still very much in our midst.

The good news is that as we have developed our work and focused increasingly on prevention – trying to stop people getting to crisis point – preventing poverty is now very much getting on the agenda. Our End Poverty Pledge has picked up traction and gradually individuals and organisations are signing up and realising that to beat poverty we need to commit to actions and work together to change our culture.

This has been matched with our participation work which has grown mainly through the Poverty Truth Commission. With our commissioners we have produced a Short Guide to Participation, which includes some case studies to show how people with lived experience of poverty are shaping what we do and encouraging others to take the participation 'journey' too.

It's an exciting time but we need to continue pushing so that we see a constant in the reduction in foodbank use, people escaping poverty and developing their resilience so as an organisation we are working ourselves out of a job!

This year we have seen some encouraging changes within our foodbank. In May we piloted a new foodbank model at one of our largest centres, after running 2 focus groups with both clients and volunteers. Our 'Choose Your Food' model seeks to recreate a shopping experience for our clients, where instead of being handed over a packed bag of food and toiletries, clients can now walk around with a shopping basket and select their own food and toiletries.

The positive impact of the new model has been felt across the whole of our foodbank operations. Our clients, who have consistently said they much prefer this model, not only because it helps make a foodbank visit more dignified but also because it means clients actively contribute to reducing food waste, by only taking the items they need and want, even when they are entitled to more.

Our volunteers, who have enjoyed greater engagement with clients as they choose their food. And, from an operational perspective, a decrease in stock sent to the centre. As clients are only taking what they need, they are actually taking less food. In the first 2 months following its launch, the amount of food taken per person has reduced by 20%.

We are now exploring how we can transition other centres to this model, so all our clients, across every foodbank centre, can share in the same experience.

With our Summer holiday period over and the restart of school, so too the foodbank is getting ready for a new Harvest season. Every year we are blessed to receive donations from schools and churches which help to keep our centres and pantries stocked for those in our community experiencing financial hardship. Whilst, so far in 2024,we have seen an encouraging decrease in numbers of people attending our centres, we know that with winter approaching, families and individuals will see their bills increase and many will need support to ensure they can access essentials, like food and toiletries.

Unfortunately, the first 6 months of 2024 saw an 18% reduction of stock in, compared to the same period in 2023. We rely on the generous and faithful donations of our community to help us secure the stock we need to continue supporting families and individuals through our food provision projects.

If you would like to organise a food donation this Harvest, see our 2024 wishlist below. Please click on this link for a list of our donation points. If you are organising a delivery directly to our hub (Good Company Hub, Ruxley Lane KT19 0JG), please let us know by contacting us on foodbank@goodcompany.org.uk

New Chair of Trustees needed!

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A fantastic opportunity for someone who is passionate about helping people locally and being part of our vision to see a community free from poverty.

Fundraising Manager role

We're looking for an experienced, creative and proactive Fundraising Manager who is passionate about our vision to create a poverty-free future for our community.

Jonathan Lees
Founder and Managing Director, Good Company

For more information visit

Good Company – Supporting Our Community

Local poverty moves 12 year old to give up pocket money

7 November 2026



Merland Rise church caretaker told LDRS* reporter: "Last week a young girl, about 12 years old, came and knocked the door. She'd gone to Asda with her pocket money and spent it on food for the food bank. I was nearly in tears."

Decision makers need to listen to the "lived experience" of people using food banks to tackle the root causes of poverty, according to one organiser. **Tadworth's Merland Rise church** is home to a weekly food bank, as well as being one of Surrey County Council's warm hubs, where people can go if they are struggling to heat their own homes.



Image: Staff, volunteers and councillors at Merland Rise church, which holds a weekly food bank and warm hub. Emily Coady-Stemp

While uptake on the warm bank had been slow, the modern church was still a hive of activity when the LDRS* visited in late November to talk to some of those involved. The food bank has seen a rise in its users, and has moved downstairs to a bigger room in the church, while organisers are sure that as people use the church for other activities, the news will start to spread about the warm hub.

The building, where warm hub visitors can get a tea or coffee and a hot meal, is large and modern, and used for many community activities. Its administrator **Christina Lane** said she probably takes the building for granted given she goes to church there every week. She recognised that many people were struggling at the moment, and didn't want anyone to feel embarrassed about coming down. "There's no shame, we just have to club together," she said.

Jen Barnard is strategy lead at **Good Company**, which was established this year and is an umbrella organisation working with several food banks, the **Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network** and the **Epsom Pantry** among others.
She said there had been a rise in numbers of people using the food bank, compared to pre-pandemic levels, and that 10,000 food parcels have been given out this year across the five food banks in Banstead, Leatherhead, Tadworth, Epsom and Ewell.

Offering advice to those who visit on all aspects of their life, Ms Barnard said people may be referred on for mental health support, help with applying for disability benefits or advice on reducing energy consumption.

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A key part of the work, she believes, is in listening to users and looking at what changes might help them.
“It seems like a small thing,” she said, “but listening to people and understanding that everyone is an individual, everyone is unique. And a willingness [is needed] to try to think in new ways, and trying to really hear what people are saying and respond to it.”

She said the organisation’s aim was to work towards a poverty-free future, but in the meantime to support those who needed it. “Very much a part of our strategy is participation and trying to bring together people with lived experience with decision makers, trying to say: ‘We can make changes locally that are going to improve people’s lives,’” she added.

Andrea Lewis is the Merland Rise church caretaker, who helps run the building including the many events that go on there, from the food bank to birthday parties, exercise classes and more. Speaking before December’s cold snap hit Surrey, she said the warm hub hadn’t really “kicked off” but she thought the word would spread as more people visited the church, including for a Surrey County Council bingo event taking place that afternoon.

Word spreading throughout the community also means people are being brought together at a time when many are struggling. Surrey County Councillor **Rebecca Paul** (Conservative, Tadworth, Walton & Kingswood) and Reigate and Banstead Borough Councillor **Rod Ashford** (Lower Kingswood, Tadworth and Walton) both recognise that people get a lot out of volunteering for projects such as the food clubs that run in the borough.

The borough council scheme offers people discounted food for an annual subscription of £1 and £2 payment to attend each week, giving people more ownership of the situation. Cllr Paul said: “In an ideal world we would hope that we wouldn’t have to do this.It does strengthen communities, it’s building the social fabric that these things are going on.”

The warm hub is open on Tuesdays from 10am-6pm, though it won’t be open on December 27.

*Epsom and Ewell Times BBC partner – Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Cover image – for illustration only.

Recycling for food

7 November 2026



A group of environmental volunteers in Surrey is helping support its local community by recycling items that the council cannot accept through their kerbside recycling bin collections.

Catherine Banks, Founder of Tadworth TerraCycle, has signed up to a number of free recycling programmes offered by TerraCycle, collecting items including cheese packaging, Baylis & Harding products and packaging, and biscuit and snack wrappers that would ordinarily be destined for landfill or incineration. For each item of waste the group sends to TerraCycle, they are awarded with a monetary donation to the charities of their choice.

Pictured: Catherine Banks from Tadworth TerraCycle with two young volunteers and some of the items they have collected so far

The group has been raising money for charity since 2019 but recently its members have been prompted to donate funds to **Epsom and Ewell Foodbank** where they will be used for purchasing and sorting food and distributing it to those who need it most. More than £300 has been raised for the foodbank so far by collecting waste from the community via a public drop-off location in Tadworth.

The Trussel Trust reported that deliveries of aid parcels were up 14 percent compared with pre-pandemic levels, amounting to more than 2.1m parcels in the year to April 2022, and with the growing cost of living crisis facing the UK, this number is likely to increase in the coming months.

Catherine explained: “*We initially signed up to the TerraCycle programmes as a way to inspire the children at the local primary schools. By teaching them the importance of recycling and taking care of the environment at a young age we can ensure that the Earth will be in safe hands with future generations.*

“One of the schools we work with decided they would like to support the food bank and unsurprisingly all the other schools agreed it was a good idea. The cost of living crisis is affecting so many people and giving to the foodbank is the best way to help those most in need.”

As well as the foodbank, the group also donates to other good causes including funding books for local schools and

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ISSN 2753-2771

donating litter picking equipment to the local community group, and in the last 6 months more than £1,000 has been donated to the Dementia Society.

Catherine continued *"This really is a worthy cause so we encourage the entire community to get involved and drop these items at Tadworth Terracycle, 36 Bidhams Crescent, Tadworth. The more we recycle together, the more money we can raise for those who need it."*

The free recycling programmes which the group has signed up to include the Cathedral City Cheese Packaging Free Recycling Programme, the Baylis & Harding Free Recycling Programme and the Pladis (McVitie's and Jacob's) Biscuits and Snacks Free Recycling Programme.

The items the group sends to TerraCycle are recycled by shredding, cleaning and turning into plastic pellets which can then be used by manufacturers to create new plastic products such as outdoor equipment – reducing the need to extract new resources from the planet.

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Will Epsom's Foodbank ever end?

7 November 2026



A Gala fundraising dinner was held recently to recognise 10 years of Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, with guests encouraged to sign up to the new '**End Poverty Pledge**'. Nearly 200 people attended the Gala dinner to mark a decade since the doors first opened in October 2012, offering emergency food parcels to those in need.

Image: Jonathan Lees speaks at the 10 year Gala in the Queen Elizabeth II Stand Epsom Downs

Now ten years on, the food bank has five centres in Surrey and is incorporated into Good Company (Surrey) charity, which includes Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network, support services as well as Epsom Pantry which opened this year.

Good Company's mission is to create a community free from poverty and the newly launched End Poverty Pledge aims to build a movement of people and organisations committed to doing what they can locally to reduce poverty.

One of the food bank founders – **Jonathan Lees**, said Epsom & Ewell Foodbank was started after he was told of a similar initiative in Kingston and heard of a family struggling to feed themselves in Epsom. It opened with one centre in Epsom and one in Ewell, adding Leatherhead and Tadworth in 2013 and Banstead in 2014.

Jonathan Lees said: "I remember putting the first tins on our first bit of racking in one of our little rooms in the office with founding volunteer Jackie McKee. I think we counted 10 tins of baked beans. Now we have more than 10 crates of baked beans in the store. Never did we think that 10 years down the line we would still be here. We still have the mission to close the food bank and end poverty in our community, but that is not going to happen this year.

"So, while we are still here, we will challenge what is happening and support local people to rebuild their lives and have hope for the future. To recognise the impact of what we have done we held the fundraising event and this saw the launch of the **End Poverty Pledge**, as we believe everyone in our community can do something to improve the lives of those experiencing financial hardship.

"It is definitely not a celebration but a mark of appreciation of all that has happened, all we do and the invaluable support of so many people in or community who donate food, resources and funds, especially our group of amazing volunteers who are our lifeline and keep it all going."

Good Company (Surrey) is a Registered Charity no. 1197494
Good Company Hub Ruxley Lane Epsom KT18 0JG

Since they opened, the Epsom & Ewell Foodbank have helped feed more than 50,000 people. As the foodbank grew, so came the realisation that emergency food aid was not a long-term answer to poverty so in 2019, the **East Surrey Poverty Truth Commission** was launched to raise awareness of the drivers of poverty and ensure that those affected by poverty are central to decisions about how to tackle it. Phase 2 of the ESPTC will start in 2023.

Jonathan Lees said: "As we look ahead after 10 years, our vision is now focused on tackling the root causes of poverty and the hope of a future without the need for food banks."

For more information and to take the End Poverty Pledge please visit
https://goodcompany.org.uk/end-poverty-surrey/

Courtesy Epsom and Ewell Foodbank.

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For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

12th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Trading favours for Epsom’s Foodbank

7 November 2026



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

How to help “low-incomes” with your £400

7 November 2026

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The **Epsom and Ewell Energy Support Scheme** is a plan to offer those running into difficulties immediate help with their bills, and then advice and financial support to improve energy efficiency or reduce energy consumption in their homes and so reduce bills going forward. This might include buying a more efficient appliance for them or helping with improved insulation. The scheme is supported by local MP **Chris Grayling**

To help support this programme they are asking local households who have less difficulty paying for these higher energy bills to donate their £400 support payments to the fund so that it can be used to help reduce the bills of those who are struggling. If you are able to do this, they would be very grateful, and all other donations are of course also very welcome.

The Scheme is being run jointly by the **Good Company**, which runs the local food bank, and **Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell** helped by local Churches. It will offer both advice sessions to help those who are not sure how to improve their energy efficiency as well as assistance paying for improvements.

To make a donation, please visit the donations page at **www.justgiving.com/campaign/epsom-ewell-energy-support-scheme**

Foodbank feeding thoughts...

7 November 2026



Gillian Nichols of **Epsom and Ewell Foodbank** writes: What price do you put on mental health? Among the people that visit foodbanks, many have severe mental health issues due to traumatic experiences, poor circumstances, and often unaddressed medical issues they've faced in their lives. At Epsom Foodbank we have a higher motive than simply feeding the people who need us.



We want to help reduce the need for our Foodbank services through addressing the cause of the problem, not just the problem itself. And we are already doing this very successfully.
Our outstanding counselling service has been sitting alongside the foodbank, working with clients to help them move on from their problems towards independence and work.
It's hard for many of us to understand the plight of the people we help. It is best described in their own words which you can read at the end of this letter.
To have a qualified Counsellor available at our Foodbank is a huge asset which has changed lives. We really want to do more of this. But we need funding in order to do it. And it doesn't take a huge amount. In fact, just £50 per month would make all the difference.
A partnership or donation from your company can enable our Counsellor to keep working with people, building their confidence, and helping them escape from dependence by listening, offering therapy services, and having them know someone is there and looking out for them.
Everyone knows the importance of mental health, and how poor mental health lies at the root of so many social issues. If you can help support this incredible life-changing service, contact **gillianaudreynichols@gmail.com**

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