



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

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](https://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](http://www.handmadeinepsomandewell.co.uk) or follow @Handmadeinepsomandewell on Facebook and Instagram. Enquiries can be sent to [handmadeinepsomandewell@gmail.com](mailto: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

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

---

## Epsom charity backs Ukrainian wheelchair athletes in world championship

*Surrey Stands with Ukraine*, the Epsom-based humanitarian charity operating under Harrop HR Missions Ltd (Registered Charity No. 1117155), is proudly sponsoring the Ukrainian Pickleball Team at the prestigious **English Open Pickleball Tournament** in Telford this summer, taking place from **6-10 August 2025**.

This powerful gesture of international solidarity comes with a particular emphasis on supporting Ukrainian **wheelchair athletes**—many of whom suffered life-changing injuries during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Founded in early 2022 by Ukrainian and British friends, Surrey Stands with Ukraine has grown to become one of the UK's most active grassroots support groups for Ukraine. To date, the charity has delivered more than **£4 million** in humanitarian aid, including over **10,000 mobility aids**, **40+ tonnes of medical supplies**, and **140 aid vehicles** to those in need across the



country. It also funds Ukrainian NGOs and institutions, with a strong focus over the past 18 months on **rehabilitation from physical and psychological trauma**.

Now, that mission expands to the world of sport.

The Ukrainian Pickleball Team arriving in Telford includes several inspirational wheelchair athletes whose journey into sport has been shaped by wartime adversity. For many, pickleball has become a vital outlet for physical recovery, psychological strength, and renewed purpose. Their participation in this international tournament is seen as a powerful symbol of national resilience—and comes at a time when Ukraine's sporting community continues to suffer, having lost **487 athletes** since the full-scale Russian invasion began.

"We are honoured to sponsor the Ukrainian Pickleball Team and shine a light on these remarkable athletes," said a spokesperson for Surrey Stands with Ukraine. "Their participation in the English Open is a testament to their courage and a reminder of the human toll of the war. They represent not only Ukraine, but also the enduring spirit of all those affected."

As part of its sponsorship, Surrey Stands with Ukraine is covering travel and accessible accommodation costs to ensure that all team members, especially the wheelchair athletes, can compete on equal terms.

The **English Open Pickleball Tournament**, held annually in Telford, is one of Europe's premier events in the sport. This year's edition promises to be especially meaningful with the Ukrainian team's presence on court.

---

## Event Details

- **What:** English Open Pickleball Tournament
- **When:** 6-10 August 2025
- **Where:** Telford, United Kingdom
- **Team:** Ukrainian Pickleball Team, including wheelchair athletes, sponsored by Surrey Stands with Ukraine

---

## About Surrey Stands with Ukraine

Operating under Harrop HR Missions Ltd, Surrey Stands with Ukraine is a registered UK charity supporting civilians, hospitals, and trauma centres across Ukraine. Founded in February 2022, it continues to deliver aid, funding, and solidarity from the UK to those most affected by the war.

### Contact

Email: [surreystandswithukraine@gmail.com](mailto:surreystandswithukraine@gmail.com)

Website: [surreystandswithukraine.org.uk](https://surreystandswithukraine.org.uk)

Phone: +44 7920 008048

### Donate

Support the charity's Trauma Rehabilitation Fundraiser at <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/trauma-rehabilitation-pack>

---

## Meet Two of the Athletes: Stories of Courage

**Oleksandr, 30, from Mykolaiv**, was serving as a frontline medic when a Russian shell strike in 2023 caused devastating injuries to both his legs. After undergoing multiple surgeries and losing mobility, Oleksandr found himself struggling with isolation and trauma. Introduced to pickleball during rehabilitation in Lviv, he quickly found strength in sport and camaraderie. "Pickleball gave me a reason to get out of bed again," he says. Now a wheelchair athlete, he's competing internationally for the first time in Telford.

**Natalia, 27, from Dnipro**, was wounded in a missile attack while volunteering at a humanitarian centre in early 2022. With long months of rehabilitation behind her, she turned to pickleball as a low-impact sport that helped her regain balance and confidence. As one of the few female wheelchair players on the Ukrainian team, she says the sport has become a symbol of her resilience. "We lost so much—but we didn't lose our spirit," she says.



## Volunteers Tackle Plastic Waste in Epsom Town Centre

Plastic waste is a global menace that often ends up closer to home than we think. According to recent studies, the average person could be consuming up to five grams of microplastic every week — equivalent to the weight of a credit card — through food and drink. With plastic present in around 70% of consumer products, and evidence of its harmful impact on marine life and ecosystems, managing our plastic footprint is becoming increasingly urgent.

On Sunday 29 June, local volunteers from ASEZ WAO UK, a community group with a focus on sustainability, staged a “Rethink Plastic” event around Epsom’s Clock Tower. Around 40 volunteers, joined by members of the public, took part in a litter pick, public awareness presentations, and an upcycling workshop to highlight practical solutions to plastic waste.

Their efforts drew the support of the Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor **Robert Leach** (RA Nonsuch), who questioned the scale of modern packaging waste and praised the volunteers for helping to keep the town clean. Councillor **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley Vale) also lent his backing, commenting, “Wouldn’t it be great if people just used the bins?”

In total, volunteers collected around 35 bags of rubbish from the town centre. Under a pop-up gazebo, families were invited to transform discarded plastic bottles into creative items such as phone stands, piggy banks, toy cars and flowers — demonstrating how waste materials can be given a second life. A young mother taking part with her daughter described the workshop as “really good, really fun — a great idea.”

Upcycling — the process of turning unwanted materials into something of higher value — is gaining traction as one response to the growing problem of plastic pollution. However, recycling still faces challenges. For example, items such as greasy pizza boxes and disposable coffee cups often cannot be recycled through normal household collections, highlighting the importance of checking local guidelines to avoid contaminating recyclable waste streams.

Littering and plastic waste remain significant problems in the UK. The charity Keep Britain Tidy estimates that local councils spend nearly £700 million each year cleaning up litter, much of which includes plastic packaging. With plastic pollution known to damage habitats and harm wildlife, local action is seen as a vital part of tackling a wider environmental crisis.

ASEZ WAO UK says it plans to continue its local campaigns and is encouraging residents to get involved in future events. More information about their activities is available online or from volunteers active in the community.

For those inspired to act, it’s a timely reminder: our throwaway habits may have far-reaching consequences — and tackling them starts on our own doorstep.

Image: Cllrs McCormick and Leach speak out against plastic waste

## Great Get Together Got its Act together.

Sunday, St Joseph’s Church in Epsom was buzzing with laughter, music, and the spirit of community as residents gathered for The Great Get Together — a free, vibrant family event co-hosted by Good Company and Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network.

The event was officially opened by the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Robert Leach, and warmly supported by local MP Helen Maguire, whose presence reflected the significance of the day for the whole community.

From the moment the gates opened, visitors were welcomed into an afternoon packed with activities, entertainment, and delicious food — all completely free of charge. Families from across the borough came together to celebrate unity, diversity, and neighbourly spirit.

Children and adults alike were kept smiling with a variety of games and creative stations. Highlights included crazy golf, football, face painting, and colourful arts and crafts, all made possible by a team of tireless volunteers.

The entertainment line-up was a true showcase of local talent. Epsom’s own Ukrainian Renaissance Choir moved the crowd with their stirring songs, while Freedom Pulse Brass brought rhythm and energy. Helin Konyar, a graduate of Laine Theatre Arts, delighted both children and adults with her joyful Disney song set.

No community celebration is complete without good food — and this one delivered. Lezzet Kitchen, Turkish cooks, served up their



famous filled flatbreads, freshly made on-site, alongside Noah's pudding made by the Chickpea Project, thought to be the oldest dessert in the world.

One attendee summed up the day perfectly: "Today was truly unforgettable, filled with love, warmth, and a deep sense of safety. It was inspiring to see so many vulnerable refugee families brought together with the wonderful Epsom community."

Thanks to the dedication of countless volunteers, The Great Get Together was a heart warming success.

Image: Epsom and Ewell Mayor Cllr Robert Leach (RA) and Helen Maguire MP at Epsom's Great Get Together

---

## Epsom and Ewell Youngsters Join Thousands for Day of Outdoor Adventure

*Over 2,000 Beaver Scouts and Rainbows take part in Surrey's Bazzaz event*

Young adventurers from Cuddington, Epsom, Stoneleigh, and Ewell were among more than 2,000 Beaver Scouts, Rainbows, and volunteers who gathered at Merrist Wood in Guildford last weekend for *Bazzaz* - Surrey's flagship activity day for 6- to 8-year-olds.

Held every three years, *Bazzaz* offers a rare opportunity for children to immerse themselves in over 100 action-packed activities, ranging from caving and rock climbing to tomahawk throwing, circus skills, go-karts and inflatable obstacle courses. The event aims to build confidence, teamwork, and resilience through fun and challenge.

Despite soaring temperatures, participants were well-prepared with sun hats, sunscreen and plenty of water. A midday highlight was an unexpected treat as the **Red Arrows flew overhead**, returning from the King's Birthday celebrations in London.

Feedback from the young participants was as bright as the weather:

"I had lots of fun and I liked the train ride," said Sam, aged 7, from Epsom.

"Caving was the best because it was challenging and I made a new friend," added Matthew, 7, from Guildford.

Emily, aged 5, from Woking, said: "It was awesome! I enjoyed climbing because I haven't tried that before."

Milly, 6, from Haslemere, shared: "I liked making my dad a Father's Day card."

And Noah, 7, from Banstead, summed it up simply: "I liked doing all the activities with my friends."

The event was supported by an army of adult volunteers, without whom such experiences would not be possible. Richard, a Beaver Scout leader from Surrey, said: "It was a brilliant day for everyone. Some activities were pure fun, others focused on building #SkillsForLife — all of them gave the children something special to take away."

### About Beavers and Rainbows

**Beaver Scouts** (ages 6-8) and **Rainbows** (ages 5-7) are part of the UK's long-established Scouting and Girlguiding organisations. Together, they offer thousands of children a safe and inclusive environment to learn through play, develop life skills, and enjoy the outdoors.

Nationally, the Scout Association offers over 200 different activities — from abseiling to coding — supported by more than 100,000 volunteers. But demand continues to outpace capacity, with nearly 30,000 young people currently on waiting lists across the UK.

To find out more about volunteering with Scouts in Surrey, visit [surrey-scouts.org.uk](https://surrey-scouts.org.uk)

---

## Epsom Joins National 'Great Get Together' Inspired by



## Jo Cox's Legacy of Unity

**A celebration of community spirit and shared humanity is coming to Epsom on Saturday as part of a nationwide initiative inspired by the late MP Jo Cox.**

Hosted by local charity *Good Company (Surrey)*, the free event—branded *The Great Get Together*—will take place in Epsom and promises an afternoon of food, music, games and family entertainment. The day will begin with a formal welcome from the Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor Robert Leach, accompanied by the Mayoress.

The event is one of hundreds taking place across the UK this weekend to honour the message of Jo Cox, the Labour MP for Batley and Spen who was murdered in 2016. Cox is remembered for her powerful maiden speech in Parliament, in which she said: *"We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us."* Her words have since become the cornerstone of an annual campaign celebrating unity and community cohesion.

In Epsom, the programme includes live performances from the Ukrainian Choir, a Disney singalong, and the Freedom Pulse Brass Band. Children will be kept busy with games, crafts, a treasure hunt, and even Crazy Golf. There will also be henna hand-painting and a showcase of artisan goods.

Jo Sherring, who leads the *Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network*, said the day is about bringing people together:

"Hosting a community event like *The Great Get Together* allows us to bring people from all walks of life together in a spirit of unity, friendship and shared humanity. It's an opportunity to celebrate our diversity, forge new connections, and show that Epsom is a place where everyone belongs."

Good Company (Surrey), the charity behind the event, also operates the Epsom & Ewell Food Bank, the local Refugee Network, and community pantries in Epsom and Banstead.

While the event is free to attend, organisers ask that attendees book tickets in advance via the QR code on promotional flyers or the charity's website, where a full afternoon timetable is also available.

The *Great Get Together* campaign is run by The Jo Cox Foundation and aims to encourage people across the UK to bridge divides and build stronger, more connected communities. The Foundation states: *"Change starts at the community level; we all have the power to make a difference."*

Further information about the national initiative can be found at:

□ <https://www.jocoxfoundation.org/our-work/stronger-communities/great-get-together/>

### Contact for local event:

Jo Sherring

Lead, Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network

□ 07849 631747

□ [jo@goodcompany.org.uk](mailto:jo@goodcompany.org.uk)

---

## Epsom Red Cross Volunteer honoured by King

A British Red Cross volunteer from Epsom who has spent 40 years with the organisation has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the King's Birthday Honours.

Jon Richards, 61, followed in his mum's footsteps as a volunteer with the British Red Cross and has worked across a number of different services during his four decades with the charity.

Jon enjoys helping individuals and families, having attended numerous callouts across the South East as well as helping at rest centres. This included an incident in 2014 when Jon volunteered for four days straight, supporting people caught up in severe flooding in London and Brighton, and in 2017, when he supported the response at Grenfell Tower.

Jon, who also met his wife through the British Red Cross, said: "It's a real honour to be given a British Empire Medal in the King's Birthday Honours for my time volunteering with the British Red Cross.

"We work hard to help people who face the most difficult challenges in life and I'm very proud to be recognised with this award."



Described as a modest and quiet man by his colleagues, Jon's knowledgeable, methodical, and calm approach builds trust with both service users and partner agencies. On one of his most recent callouts, Jon supported in a case of hoarding, where the member of the public would not allow firefighters or social services into their home, but felt comfortable allowing Jon in to discuss alternative accommodation options.

Jon added: "It's important to show kindness and compassion whenever you're carrying out volunteering duties and having met so many brilliant colleagues over the years at the British Red Cross, I know that everyone here will do everything they can to help those in need.

"Throughout the last 40 years, I've worked in so many different areas of the British Red Cross and had a chance to see how big an impact the work we do can have on communities."

British Red Cross Chief Executive Béatrice Butsana-Sita said: "Jon is an incredible ambassador for the British Red Cross and a fantastic example of the brilliant staff and volunteers that support our vital work.

"For 40 years he has been a huge figure in our Surrey services, giving up his time to support people when they need it most.

"I am delighted to see Jon rewarded for his work with a British Empire Medal in the King's Birthday Honours list and would like to congratulate him on this amazing achievement."

---

## 23 Epsom Dads take on Welsh mountains for charities

A group of 23 dads in their 40s and 50s from the Epsom area will take on their 2025 hike - the 'Carneddau to Coast' challenge across the rugged mountains of North Wales.

The Epsom Trailblazers are back for their fifth charity hike. On 14th June, the group will tackle 11 peaks, 30km and 1,700m of ascent in one day, all in aid of two amazing charities.

Established in 2016, the Trailblazers' charity hikes have raised over £55,000 in recent years, and this year's target is a massive £10,000 for their chosen charities - one local (Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People) and one national (The Brain Tumour Charity).

The bi-annual walking challenges plus many months of training routines have helped the Trailblazers become great friends as well as shaking off some excess kilos in the process.

According to four-times Trailblazer John Croome: "The Trailblazers have all been training really hard this year, hiking endless repeats of the Box Hill ascent every weekend in preparation for the Carneddau challenge and getting in shape any way we can.

"We think we are ready, and are really looking forward to the hike to raise much-needed funds for these great charities."

The Brain Tumour Charity is the largest dedicated funder of research into brain tumours globally, and has a special connection to the group, with a best friend of a Trailblazer currently undergoing treatment for a brain tumour. Supporting their work will help to save and improve the lives of everyone affected by a brain tumour.

The Trailblazers have also chosen to support the Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People as their local charity this year - the Surrey-based charity supports disabled people of all ages to maximise their independence and achieve their potential. Again, the group has a personal link with the charity with one of the Trailblazers working hard at the charity every day.

Firzana Khan, Community Fundraiser for The Brain Tumour Charity, said: "We're incredibly grateful to the Epsom Trailblazers for choosing to support The Brain Tumour Charity on their epic Carneddau to Coast challenge.

"Their determination, camaraderie and generosity are truly inspiring, especially as they walk in support of a close friend affected by a brain tumour. Every step they take helps us move closer to our goal of doubling survival and halving the harm that brain tumours cause. We're cheering them on every inch of the way!"

The Trailblazers 2025 challenge: <https://www.givewheel.com/fundraising/8095/trailblazers-2025-carneddau-to-coast/>

---





## Epsom Charity Celebrates Project Milestone with a BBC Radio Takeover

The Sunnybank Trust is celebrating a major milestone – five years of **Sunny Sessions**, its inclusive radio show dedicated to amplifying the voices of the learning disability community.

Founded during the lockdown by CEO **Dorothy Watson** and Futures Manager **Claire Dawson**, the show began with the goal of keeping the community connected during a difficult and isolating time. *Sunny Sessions* aimed to provide comfort, connection, and positivity through buzzing music, exercise segments, and relevant news updates.

**Dorothy Watson**, CEO of The Sunnybank Trust, said:

*“We are proud to be celebrating five years of Sunny Sessions. What started as a way to connect people has become a vibrant platform run by and for the learning disability community. Congratulations to Jon Andrews, our dedicated producer, and many thanks to Surrey Hills Community Radio for hosting our show.”*

To mark this milestone, The Sunnybank Trust is pleased to announce that the **BBC Breakfast Show** will host the anniversary celebration on **28 March 2025**, between **7 - 9 am** on **BBC Radio Surrey & Sussex**.

As part of the celebration, the show will feature an interview between **Emma Blackmore**, a Sunnybank reporter based in Bristol, and the consultants from **Understand Us**, a consultancy founded by The Sunnybank Trust in 2019.

**Understand Us** is a learning disability-led consultancy based in Epsom, offering services such as training, workshops, and audits to help businesses become more accessible to people with learning disabilities. For more information, visit [understandus.co.uk](http://understandus.co.uk).

During the interview, the consultants will share insights into their roles, discuss how businesses can benefit from Understand Us, and reflect on their favourite projects.

**James Cannon**, BBC Producer, said:

*“We are incredibly proud of the journey Sunny Sessions has taken over the past five years. This anniversary and the feature on BBC Breakfast provide an opportunity to share the voices and stories of the individuals who have been part of the show’s success. Our mission has always been to amplify these voices and promote inclusion, and we are excited to take this next step in reaching an even wider audience.”*

Today, *Sunny Sessions* is presented by **Jon Andrews**, who brings his passion and energy to the show as it continues to grow. The programme has expanded to cover a wide variety of topics, providing a platform for people to share their stories, engage in meaningful discussions, and raise awareness about issues that matter to them.

**Jon Andrews** said:

*“I’m incredibly proud of what we have achieved with the radio show and excited to see where the next five years will take us.”*

**The Sunnybank Trust**

Photo: **Jon Andrews from The Sunnybank Trust**, and **James Fieldus, a Sunnybank Reporter**. Photo by The Sunnybank Trust.

---

## Epsom and Ewell’s Record-Breaking Poppy Appeal

The **Royal British Legion’s** Epsom and Ewell branch has once again demonstrated the remarkable generosity of the local community, raising a record-breaking total of **£79,366.99** during the 2024 Poppy Appeal. This astounding figure, collected throughout the borough in November, marks an increase of **£16,000** from the previous year—an incredible achievement as collectors and supporters returned in full force after the pandemic.

Poppy Appeal Organiser **Amy Johnson**, alongside her dedicated deputies, coordinated an army of volunteers, young and old, who braved the autumn chill to collect donations across the **Ashley Centre, Sainsbury’s Kiln Lane, local schools, shops, businesses, and various poppy stands** throughout Epsom and Ewell. The generosity of local residents ensured that the borough, known for its strong community spirit, once again surpassed expectations.

A special note of thanks goes to the **Ashley Centre and Sainsbury’s Kiln Lane management teams**, whose continued support



provided vital collection points for this year's appeal.

Reflecting on the significance of the funds raised, **Barb Warwick, Chair of RBL Epsom and Ewell**, stated:

"As we sadly say farewell to the last of our WWII service men and women, our mission now is to ensure that the new generation of Armed Forces personnel and their families receive the support they need, no matter where or when they serve. We are secure in the knowledge that Epsom and Ewell, the smallest borough with the biggest heart, will rise to this challenge."

The Royal British Legion continues its vital work providing welfare and support to serving and former members of the Armed Forces and their families. Anyone in need of assistance, whether they have served in the past or are currently in the Armed Forces, is encouraged to reach out to **barb.warwick@virginmedia.com** for confidential support and guidance.

With the borough's unwavering dedication, Epsom and Ewell have once again shown their commitment to remembering and supporting those who have served. **Lest we forget.**