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

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Conquering disability through art

30 December 2023



Conquest Art CIO was founded in Cheam in 1978 by artist **Ursula Hulme** MBE and now has 15 groups throughout England The members have a wide range of health problems and disabilities and they are encouraged to work using their imaginations creatively at their own pace. This helps build self- confidence and enables people to relax and make friends with similar interests within the group. No previous artistic experience is needed to join.



'Coronation Celebration' – a picture made as a joint project by the members of the the Stoneleigh Conquest Art Group

In the past an annual exhibition of members' work has been held at Bourne Hall in Ewell. This year the exhibition was held online and in 2024 there are plans to hold it at the Horton Chapel in Epsom.

Each year an annual meeting (accompanied by an exhibition) is held at St. Paul's Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam, and the Charity Coordinator is in the process of setting up a series of meetings on Zoom where the leaders of the various groups can discuss common issues together and share ideas.

Three of the groups are in Epsom and Ewell as follows:-

Epsom Methodist Church, Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5HU 'phone number 01372 723966. The leader is Christine Loizou. Held on Tuesdays from 2pm – 4pm.

Stoneleigh Methodist Church, Stoneleigh Crescent, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 ORT. 'phone number 020 8393 4116. The leader is Lesley Lee. Held on Mondays 2pm – 4pm.

Christ Church Ewell, Cheam Road, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 1AD 'phone number 07500 339 168 The leader is Steve Deal. Held on Mondays from 1pm – 4pm. Currently this group has no vacancies.

Conquest Art is run by volunteers with the exception of the co-ordinator. Anyone who would like to find out about volunteering or who feels inspired to learn more about Conquest is very welcome to come along to one of the groups to see what happens there.

For further information please see the charity website at www.conquestart.org

Top image: Caterpillar draft excluder made by partially sighted and blind members at Epsom from coloured wool pom-poms.

Epsom and Ewell Borough of Sanctuary

30 December 2023

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Responding to the decision Nina Kaye told the Epsom and Ewell Times: "We support over 200 families with over 400

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refugees and EERN provides over 40 hours of English lessons each week.

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

Related reports:

Hosts of Ukrainian refugees appreciated

Flight of refugees: history repeating?

Breaking the mould for Ukrainian refugees

Local refugee cash appeal

Image: Raimond Spekking

Community Football hero retires

30 December 2023



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

 The club that’s always welcomed both boys and girls was set up by the Rvd. Clive Potter over 30 years ago.
 Now Reverend Potter is due to retire and the club want to thank him for leaving a lasting legacy of real community football in the area.

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

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

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

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

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

Rvd Clive then began the missionary work to take the ideas to others in the community. He became a sports advisor for the diocese and encouraged the setting up of many more clubs. Other clubs bought into the opportunity for competition with a Bishop’s League, a Bishop’s Cup and a Bishop’s Shield.

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

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

Speaking about his role, Rvd Clive said: “The vision was always to relate the church to the community, to build a good ethos and to develop friendships. I’m delighted to see the club still

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ISSN 2753-2771

running after all this time, it's brilliant for the community."

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

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

Paul Wilson

Dedicated Epsom tree-man

30 December 2023



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For further information about Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board:
epsomandewelltab@gmail.com
www.eetab.org.uk/
Facebook: @EpsomEwellTreeAdvisoryBoard

Well trained Father Xmas coming to Epsom

30 December 2023

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

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

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

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

Thurs, 07 Dec 2023 – from 20.30am – 12.30pm With Epsom Choral Society, 1,00 -2,200pm with The Vale School and 2.00-3.00pm with Meadow Primary School – Ashley Centre

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

Tilly the Train and Father Christmas Street Collections are:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maria Anstiss – Epsom Rotary

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

Don't wait for the Feast of St Stephen

30 December 2023



For the seventh year running, **Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell** (CAEE) has teamed up with the **Rotary Clubs of Epsom and Ewell** to bring much needed support to those in the borough in need of help with paying fuel bills this winter.

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.

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Lisa Davis, CEO, Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell, said: “With energy bills still the biggest cost-of-living worry for many individuals and families across the country, this fund is a crucial support for those in our borough. Please get in touch if either you want to donate your Winter Fuel Payment, or you are in need of support.”

Since January 2018, CAEE has received nearly £15,000 in donations and made over 170 payments to families in Epsom & Ewell suffering from fuel poverty.

If you would like to know more about donating your Winter Fuel Payment, please contact via the websites epsomrotary.uk or ewellrotaryclub.org.uk 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 our website : www.caee.org.uk https://www.caee.org.uk/

St Stephen’s Day (the first Christian Martyr) is 26th December in Western Christianity.

Local community gathered at Horton Cemetery

30 December 2023



On **World Mental Health Day** 10th October on a working and un-seasonally hot day, young and old gathered in commemoration of the 9000 patients buried in Epsom’s abandoned Cemetery.

The events were the climax to a year long project of The Friends of Horton Cemetery, supported by **Kings College** and **Dr Alana Harris**, local resident and Reader in History at the University. Entitled “Out of Sight, Out of Mind”, the project raised awareness throughout the Borough of the lives of 9000 patients buried between 1899 and 1955. In their memory nearly 1600 ceramic flowers were uniquely painted by hundreds of concerned citizens as they contemplated the stories and photographs of individual patients.



Hardy poem reading

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Faith leaders read a committal together

The celebration started in a private field provided for the day by local farmer Mr Seymour Bourne and located right next to the five acre Cemetery. The largest asylum cemetery in Europe. Under a blazing Autumn sun the gathering was addressed by the charity's secretary **Mr Lionel Blackman**, who called for a rejection of a local council categorisation of the Cemetery as "amenity woodland". The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, **Cllr Robert Geleit** (Labour Court Ward) spoke of Epsom's historic connection to the five psychiatric hospitals in the Borough.

Patron of the charity, **Chris Grayling** MP sent a message, read by Horton Ward Cllr **Kieran Persand**: *"It's easy not to realise, as you drive past, the piece of history that lies behind the fence. Thousands of people lived in the old hospitals, lived and died mostly anonymously. They have no gravestones to mark their final resting place. And disgracefully the cemetery has been allowed to rot by its current owners. It is a credit to the work of the **Friends**, and of people like **Alan Carlson** who raised the money for a memorial, that their memory has not been lost. I hope one day that the cemetery can be taken back, and turned into a real garden of remembrance for those who passed so much of their lives here."*

Theresa Keneflick, a trustee of the charity and head of St Josephs Primary School spoke and brought a school choir who sang "True Colours" by Cindy Lauper.

The following each read a verse from Thomas Hardy's 'Voices from Things Growing in a Churchyard':

Rosie Spence, relative, on behalf of her great, great, great grandfather. **Allen Price** from Love Me Love My Mind. **Carmen Nel**, NHS Clinical Practitioner. **Audrey Ardern-Jones**, local poet and project volunteer. **Charles Wood**, former Nurse at Manor Hospital and Horton Hospital. Kevin McDonnell, Friends of Horton Cemetery Trustee and lead researcher of the lives. **Timothy Folkard**, project volunteer.

Then voices from the Cemetery were spoken by **Epsom Players** representing the lives of Enid Barnet and Richard Waterer.

Dr Alana Harris explained the symbolism of the ribbons everyone had tied for the day to the fence near the Cemetery.

Rev Nick Parish and Judith Mitchell (St Martin's Church of England); Fr Stephen O'Brien (St Joseph's Catholic Church); Pastor Josh Selfe (Epsom Methodist Church); Clerk Frances Touch (Epsom Quakers) said in unison:

"We are gathered to remember these 9000 souls who lived and died in Epsom – to
remember them and to make representations that they might have dignity and rest in their death.

To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose on earth. A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted. A time to heal, a time to break down and a time to build up.

We affirm our mutual commitment to honour the residents of Horton Cemetery and to work for their memorialisation. Amen."

Finally a trumpet solo 'Marking the Unmarked' – was performed by its composer **Erin Symonds**.

The gathering then followed Scots Piper **Bob Ash** to the former Horton Chapel where a Memorial Garden of the ceramic flowers was unveiled. The audience was addressed by Patron of The Friends of Horton Cemetery, **Baroness Sheila Hollins**, who once worked in the St Ebbas Hospital in Hook Road, Epsom. Dr Harris concluded speeches with an overview of the project and its significance and meaning.

'In Memoriam' a film created by Cameron Cook, Jack Daly and Mica Schlosser of Kings College simply rolled the 9000 names to suitable music. The audience was spellbound.

Company Concentric performed a dance 'Garden Unlocked' and led the audience to the Memorial Garden unveiling. This involved the planting of final flowers within the Forget Me Not installation by **Sue Littleboy** planting for James

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Poppelwell (great grandad, 1867-1914, d.Long Grove, grave b977); **Nari Fairbanks** (by proxy as resident in NT, Australia) – planting for Charles Holdgate (great, great, great uncle, 1854-1932, d. Long Grove, grave 1105a); **Iveta Goddard** – creator of the ceramic flowers used in the memorial garden and **Lauren** of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

Joining the 200-odd strong audience beside Horton Cemetery were Liberal Democrat PPC **Helen Maguire**, Chair of Epsom and Ewell Labour Party **Mark Todd** and **Gina Miller** the True and Fair Party PPC for the constituency. And as ever on her push-bike, Cllr. **Alison Kelly** (LibDem Stamford) and **Janice Baker** a leader of the local Green Party. Two Residents Association Councillors appeared including Cllr Phil Neale (Cuddington Ward) and another.

Lease reprieve for Langley Village Hall

30 December 2023



Langley Vale Village Hall was under the threat of closure but due to the hard work of the Langley Vale Village Hall Association and local residents a new 10 year lease has been negotiated.

The Hall, situated at 47 Rosebery Rd, Epsom, is the heart of community life in the somewhat otherwise isolated housing estate over the Downs. The freeholder of the hall is THE GUILDFORD DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE, a company limited by guarantee and not-for-profit.

Nevertheless, it is reported to have been been a trying and difficult year dealing with the lease renewal.

Sharon Watkinson, a long standing resident of Langley Vale, witnessed the signatures of the trustees of the Association on the new lease.

The new lease includes a guaranteed option to add a further 5 years to take the Hall safely through to 2038.

The renewal allows the Association to apply for grants for the Village Hall for some much-needed maintenance works and possible eco friendly upgrades to the heating and also the windows.

The Hall was the venue for a highly successful Kings Coronation Street Party, "the best party the Village has seen" said Sean Porter, Chairman of the Langley Vale Village Hall Association.

You are invited to commemorate the 9000 souls in Epsom's forgotten cemetery

30 December 2023



9000 patients of Epsom's cluster of now closed psychiatric hospitals were buried between 1899 and 1955 in a now abandoned Cemetery. The Friends of Horton Cemetery are writing their life stories and seeking to reclaim the five neglected acres from a property speculator.

The **Horton Cemetery** is located between Horton Lane and Hook Road, **Epsom**.

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On **10th October 2023** from 1.00pm The **Mayor Cllr Robert Geleit** (Labour Court Ward) and Mayoress of **Epsom and Ewell** will lead councillors, Aldermen of the Borough and the public in commemorating the lives of the 9000.

Baroness Sheila Hollins, a Patron of the Friends of Horton Cemetery will be in attendance and Alderman **Alan Carlson** will address the gathering. **St Josephs Primary** School pupils will sing and others will recite poetry. A "committal prayer" will be spoken on behalf of faith leaders of Epsom and Ewell. The ceremony will end with a Scots Piper leading the gathering to the former Horton Chapel that is now the Horton Arts Centre in Haven Way.

This venue will be host to further performances and speeches and the opening of a **Memorial Garden** in tribute to the 9000.

900 ceramic flowers painted by many people across the Borough over the last year will be planted.

This is the culmination of a year long project of the Friends of Horton Cemetery known as "**Out of Sight, Out of Mind**", led by the charity's history consultant, **Dr Alana Harris**, local resident and Reader in Modern British Social, Cultural and Gender History at **Kings College**. The Project is supported by **Historic England**.

Lionel Blackman, founder and director of The Friends of Horton Cemetery, said "All are welcome to this significant event taking place on **World Mental Health Day**. Demonstrating widespread public support for the return of the Horton Cemetery for the public and relatives of the deceased, is essential in correcting an unconscionable decision of the NHS in 1983 to sell the land to a property speculator".

If you intend to attend the event you are requested to complete this simple online RSVP form.

If you are attending you should read the advice of The Friends of Horton Cemetery on the ground conditions and lengths of walks involved. Click HERE.

Related reports:

Friends of Horton Cemetery workshop

Another Horton Cemetery Life Story

Grace Jones – Horton Cemetery Stories

Emily Elizabeth Campbell – Horton Cemetery Stories

Bringing to life the dead in Epsom's forgotten cemetery – Historic England awards local charity.

Council: Horton CPO debate shelved

Befriend the aged

30 December 2023



Loneliness is something that people of all ages can feel, but it is older people who perhaps feel this more acutely. Our **Volunteer Befrienders** visit an older person on a regular basis to offer a supportive and reliable relationship to our clients who may be socially isolated to provide companionship and support.

If you have an hour or two a week to spare, it would be great if you could consider becoming a Volunteer Befriender for **Age Concern Epsom and Ewell**. No specific qualifications are required, just good listening skills, reliability, an interest in older people and a sense of humour.

We will ensure you receive the necessary training before you start your befriending journey and will provide ongoing support. If you would like to know more, please contact Jane Hodgson, Volunteer Co-ordinator on jane.hodgson@ageconcernepsom.org.uk or by telephone on 01372 732456.

Epsom Scouts Summer Swiss adventures

30 December 2023

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This summer was packed with Scouts travelling on International Expeditions and trips and Surrey Scouts joined in on the fun. Scouts from 3rd Epsom & 8th/14th Epsom joined 700 other young people from across Surrey to have their own summer adventure.

The Scouts attended Surrey's Kix. Challenging themselves to take part activities over a week at Kandersteg International Scout Centre (KISC), Kandersteg, Switzerland.

This year sees the centenary of KISC, where at the beginning on August, saw Dignatories from Switzerland and members of WOSM (World Scout Scout Movement) and members of the Commissioner team from UK Scouting take part in the festivities.

While Surrey Scouts were on site, they met Scouts from Australia, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Israel, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal and other parts of the UK.

Thirteen coaches set off from Cobham Services (thanks to them for accommodating their departure and return). Apart from the UK contingent visiting south Korea for the World Scout Jamboree, this expedition was the largest contingent of Scouts from the UK visiting overseas this year.

While in Switzerland, Scouts Walked high into the Mountains with our trained (and KISC trained) Mountain walkers, rafted from Thun to Bern (as well as getting to visit Thun & Bern), went high into the trees as part of a High Rope course in Interlaken (as well as getting to visit Interlaken).

All Troops also helped out on site and got to visit the local area. Troops also chose a Troop day, where some Scouts went up the Schithorn (the one in the Bond movie), Jungfrau, Rothorn (via a steam ship and train), visited the Thermal pools in Brigerbad, Tobogganning at Lake Oeschinen, Zip Wire and Trotti bikes in Grindelwald amongst other things.

Ian MacQueen Expedition leader said "KIX 2023 took two years to plan with and aim to give 700 Scouts and leaders the opportunity to try new activities, make new friends and learn skills for life. I think it is safe to say we achieved our aim and more. My thanks to the staff and leaders who made the event a success. We will now start to plan KIX 2026"

Owen a Scout from 1st Nork said "My favourite thing about KIX was the river rafting and being able to invade all the other boats".

Caramay a Scout from 3rd Epsom said "My favourite bit of the week was the trip to the Thermal baths because it gave an opportunity to rest during the active week".

Samuel a Scout from 3rd Epsom said The rafting was the best because the experience was enjoyable and the scenery was amazing."

Scouts are for Boys and Girls aged 10.5 to 14. Pre-pandemic youth membership was 479,000 (2020)
Up until the pandemic, The Scouts enjoyed a sustained period of growth, with total membership rising by nearly 200,000 between 2006 and 2020

2020 to 2021, youth membership fell from 480,083 to 362,752 – a 24.5% decline – and adult membership fell from 155,907 to 141,863. 2021 to 2022 membership growth is 362,668 to 421,852 – an increase of 16%

All genders, races and backgrounds are welcome at Scouts. Every week, it gives almost over a third of a million people aged 6-25 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.

Individuals are 15% less likely to suffer from mood swings and anxiety if you've been a Scout or Guide, according to a Cohort study by the University of Edinburgh and Glasgow, 2016.

Neil Wibberley

Related Reports:

Epsom scouts on Korean jamboree

Dutch scouts go English in Epsom & Ewell

Feelings for feline fosterers

30 December 2023

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

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771



Would you be able to provide a temporary home for a cat in need? **Cats Protection Epsom Ewell** and District branch has been helping local cats since 1988 and is in urgent need of volunteer indoor fosterers.

They are looking for people who can provide temporary foster care in their own homes for cats like Kelly. Kelly was handed over to Cats Protection when her owner could no longer care for her.

Volunteering to foster a cat can be hugely rewarding; all you need is time, a safe space, and a love of cats. As a fosterer, you would be taking care of a cat in need until they find them their “forever” home.

Cats Protection will provide you with full training, to enhance your skills and knowledge and will cover the cost of equipment, food, and vet bills.

Current volunteer fosterer Helen says “I love the company of cats and by fostering I get to help lots of cats. Of course, I get attached to each cat I foster, but I can then help another cat find their new home. There are so many cats which need our help.”

Why become a fosterer?

It is a wonderful and rewarding experience.
It provides the opportunity of having the company of cats in your home, without the responsibility of ownership or expense.
It means that you can take time out e.g., to accommodate planned breaks.

They are looking for people who:

Can provide a safe, secure, indoor environment with sufficient space to allow the cat to eat, sleep and play.

Have the time to feed, groom, play and clean the bedding and equipment.

Own their own home or have permission from the landlord for a pet and are 18 years or older.

Cats Protection Epsom Ewell and District branch is run by a small team of dedicated, cat-loving volunteers, all of whom are passionate about improving the lives of cats and kittens in Epsom, Ewell, and the surrounding area.

They work hard to find loving new homes for local cats in our care, offer support and help with the cost of neutering, provide advice on lost and found cats, as well arranging education / welfare talks within the Epsom and Ewell area.

They also have a charity shop in Banstead High Street.

To find out more about becoming a fosterer you can email volunteering@epsom.cats.org.uk

To find out more about all the work they see https://www.cats.org.uk/epsom

Cats Protection’s Epsom Ewell and District branch is part of a national network of 256 volunteer-run branches and 30 centres that together help over 166,000 cats and kittens each year.

Epsom scouts on Korean jamboree

30 December 2023



Scouts from across Surrey, including Epsom and Ewell, arrived in South Korea for the 25th World Scout Jamboree being held from August 1st – 12th 2023. The Jamboree is a two-week event holding significant historical value as the first Jamboree dates back to 1920. Scouts from 150 countries across the globe come together once every four years to promote unity, community and togetherness.

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This year the event is hosted in Gunsan-si, South Korea and it is the second time in the country as the 17th World Scout Jamboree was held in the country back in 1991. Festivities kicked off from August 1st and will end on the 12th. During this time, young scouts will bask in skill development, learn new skills, experience new cultures, and make international bonds with fellow scouts who may not share the same mother tongue but hold the same values as one another.

Those heading to the Jamboree will also have the amazing opportunity of exploring Seoul for three days and also embark on the popular Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) tour – where they will see the original demarcation line between North Korea and South Korea.

Scouts from Surrey and 5,000 other members across the UK, have joined over 40,000 scouts from almost every country in the world this year. Many Scouts spend years looking forward to this event as only Scouts ages 14- to 17 are eligible to apply for the Jamboree. Participants are selected two years ahead of the event so the Scouts can focus on their fundraising skills to fund their trip. Adults are also entitled to join the Jamboree as scoutmasters or event staff.

The Jamboree is a one in a lifetime opportunity for young scouts. These young people do not only gain practical skills but also make bonds for life, connected by one thing – Scouting.

As has been widely reported in the national media a heat-wave disrupted the Jamboree but still Epsom Scouts feel positive about the experience:

Ben, from **Epsom & Ewell district**, said: “Although the event was cut short I feel incredibly lucky that I got to experience a camp of that scale with that amount of diversity and culture and even though I am gutted the Jamboree experience is over I think the skills, memories and friends we have all gained from this once of a lifetime experience will stay with us forever.”

Chief Scout **Bear Grylls** said: *‘Scouts from all corners of the UK are travelling over 12 hours to South Korea for the 25th World Scouts Jamboree. This year five thousand talented young people from the UK and 40 thousand from over 150 countries across the globe will come together to take on new adventures, make lifelong friendships and experience this once in a life time opportunity. This year is extra special, as it will mark the 100th anniversary of the Korean Scout, a milestone we will all be able to celebrate together at the 2023 World Jamboree.*

‘The theme of the Jamboree this year is to “Draw your Dream”, representing our willingness to accept young people’s ideas and opinions, and create an opportunity for them to make their Jamboree dreams come true.

I’m so proud to be a part of a movement that puts young people first by helping almost half a million people develop skills for life.”

Neil Wibberley

Reviving nature by the M25 in Leatherhead

30 December 2023



A £2.8million grant has been awarded to a wildlife charity as it aims to fulfil its founder’s last wishes.
The **Wildlife Aid Foundation**, based in Leatherhead, was founded 40 years ago by **Simon Cowell**.

The money, which **Surrey County Council**’s cabinet approved today (Tuesday 25th July) will be used to build a community hub for hosting school, college and community groups, as well as family sessions and talks. The £2.8m represents just less than a quarter of the project cost, with the remainder being raised by the charity.

The Wildlife SOS star, who was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2022, launched a Simon’s Last Wish appeal to help the charity after his death.

Documents for the cabinet meeting, which made the decision on awarding the funding as part of the Your Fund Surrey money that community projects can bid for, say the project has the “potential to have a long-lasting positive impact on the environment and wildlife in Surrey”.

A planned wildlife centre would restore land bordered by the M25 and the River Mole, and give the charity a future rescuing and rehabilitating animals in Surrey.

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The Wildlife area between River Mole and clockwise carriageway of M25

Mr Cowell said the charity had got far bigger than he ever thought it would when he founded it 40 years ago and praised the 400 volunteers at the charity.

He told the LDRS earlier in the year: “They just do an amazing job, and without them we would not be here. It’s as simple as that.”

On his cancer diagnosis, Mr Cowell said he was in “total denial of the whole thing”. He said: “We all think we won’t get it, and when you do get cancer, you’ve got two choices. You sit in the corner and sulk, or you just ignore it and get on with it while you can. So I’ve done that, basically.”

Emily Coady-Stemp LDRS

Epsom and Ewell Times adds:

After the grant was announced Simon Cowell said: “It’s an astonishing fact that a third of Surrey’s biodiversity is either locally extinct or heading that way. The power of the Wildlife Aid Centre shows that, by all of us working together, we will be able to change this. We will inspire visitors to carry out regular, small actions which will have significant, positive impact on the environment. And by all of us doing it, our joint strength is enormous.

This amazing funding means we can finish creating the habitats and build a visitor centre that will welcome everyone. I am thrilled that Your Fund Surrey is supporting the Wildlife Aid Centre; together we will create a replicable movement for environmental good that is driven by our communities.”

Surrey County Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety Councillor **Denise Turner-Stewart** said: “I would like to congratulate the Wildlife Aid Foundation who have been successful in their application to Your Fund Surrey’s Community Project Fund.

“This is fantastic news for the Wildlife Aid Foundation and indeed for Surrey’s residents. This is a truly ambitious and inspiring community legacy project. The new centre aligns with our ambition to promote a greener future in Surrey, to help restore and protect the future of the county’s natural environment and encourage nature and wildlife to thrive. It will also offer huge benefit, opening the doors for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn more about wildlife conservation.”

A £2.9m award given to Guildford’s Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in June saw the total amount of money given out from the pot reach £10m since its launch in November 2020.

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The Wildlife Aid Foundation is a charity dedicated to the rescue, care and rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned animals. Based in Leatherhead, Surrey, UK, the centre operates Surrey County's only wildlife hospital (one of the three largest such hospitals in the UK) and maintains a referral service for wildlife hospitals throughout Europe. The organisation also carries out environmental activist and educational roles. Wildlife Aid has attracted media attention for its rescues of photogenic wild animals like young foxes and baby badgers; Animal Planet's TV program *Wildlife SOS* chronicles the activities of Wildlife Aid volunteers as they rescue imperiled animals

Orphans by mental ill-health and war

30 December 2023



Another tragic life that ended in Epsom and a burial in Europe's largest and now abandoned asylum cemetery. The **Friends of Horton Cemetery**'s research project is bringing back to life the lives of the 9000 patients.

Kate Bailey née Cheer was born in 1882 in Abingdon, Berkshire to a farming family. Unfortunately, there is little cheer in this family's story, which makes for a very sad read, tinged with a little mystery as to why her life unravelled.

It is most sad because her death in 1914 left two very young children who were then to lose their father later that year at Ypres, fighting in WW1.

Theresa Kenefick-Conway tells the full story on the website www.hortoncemetery.org

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Epsom medics sky-dive for babies

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A team of obstetricians, gynaecologists, neonatologists and nurses who work at **Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust** have raised nearly £10,000 for **Bliss**, the UK's leading charity for babies born premature or sick.

Radhika Viswanatha, Nina Underwood, Ramesh Ganapathy, Demetri Panayi, Salim Yasin, Charlotte Pearse, Vicky Minns, Cristina Arias-Rey and Sharon Young took part in a skydive on 28 May 2023 at the Old Sarum Park in Salisbury.

1 in every 7 babies born in the UK will need specialist care and the group have a special link to Bliss, as they each look after women and their babies during pregnancy and delivery and beyond at Epsom and St Helier Hospital.

Some of the babies they deliver are more vulnerable than others, so are looked after by the hospital's neonatal team.

Demetri Panayi said: "Our charity skydive was born out of moments of madness, midlife crises and irrational personal desire! But it gave us the opportunity to raise money for a cause close to our hearts, and to our patients."

Donations to their skydive are helping Bliss to drive improvements in neonatal care, to ensure that the needs of babies are at the heart of policy and planning for the future, and to provide information and support to all families with a baby born premature or sick.

Richard Moody, Director of Fundraising at Bliss, said: "We are so grateful for the exceptional fundraising efforts of Demetri and his colleagues. Each donation to Bliss is going towards our mission of helping all babies born premature or sick in the UK have the best chance of survival and quality of life.

"This is a great example of how a perinatal team can come together to raise awareness and money for Bliss."

You can find more information and donate here: https://www.justgiving.com/page/skydive2023

Molly Gorman

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2700 cubs and brownies came to Epsom

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Cub Scouts and Brownies from **Epsom & Ewell districts** joined over 2700 Cub Scouts, Brownies and leaders from across Surrey for a day of fun and adventure at an activity day called SCRAM at **Hook Arena, Epsom** on Saturday 17th June 2023.

Cub Scouts and Brownies were able to try many new and large activities that cannot be organised in groups or districts as well as being able to mix with Cubs and Brownies from other districts.

Over 200 activities were on offer including pedal karts, high ropes, bungy trampolines, Assault course Wire, bungee running and zorbing as well as smaller activities like making popcorn, Grand Prix table game, firing water rockets and much more. As well as having fun and enjoying the activities on offer, many activities taught them #skills for life.

During the day, a number of local Mayors from around the County visited to see what was on offer as well as **CJ Ledger**, Deputy UK Commissioner (Support) who spoke to the young people during the day as well as seeing what Surrey Scouting had to offer.

Oliver a Cub Scout from Surrey aged 9 said “I liked the inflatable that you had to jump over so you don’t get knocked over, I think it helped that we played a similar game at Cubs which helps with co-ordination skills”

Lauren a Cub Scout from Surrey aged 10 said “I liked the bungy trampoline because it was fun and exciting”.

Max a Cub Scout from Surrey aged 8 said “I liked the zorbing because it was fun and I haven’t done it before”.

Sarah a Brownie from Surrey aged 8 said “I liked the activities and the excitement of the day, there was lots to do”.

Ali Tickett, Organiser of SCRAM for Surrey said “What a day! 2,700 cubs, Brownies and leaders came to Hook Road Arena to celebrate just how brilliant being a Cub Scout and Brownie is! The cubs and Brownies had an incredible range of activities to try including a cave bus, metal detecting, pancake making as well as a high ropes course and many, many more. Some activities were just for fun and other were a real challenge all supporting the fact that Scouting helps young people develop Skills For Life.”

Related reports:

Epsom Beavers away in Surrey woods

Dutch scouts go English in Epsom & Ewell

Cub Scouts are for Boys and Girls aged 8 to 10.5
Brownies are for girls aged 7- 9
Brownies are part of Girlguiding UK
Pre-pandemic youth membership was 479,000 (2020)
Up until the pandemic, The Scouts enjoyed a sustained period of growth, with total membership rising by nearly 200,000 between 2006 and 2020
2020 to 2021, youth membership fell from 480,083 to 362,752 – a 24.5% decline – and adult membership fell from 155,907 to 141,863
2021 to 2022 membership growth is 362,668 to 421,852 – an increase of 16%

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