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

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Epsom Mental Health Week marks 20 years of local charity

25 September 2026



Epsom Mental Health Week will bring talks, exercise classes, creative activities and opportunities to meet others to venues across the town from Saturday 3 to Sunday 11 October.

The programme celebrates 20 years of Epsom charity Love Me Love My Mind. Working with the White House Wellness and Health Centre and other local organisations, it aims to make conversations about mental health welcoming and accessible to people of different ages and interests.

Events include a free children's art club, men's social walks on Epsom Downs, mindful colouring and tea, yoga and fitness classes, and talks on anxiety, burnout and domestic abuse. St Barnabas Church will host peer support sessions, an advice café and a performance by Epsom Male Voice Choir.

On Wednesday 7 October, Epsom Picturehouse will screen *Aftersun*, followed by a discussion of the film's themes of grief, memory and mental health. **Tickets must be booked** through the Picturehouse website.

The week's main gathering falls on **World Mental Health Day, Saturday 10 October**. A Wellness Day at Metropolis Epsom, 1 Derby Square, will run from 11am to 4pm, bringing together local support organisations and offering taster sessions. A free children's art and craft club will run there from 11am to 3pm.

Activities also take place at the White House Wellness and Health Centre in Waterloo Road, the Rainbow Leisure Centre in East Street and St Barnabas Church in Temple Road. The programme says events are free unless a listing states otherwise. Visitors should check individual booking details and contact the organiser about any accessibility requirements.

A further creative session for children aged seven and over is listed for Wednesday 28 October at Epsom and Ewell Family Centre, Riverview Road, West Ewell. Families can ask about that session on **01372 571178** or at **epsomewellfamilycentre@barnardos.org.uk**.

For the full programme and enquiries about Epsom Mental Health Week, contact Love Me Love My Mind at **info@lovemelovemymind.org.uk** or visit lovemelovemymind.org.uk.

Lionel Blackman

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Related reports

- Epsom's Love Me Love My Mind celebrates 20 years of community care — 27 July 2026. epsomandewelltimes.com
- Epsom & Ewell residents invited to share 'Messages of Hope' for World Suicide Prevention Day — 10 September 2026. epsomandewelltimes.com
- Epsom counselling service aims to make therapy more accessible — 16 June 2026. epsomandewelltimes.com
- Epsom's Love Me Love My Mind week of healing — the 2024 Mental Health Week programme. epsomandewelltimes.com
- Sue Bull – a special lady. An obituary — the story of Love Me Love My Mind's founder and the development of the annual week. a special lady. An obituary.

A year in the life of Epsom's Citizens Advice Bureau

25 September 2026

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Citizens Advice helps nearly 3,900 borough residents

Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell (CAEE) has published its Annual Report for 2025/26 following its annual general meeting.

During the year, the charity helped 3,861 people across the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, addressing 11,312 issues.

A team of more than 50 volunteers, supported by 16 paid members of staff, provides the skills and knowledge needed to solve problems, offer reassurance, create stability and help clients towards independent lives.

Lisa Davis, chief executive of Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell, said: “Behind each of these numbers is a real person: someone struggling with energy debts whilst managing serious health conditions, someone rebuilding their life after domestic abuse, or someone working through decades of accumulated hardship.

“It is a privilege to stand alongside people at their most vulnerable and help them find a way forward.”

Linda’s story

Linda approached CAEE with a large energy debt after being unable to communicate with her energy company to resolve the problem.

She had experienced several health conditions over recent years, including cancer, diabetes, a stroke and mobility difficulties. These had affected her mental health and ability to work, leaving her feeling overwhelmed.

A CAEE energy adviser clarified the situation with the energy company and advised Linda on managing her Unreal finances and minimising her energy use. Linda now feels better able to cope in the future.

Fazia’s story

Fazia moved to the UK with her husband on a spousal visa with no recourse to public funds.

After experiencing domestic abuse, her husband was removed from the home by the police and she separated from him.

Fazia instructed a firm of solicitors to apply on her behalf for an independent visa and access to public funds under the Migrant Victims of Domestic Abuse concession. After receiving no response from the solicitors despite contacting them repeatedly, she approached CAEE.

The charity applied on her behalf and her application was resolved within a week.

An adviser also helped Fazia claim benefits, as she had been without funds for many months, and provided foodbank and Household Support Fund vouchers until she received her first Universal Credit payment.

Fazia is now working towards independently supporting herself and her child.

Clive’s story

Clive’s story is one of many missed opportunities to prevent someone falling into serious debt.

After losing his wife a few years ago, Clive struggled with bereavement and lost his well-paid job. While trying to provide for his children, he began accumulating credit card debt.

His life became harder still when he was the victim of a hit-and-run road accident and lost his son to Covid-19.

By the time he approached CAEE, he was living in his daughter’s flat with several significant health conditions, poor mental health and debts totalling more than £40,000 across nine financial institutions.

More than 12 months later, CAEE is still working with Clive to alleviate his circumstances. With considerable perseverance by both parties, most of his debt has been written off and Clive is on track to live an independent life, financially in control and debt-free.

Lisa Davis added: “CAEE gives people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are and whatever the problem.”

Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell

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Epsom Scouts joined Swiss adventure

25 September 2026



More than 700 Scouts and volunteers from Surrey, including Scouts from 3rd Epsom & 8th/14th Epsom (Air Scouts), have returned from an unforgettable international adventure in Switzerland as part of **KIX 2026 (Kandersteg International eXpedition)**.

The expedition marked a significant milestone, celebrating **25 years of Surrey Scouts' modern-era expeditions to Kandersteg International Scout Centre (KISC)**, one of the world's premier Scout destinations. The 2026 contingent was the largest group of Scouts to leave the UK this year.

The first Surrey expedition to Kandersteg took place in 2001 under the name **SWaK (Scouts with Altitude – Kandersteg)**. Since then, Surrey Scouts have returned through a series of major international expeditions, including Expand 2004, K9 in 2009, and KIX events in 2014, 2018, 2023 and now 2026.

During their week in the Swiss Alps, Scouts from 3rd Epsom & 8th/14th Epsom (Air Scouts), joined fellow participants from across Surrey to experience a programme packed with adventure, challenge and international friendship. While at Kandersteg, they met Scouts from Canada, Portugal, Spain, Australia, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany and other parts of the United Kingdom, demonstrating the truly global nature of Scouting.

Participants travelled to Switzerland aboard twelve coaches provided by Baker Dolphin, departing from Cobham Services.

The expedition offered a wide range of activities, including hiking in the mountains led by trained and KISC-qualified mountain walkers, rafting on the river Aare from Thun to Bern, and high ropes adventures in Interlaken. Scouts also had opportunities to explore local towns and communities, gaining first-hand experience of Swiss culture and life.

Each troop selected a special activity day tailored to their interests. Activities included visiting the Schilthorn, famous for its appearance in a James Bond film; exploring the Jungfrau region; travelling to the Rothorn by steamship and mountain railway; relaxing in the thermal pools at Brigerbad; tobogganing at Lake Oeschinensee; visiting the St Beatus Caves; and climbing in Winteregg.

In addition, the Young Leader (YL) Squad helped KIX in helping to protect local biodiversity through a partnership with the Forestry Commission. KIX has partnered with Flora from the local Forestry team to contribute to the protection and preservation of biodiversity in the Kandertal area.

The Kandertal is one of the regions in the Canton of Bern with the highest concentration of reptiles. Eight of Switzerland's sixteen native reptile species can be found there, including the sand lizard, grass snake, and the rare smooth snake. Many of these species are under threat, and some are critically endangered, largely due to the loss of important habitats. These habitats include sun-exposed features such as rock piles, dry stone walls, wood piles, and brush piles, as well as natural riverbanks, forest edges, and rocky areas. As part of the Kandertal Reptile Conservation Project, valuable habitats have been surveyed and documented to support their long-term preservation. Working alongside Flora and Luke, the YL Squad helped to maintain and enhance these habitats by clearing brush, creating piles of branches and stones, and improving existing habitat structures. These practical conservation activities make an important contribution to protecting local biodiversity and supporting the survival of the area's native reptile species.

Mel Wedlock, Young Leader Development Team Lead for Surrey Scouts, said: "Supporting projects like this is a fantastic opportunity for the Surrey Young Leader Squad as part of their service project with KIX. The Squad are taking part in the expedition as members of the wider staff team, giving them valuable experience of supporting and delivering a large-scale international event for young people. Alongside developing their leadership skills, they have been able to make a meaningful contribution to an important local conservation project. It has been great to work with KIX, supporting the local community and helping to protect the natural environment in the Kandertal region."

A particularly memorable moment came thanks to local shop owner **Patrick Straubinger**, who gifted every Scout and volunteer a commemorative Swiss pin badge in recognition of Surrey Scouts' 25-year connection with Kandersteg. Patrick has welcomed generations of Surrey Scouts, alongside visitors from Scout groups across the world, throughout that time.

The expedition also attracted local media attention, with Surrey Scouts appearing on the front page of the **Frutigländer**, Kandersteg's local newspaper, as well as featuring in a detailed report inside.

Supporting an event of this scale required an enormous effort from volunteers. Over the course of the week, the catering team provided enough evening meals to feed one person for more than 13 years. The contingent consumed more than **1,322kg of fruit and vegetables**, **3,500 wraps**, **195kg of cheese**, **21,456 slices of salami**, **489kg of meat**, **1,548 schnitzels**, and **255kg of breakfast cereal**.

Meanwhile, the high walks team supported participants in covering more than **19,000 kilometres** of mountain trails and climbing a combined elevation gain of nearly **650 kilometres**. The activities team also coordinated more than **500 cable car journeys** and **400 swimming pool visits** during the expedition.

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As the Scouts returned home, they brought with them new friendships, increased confidence, valuable #skillsforlife and memories that will last a lifetime. Showing Scouting has a #placetobelong.

Ian MacQueen Expedition leader said “KIX 2026 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 2029”

Scouts were asked “What were you expecting from the trip before you came?”

A Scout from 3rd Epsom said “I was expecting to be tired from hikes and I was looking forward to the activities, thought it was always cold and there would be lots of always hiking. I also thought it was going to be like a school trip and was expecting to be fun but wet.”

A Scout from 8th/14th Epsom said “I was expecting adventures, and to meet other Scouts from other countries.”

Scouts were then asked “What’s been the highlight of the week?”

A Scout from 3rd Epsom said “I enjoyed the rafting and going to Brigerbad and it was nothing like a school trip it was much more fun (different to expectations), I got to know lots of Scouts and doing all the different activities including, high ropes. It was a really nice place in general and I want to come again as everything was really fun.”

A Scout from 8th/14th Epsom said “I liked swimming in the pool in the park in Bern after rafting and also the rafting from Thun to Bern.”

We then asked the Adult Volunteers “Why did you want to bring your Scouts on this trip?”

An adult volunteer from 3rd Epsom said “We have been many times before and they get a lot out of the trip and gain great experiences. It is also great to see true scouting in operation but there are long challenging days but full of fun and excitement.”

An adult volunteer from 8th/14th Epsom said “There is a program for our scouts which is organised by the County team with support & food provision.”

We finally asked the Adult volunteer, “What was there highlight of the week?”

An adult volunteer from 3rd Epsom said “The friendliness, organisation and true Scouting spirit is second to none. Activities are organised very well with tasks as necessary. The Scouts found the walks challenging but all survived and surprised they could walk so far and so high. The food was also very good.”

An adult volunteer from 8th/14th Epsom said “The location, amazing scenery, swimming in Spiez, getting to know other adult volunteers better and hiking way beyond what I would normally do.”

Neil Wibberley

Ukrainian Independence Day celebrated with music, film and community spirit in Epsom

25 September 2026



Epsom Picturehouse was filled to capacity yesterday afternoon as the local community came together to mark Ukrainian Independence Day with an afternoon celebrating Ukrainian culture, music and film.

The event began in the Picturehouse foyer, where three young Ukrainians performed a selection of Ukrainian songs. Singer **Diana Zadorizhna**, guitarist **Vlad Verteba** and percussionist **Vlad Voloshin** provided live music as audiences gathered before the film screening.

Visitors were also able to browse a colourful display of Ukrainian crafts, handmade by local Ukrainian women. The crafts offered a glimpse into Ukraine’s rich artistic traditions and gave members of the community an opportunity to share something of their heritage with their neighbours in Epsom.

Nina Kaye of **Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network** welcomed the audience, and the afternoon began with everyone standing to sing the Ukrainian national anthem.

Roy Deadman, founder of **Surrey Stands with Ukraine**, introduced the film and spoke about the importance of cultural exchange and of continuing to share Ukrainian culture with the wider community.

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The audience went on to enjoy *Mavka: The Forest Song*, one of Ukraine's most successful animated films. Inspired by Ukrainian folklore and Lesya Ukrainka's celebrated 1911 drama *The Forest Song*, the film combines fantasy, romance, comedy and music with a powerful celebration of Ukraine's natural and cultural heritage.

The screening attracted a full house, demonstrating once again the strong support that the local community continues to show for Ukrainians living in the area. For those attending, the event was not simply a film screening, but an opportunity to come together, celebrate Ukrainian identity and culture, and strengthen the friendships that have grown between Ukrainians now living in Epsom and the wider community.

The enthusiastic response reflected the continuing message of solidarity that has characterised local support for Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion: Ukrainian culture is alive, vibrant and something to be shared and celebrated.

Nina Kaye

Back Epsom's Horton Cemetery history heroes in national vote

25 September 2026



Epsom and Ewell (and beyond) residents are being urged to get behind the local Friends of Horton Cemetery after the charity was shortlisted for a national award celebrating the volunteers who rescue the stories of ordinary people from obscurity.

The Friends are among 24 organisations selected from across England for Findmypast and Heritage Open Days' first "Everyday History Heroes" awards, with its place in the regional South-East final short-list of three.

Historian and broadcaster David Olusoga is supporting the campaign, which recognises historic and cultural organisations that preserve the stories of people frequently overlooked by conventional history.

A national winner and seven regional winners will be chosen by public vote. Regional winners will receive £1,000 to support their work.

Olusoga is quoted in a BBC news article as saying: "Horton Cemetery was a remarkable example of everyday history." Adding "More than 9,000 people who died as patients in Epsom's psychiatric hospitals were buried there, many in unmarked graves, and for decades their stories were largely forgotten."

He said: "The Friends of Horton Cemetery have been restoring dignity and remembrance to thousands of people who were too often overlooked in their own lifetimes".

The Epsom & Ewell Times makes no pretence of neutrality in this contest: our vote belongs to the Friends of Horton Cemetery—**and we hope our readers will add theirs.**

Between 1899 and 1955, about 9,000 people were buried at Horton Cemetery. Each had been a patient at one of the five mental health hospitals forming the Epsom Cluster.

Their graves are now unmarked. The privately owned cemetery has been neglected for decades and remains inaccessible to the public.

Against that unpromising background, the Friends' volunteer researchers have painstakingly rebuilt the lives of those buried there from hospital, census, military, family and other historical records. More than 500 individual life stories have already been researched, written and published.

The result is much more than a list of names and dates. The research restores identities to people whose lives were often obscured by the stigma once attached to mental illness and institutional care.

Those remembered include war veterans, mothers, labourers, domestic servants and children. Many experienced poverty, bereavement, illness or family separation before entering one of Epsom's hospitals. Their stories collectively illuminate a neglected chapter of the borough's history—and of Britain's changing treatment of mental ill-health.

Explaining its nomination, charity trustee Theresa Keneflick said: "We're proud that this nomination recognises the work of our researchers and volunteers for all that they do to ensure the lives of the 9,000 are remembered."

The award was created by family-history website Findmypast in partnership with Heritage Open Days. Its purpose is to honour grassroots organisations telling the histories of the ordinary people and communities who worked, struggled, campaigned and helped to build modern Britain.

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David Olusoga said history was not confined to the famous figures taught about in schools, but included the millions of ordinary people whose actions shaped today's world. He encouraged the public to explore the shortlisted organisations and vote for a local "hidden gem".

Few candidates can fit that description more literally than Horton Cemetery: an important part of Epsom's heritage hidden behind locked boundaries, its thousands of occupants deprived of individual grave markers but no longer without voices.

Voting remains open until 31 August, with the winners due to be announced on 10 September.

Vote for the Friends of Horton Cemetery on the Findmypast South East voting page.

The Friends' research and the stories already recovered can be explored at the Horton Cemetery website.

The Friends of Horton Cemetery host an Heritage Open Day alongside the Cemetery on Saturday 12th September.

Lionel Blackman

Hon. Sec. of The Friends of Horton Cemetery and a director Epsom and Ewell Times

Image – photo of the Cemetery from 1971

Note: The FindMyPast voting page suggests the charity has "transformed the cemetery". This is an error we are seeking to correct. The Cemetery remains neglected in private hands with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council declining to purchase it for its restoration as a community asset.

Related reports:

500 patients buried in Epsom's asylum cemetery no longer forgotten

Friends of Horton Cemetery influence law reform

Epsom and Ewell's MP champions Friends of Horton Cemetery mission on "Time to Talk Day"

Epsom's Horton Cemetery gets attention of two kinds

Epsom Council dead set against the dead?

Petition to reclaim Horton Cemetery from property speculator

Local community gathered at Horton Cemetery

Surrey walkers invited to tackle five peaks for young people

25 September 2026



Local charity Surrey Care Trust is calling on walkers, families, friends and businesses to take on a 13-mile – or even 26-mile – challenge across Surrey this year, helping young people overcome barriers, build confidence and create brighter futures.

Surrey Care Trust's 5 Peaks Challenge will see participants take on either a half-marathon or full-marathon distance walk, tackling the "five peaks of Surrey": St Martha's Hill, Newlands Corner, Leith Hill, Holmbury Hill and Pitch Hill.

The event aims to raise funds for the charity's work with young people across Surrey.

For many young people, the biggest obstacles are not physical. Low confidence, anxiety, a lack of skills or uncertainty about the future can make it difficult to remain connected to education, training and employment.

Surrey Care Trust provides alternative education, mentoring, confidence-building activities, skills development and practical support to help young people recognise their potential and move towards a positive future.

Through its Steps2Work programme, the charity says it has supported hundreds of young people into employment, education, training and volunteering.

"Everyone faces challenges in life, and sometimes young people need someone to help them find their way forward. The 5 Peaks Challenge is a fantastic opportunity for the Surrey community to come together, take on a personal challenge and help young people build confidence and achieve their goals," said Rachel Perez-Lofty, Fundraising and Marketing Manager.

The bespoke orienteering route offers participants the chance to challenge themselves while enjoying Surrey's

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countryside, whether walking alone, with friends or as part of a workplace team.

“The Surrey 5 Peaks Challenge really is an adventure not to be missed. I speak from experience. Expert organisation, stunning Surrey Hills countryside, the challenge of the five peaks, fresh air and the chance to meet other walkers all combine to make the day something very special.

“By taking part, you will be helping support vulnerable young people and families across Surrey. You really can make a difference,” said Teresa, a long-time Surrey 5 Peaks walker.

Surrey Care Trust is encouraging people of all abilities to take part, whether they are experienced walkers or simply looking for a new challenge.

The event takes place on Saturday 12 September 2026, following a route from Shamley Green to Wootton and back to Shamley Green.

To register, visit:

https://www.surreycaretrust.org.uk/event/charity-challenge-event-surrey-5-peaks-challenge-2026/

Surrey Care Trust supports people across Surrey to overcome barriers, build skills and create better futures through mentoring, education, training and community support.

Surrey Care Trust

Epsom Foodbank warns of summer holiday pressure as donations fall

25 September 2026



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

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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

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Invites Community to Share 'A Million Acts of Hope'

25 September 2026



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, in partnership with the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network, is inviting residents to take part in *A Million Acts of Hope* during Refugee Week this June – celebrating the everyday actions that bring people together and strengthen communities.

A Million Acts of Hope is a national initiative recognising the small but meaningful contributions people make to their community each day. From coaching youth teams and volunteering at food banks to supporting neighbours and caring for shared spaces, these acts may go unnoticed, but they play an important role in building compassionate and connected communities.

Running from 15 June to 21 June, Refugee Week offers an opportunity to recognise the contributions of refugees, while celebrating the diversity, resilience and community spirit that enrich local life. This year, the borough will also mark *A Million Acts of Hope* during the same week, highlighting how simple actions can help create a more welcoming and inclusive place for everyone.

These shared values are reflected in the work of the Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN), which supports refugees to feel welcomed, connected and part of the community. EERN, which is partly funded by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, delivers a range of services, including: group activities, helpdesk support, language classes and community initiatives – all designed to help foster inclusion and understanding.

To encourage residents to get involved*, A Million Acts of Hope* boards were installed at Epsom Library and Ewell Library (Bourne Hall) this week. The CEO of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Jackie King, Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Lucie McIntyre and Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network Lead, Jo Sherring, have all added their messages to the board.

We encourage visitors to share messages of kindness, gratitude or community spirit.

Participants can write a short note on a postcard, available at both locations, and add it to the display, creating a collective expression of hope across the borough.

Speaking of the upcoming events, Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, said:

"Epsom & Ewell is a borough defined by the strength of its community, and initiatives like *A Million Acts of Hope* highlight the kindness, compassion and generosity that bring our residents together. It has been truly heartwarming to read the many stories already shared on the boards across the borough, each one reflecting small but meaningful acts of care, gratitude and support.

These stories capture what makes Epsom & Ewell such a special place to live, and I encourage residents to continue adding their voices as we come together to celebrate hope and the power of community."

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Image EEBC: rom left to right: Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Lucie McIntyre and Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network Lead, Jo Sherring.

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500 patients buried in Epsom’s asylum cemetery no longer forgotten

25 September 2026



A team of researchers volunteering for the local charity The Friends of Horton Cemetery have reached a milestone in their quest to write the histories of 9000 patients buried in the abandoned privately owned Horton Cemetery. The cemetery, reputed to be the largest asylum cemetery in Europe, is situated at the junction of Hook Road and Horton Lane. The story of Marjorie is the 500th published on the charity’s website

A discarded headstone rescued from a skip more than forty years ago led researchers to uncover the poignant story of a young woman buried at Horton Cemetery — and reconnect her memory with living family members.

Before the cemetery was sold by the NHS in 983 to a property speculator, notices appeared in the local press informing relatives that they could reclaim the headstones of loved ones buried there. Families were warned that any memorials left behind would be destroyed.

At the time, an electrical engineer working on a project within the former Epsom hospital cluster discovered one such stone which had been thrown into a skip. Appalled at what he later described as a “blatant disregard” for somebody’s final resting place, he rescued the memorial and took it home for safekeeping.

Today, the headstone remains carefully preserved, with the hope that one day it may be returned to the cemetery where it was originally intended to stand in perpetuity.

The inscription reads simply:

Marjorie Young
14th September 1948
Aged 27 years
R.I.P.

As researchers from the Friends of Horton Cemetery began investigating Marjorie’s life, they were astonished to discover that a relative was still alive and able to shed light on her tragic story.

The relative, whose mother was Marjorie’s first cousin, said: “Your message is a welcome bolt from the blue. I can’t believe that after all these years somebody is interested in Marjorie. I didn’t know her but my mother so often talked about her. My mother died in 2015 but she still had nightmares about the life Marjorie led.”

His words underline one of the central aims of the Friends of Horton Cemetery — ensuring that those buried in the former asylum cemetery are not forgotten.

Research into burial records revealed another heartbreaking detail. The cemetery register records that Marjorie was buried in grave 2892b alongside a “stillborn female child”. Marjorie was buried with a stillborn child who researchers believe belonged to an unknown patient.

Such practices were sadly not uncommon. Before changes introduced during the 1980s, hospitals frequently arranged the burial of stillborn babies with little or no consultation with grieving parents. Often, infants were buried in existing graves within institutional cemeteries.

A Family Marked by Tragedy

Marjorie’s father, Charles Young, was born in 1894 to Harry Young and Ellen Fanny Young, née Chesterman. According to family recollections, Ellen gave birth to as many as 23 children, though only a handful survived infancy.

The family experienced repeated tragedy. In 1905, Charles’s younger sister Minnie died after suffering an epileptic seizure during the night. An inquest heard that Minnie sometimes endured as many as thirteen fits a day. Researchers later discovered that Marjorie herself also suffered from epilepsy.

Charles married Ethel Mary Davis at St Augustine’s Church in 1920.

A Childhood of Fear and Isolation

Born on 10 June 1921, Marjorie was an only child. Family testimony has painted a troubling picture of her upbringing. Her cousin recalled stories passed down by his mother: “Marjorie was very clever and wanted to study. She was an only child so welcomed the company of my mother. As time went on it became clear to my mother that Marjorie was terrified, the reason being that her parents went out every night and left her alone in the dark. Neighbours talked of Marjorie standing

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at the window looking out in the dark.

“Eventually poor Marjorie had a breakdown and was admitted to hospital and my mother never saw her again.”

Public records relating to Marjorie are scarce. In the 1939 Register, compiled at the outbreak of the Second World War, she was living in Lambeth and working as a civil servant for His Majesty’s Office of Works, the government department responsible for public buildings.

The next surviving record appears nine years later.

On 14 September 1948, Marjorie died at Long Grove Hospital aged just 27. Her death certificate records broncho-pneumonia and exhaustion caused by epilepsy. She was buried at Horton Cemetery on 21 September 1948.

Someone Cared Enough to Remember

Researchers believe one detail about Marjorie’s story is especially important. She had a headstone.

At Horton Cemetery, where thousands were buried in unmarked graves, memorial stones were rare. Someone cared enough to arrange and pay for a marker. Someone completed the paperwork and ensured her resting place was acknowledged. It is also possible that family members attended her funeral.

For her surviving relative, the rediscovery of the headstone has brought comfort. “It is wonderful to hear that her gravestone survives and that has led to her being your 500th story. If only I could tell my mother. She would have been so pleased to know that somebody still cares about Marjorie.

“I think you’ve done a wonderful job and somehow righted some of the wrongs.”

Today, the rescued headstone stands not only for Marjorie Young, but symbolically for the estimated 9,000 forgotten souls buried within Horton Cemetery.

Perhaps one day it will stand there once again.

More research stories can be found on the Horton Cemetery website at Horton Cemetery

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The Friends of Horton Cemetery seek to restore the cemetery to community ownership. The case for a compulsory purchase order was blocked by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. The charity now pins its hopes on a fresh approach from the East Surrey Unitary Council. The charity has the support of Epsom and Ewell’s MP Helen Maguire, who is engaging with the Ministry of Justice on the issue.

Theresa Keneflick-Conway

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Local community gathered at Horton Cemetery

Epsom “Library of Things” Delayed by Council Stand-Off

25 September 2026



A volunteer-led scheme to open a “Library of Things” in Ewell has been delayed for months amid a stand-off between Surrey County Council (SCC) and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) over who has the authority to approve a key lease.

The project, led by the Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network (eeCAN), aims to allow residents to borrow household tools and equipment rather than buy them—an initiative already operating successfully in other parts of Surrey. However, despite securing planning permission for an external storage unit at Bourne Hall in early April, the scheme remains unable to open to the public.

At the heart of the delay is confusion between the roles of the county and borough councils. SCC operates the library

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service within Bourne Hall and has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with eeCAN covering the delivery of the service. But the land and building are owned by EEBC, meaning any lease for the external storage facility must be agreed with the borough.

In correspondence seen by the Epsom and Ewell Times, a senior SCC officer states that the county council "would not be a contracting party nor is there a requirement for a formal approach from us," adding that any lease should be agreed directly with EEBC.

However, EEBC's Head of Property and Regeneration takes a different view. He explains that under his delegated authority he can only progress matters involving Surrey County Council, which he describes as the legal occupier of the Bourne Hall library space. He also cites legal obligations requiring any new lease to be openly marketed to ensure "Best Value," rather than agreed directly with a single organisation.

The result is an impasse: SCC says it is not required to initiate the lease, while EEBC says it cannot proceed in the way requested. Meanwhile, the community group finds itself unable to move forward.

William Ward, Chair and Co-founder of eeCAN, describes mounting frustration. Writing to both councils, he points to months of correspondence since December and says the group now has "many local residents who have already signed up… asking why the opening has been delayed and when they can borrow the donated items they need."

The delays have already forced the postponement of the scheme's planned launch around Earth Day, with construction of the storage unit also on hold pending agreement of the lease.

The situation also raises questions about consistency across Surrey. Ward notes that similar "Library of Things" schemes elsewhere in the county do not appear to have encountered the same requirement for formal inter-council processes, suggesting potential differences in how local authorities interpret their responsibilities.

For observers, the episode offers a practical illustration of the challenges inherent in Surrey's two-tier system of local government. Responsibilities for a single site are split between county and borough, with separate legal, operational and property roles. While each authority's position may be individually justifiable, the combined effect can be delay, duplication and uncertainty for community groups trying to deliver local services.

The issue comes at a time when Surrey is preparing to replace its current structure with unitary authorities. Proponents of reform argue that merging responsibilities into a single tier could reduce exactly this kind of confusion. Critics, however, warn that large new authorities risk becoming more remote from local needs.

In the case of the Bourne Hall Library of Things, the immediate concern is more practical. Without resolution between the two councils, a project intended to promote sustainability, reduce household costs and strengthen community engagement remains on hold, it has been claimed.

Surrey County Council and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council joined forces in issuing a response to these claims. A spokesperson said:

"Surrey County Council (SCC) Libraries enables external providers to operate a "Library of Things" service across the county. Under the agreed arrangements, all "Library of Things" providers are responsible for organising off-site storage for larger items, while smaller items may be stored within library buildings where space allows.

"Ewell Library is located at Bourne Hall, which Surrey County Council leases from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC). As both the planning authority and freeholder of Bourne Hall, EEBC is responsible for approving any external storage within the grounds.

"Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network was advised at an early stage that planning permission and landowner agreement would be required for an external store to house larger items. Planning permission was granted earlier this year, and the proposal will be presented to the next meeting of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Environment Committee which is scheduled to take place on 23 June. Committee agreement is required before volunteers can manage the store.

"Both councils look forward to welcoming a new "Library of Things" to Ewell, building on the success already seen at Dorking, Godalming, Guildford and Haslemere Libraries, supporting residents to share resources and reduce waste."

Sam Jones – Reporter



Cleaning up crime hotspot in Epsom

25 September 2026

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Last weekend, volunteers from Rotary, local residents' groups and community organisations gathered behind Epsom Centre to clean a small alleyway that has become a hotspot for litter and anti-social behaviour after dark.

The clean up may have taken place in daylight, but the focus was firmly on what happens at night.

Figures from the police crime map reveal a worrying pattern. Between January and August 2025 alone, **at least 50 crimes** of all types were reported on or near this small stretch of road, including 6 violence and sexual offences, plus vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour, drug offences and public order incidents. The exact locations are harder to detail, so this is an area on the map. The problem is not isolated. In October 2025, the area saw a spike of **9 crimes in a single month**, 3 of which were linked to violence or sexual offences. Reported crimes continue into January and February 2026, showing the issue has not gone away.

According to residents living in Oaks Square, these figures may only scratch the surface. Many of the publicly recorded cases end with the same outcome: "There is insufficient evidence to bring anyone to justice at this time. The investigation may be reopened if more information becomes available." This highlights that useful CCTV coverage is patchy, and it is hard for police to gain convictions.

"Keeping in groups, leaving no one behind, and avoiding the fenced alleys and the car parks at certain times is easy to achieve by staying in the High St and walking the extra 200 meters the cut throughs save. Peak trouble in these areas is as you might expect after dark 10:00 pm until 04:00 am in summer and 8:00 pm to 08:00 am in winter".

Clean spaces change behaviour.

Clive, Maria and Chris, speaking on behalf of Rotary, said: "We're here to tidy up an area just off the High Street. Working with Rotary and other groups, we've found all sorts. The issue here is that people throw rubbish over the fence onto the railway and it just builds up."

Sharine, from Central Epsom, said it was her first time joining, "I didn't expect this level of mess or to hear about crime linked to the area. Seeing it first-hand is surprising. It makes me want to raise awareness and look for real solutions."

Steve McCormick, (RA EEBC Woodcote and Langley Vale) Residents' Association county councillor and Rotary member, explained the wider impact: "When an area looks neglected, it attracts more problems. When it is clean and tidy, people take more pride in it. Criminals tend to stay away. If a place looks looked after, you get less anti-social behaviour."

Much of the litter appears to be carelessly thrown away, sometimes even from car windows or over fences. Organisers say this reflects a wider throwaway culture.

"It's frustrating," one volunteer said. "You clean an area and shortly after it can be messy again."

In Austria, even small waste offences can lead to fines of around £80. A minor mistake might include leaving a bin bag outside a container instead of placing it inside, or putting rubbish in the wrong bin. Dumping rubbish in public spaces or beside containers can result in fines ranging from around £630 to £31,000. The idea is simple. If you cannot keep the environment clean and safe, you pay the price. Experience shows that people learn very quickly when clear rules and consequences are in place.

Another approach comes from Sweden, where "plogging" has become a popular trend. Plogging combines jogging or walking with picking up litter, turning exercise into a practical way to care for the environment. The term comes from the Swedish words plocka upp, meaning pick up and jogga, meaning jog, and the movement began around 2016. Founded by Erik Ahlström, plogging encourages people to stay active while helping reduce pollution.

A small effort with a bigger message: This clean-up focused on one small road behind Epsom Centre, but organisers say it is just the beginning. Future efforts will aim to tackle and highlight other areas identified on crime maps. The group completed the clean-up in less than an hour, but the aim is long-term change. "By focusing on litter in areas highlighted by crime data, especially those active at night, we hope to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve safety by letting everyone know where to avoid and when, whilst making the less well motivated people aware that we care.

Organisers say that "now Keep Epsom and Ewell Tidy has shut we do need to help each other to keep the town clean". Anyone can take part and make a difference: "It's an easy thing to do. You feel better after helping, you meet people, and together you can create change." If you would like to get involved in future clean-ups or community projects, contact your local Rotary group and help create a safer, cleaner Epsom.

Romy Sustar

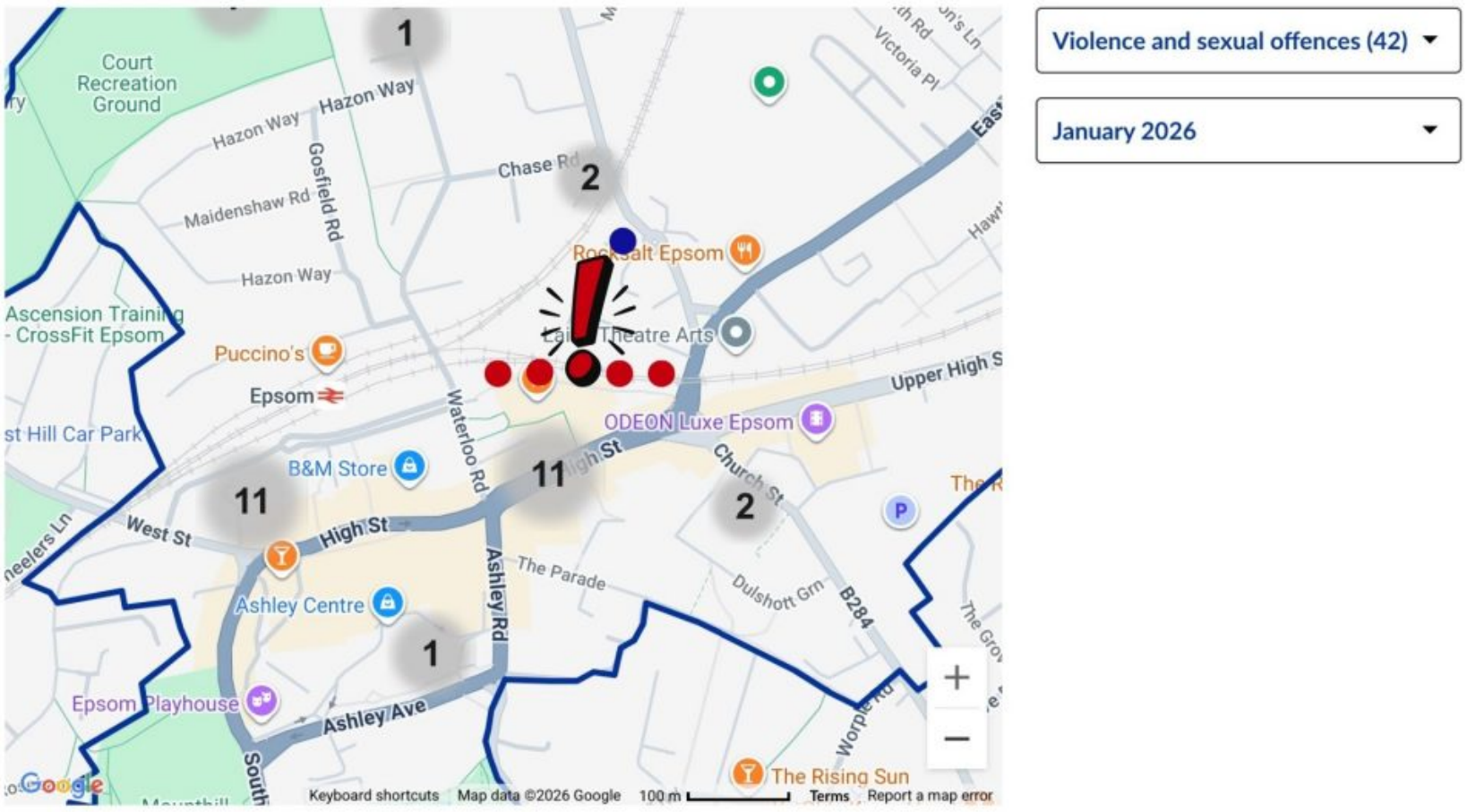


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150KG in Two Hours: Volunteers contribute to Epsom’s clean environment

25 September 2026



Volunteers from the World Mission Society Church of God carried out a community clean-up in Epsom on Sunday 26 April, collecting over 150kg of litter in just two hours.

41 volunteers gathered to help tidy key areas of the town. After a short briefing, they split into two teams to cover locations including the town centre, Epsom Square, Rosebery Park, Mount Hill Gardens and the car park near Lidl. The event forms part of an ongoing litter-picking initiative by the group which has been carried out for 8 years, reflecting the group’s continued commitment to the community and growing volunteer participation in recent years.

Working between 11am and 1pm, the teams focused on known litter hotspots, aiming to collect 40 bags and 150kg of waste. Residents showed their appreciation throughout the morning, encouraging volunteers and recognising the positive impact of their efforts. Alongside general litter, volunteers removed larger discarded items such as chairs, a vacuum cleaner, toys, carts and even a traffic sign. These were sorted for proper disposal and recycling. By the end of the event, 49 bags of waste had been collected, weighing a total of 150.34kg exceeding the original target.

Volunteers said the result highlighted how teamwork can make a meaningful difference to the local environment. Sarah, a first-time joiner of the clean-up campaign, shared that she was inspired by how the volunteers dedicated themselves to helping the community and expressed her willingness and intention to take part in future activities. Andrei, a frequent volunteer who has been taking part for four years, shared that it is the spirit and attitude of the volunteers that keeps him coming back. “They are always ready to help the community,” he said, adding that everyone deserves to live in a cleaner, more pleasant environment and that though our individual actions may seem small, in reality these can make a real difference.

Staff from the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council also said to the volunteers, “Thank you to you and all of the society for your continued efforts with events such as these; it is very much appreciated…”

Volunteers from the World Mission Society Church of God hope their efforts will continue to inspire others and contribute to a cleaner, safer Epsom.

World Mission Society Church of God

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Glyn Hall faces uncertain future as trustees issue urgent appeal to save Ewell landmark

25 September 2026



A historic community building at the heart of Ewell is at risk of being lost permanently unless urgent support can be secured.

Glyn Hall, situated on Cheam Road in Ewell Village, has served local residents for generations as a space for education, social gatherings and community activity. The hall traces its origins back to around 1870 and was later bequeathed for the benefit of Ewell residents by local benefactor Margaret Glyn in 1946.

However, after more than a century and a half of use, the building has now reached the end of its functional life. The ageing wooden structure has been closed, leaving the future of the site in doubt.

Volunteer trustees responsible for the charity have spent recent years working to secure the hall's future. Plans have been developed to demolish the existing building and replace it with a modern facility better suited to contemporary community use. Planning permission for the redevelopment was granted in January 2024.

Fundraising efforts have already attracted strong local backing, with approximately £85,000 raised from community sources. Despite this, trustees say they have only reached around half of the funding required to deliver the project in full.

They now warn that, without additional financial support or new volunteers willing to take the project forward, the consequences could be stark. The land may have to be sold, the charity dissolved, and with it the long-standing legacy of Glyn Hall brought to an end.

Trustees are therefore issuing what they describe as a final appeal to residents, local organisations and potential benefactors to come forward.

"This is a final opportunity to save Glyn Hall for future generations," they say.

Anyone interested in supporting the project or seeking further information is invited to contact trustee Matthew Anderson at mjranderson64@gmail.com.

The future of one of Ewell's longstanding community assets now depends on whether sufficient backing can be secured in the coming months.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Image: Glyn Hall now (Google) and the plan

Related report:

Campaign to save Ewell Village's Glyn Hall

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Friends of Horton Cemetery influence law reform

25 September 2026



A local Epsom charity's campaign to protect a forgotten cemetery appears to have helped shape national thinking on burial law reform.

The Friends of Horton Cemetery (FoHC), based in Epsom, made a detailed submission to the Law Commission in January 2025 calling for stronger legal protections for neglected burial grounds—particularly those in private ownership.

Now, with the publication of the Law Commission's report on Burial and Cremation in March 2026, several of the group's core concerns appear to have been recognised at the highest level of policy.

Horton Cemetery, the resting place of around 9000 former psychiatric patients from the Epsom hospital cluster, has long been at the centre of FoHC's work. Since its sale into private ownership in 1983, the site has suffered decades of neglect, with no public access and minimal maintenance.

In its **submission**, FoHC argued that the law currently leaves such sites in a regulatory vacuum, with no enforceable duty on owners to maintain them and limited powers for authorities to intervene.

That argument now appears to have gained traction.

The Law Commission's report identifies private burial grounds as an area of "real gaps in protection" and, for the first time, proposes a legal duty requiring all burial grounds—including privately owned ones—to be kept in "good order". The report also envisages inspection and enforcement powers at national level.

These proposals closely mirror FoHC's central recommendation that cemetery owners should be subject to a clear, enforceable maintenance obligation reflecting the historical and emotional significance of such sites.

However, other proposals put forward by the Epsom group have not yet been taken up in full.

FoHC had called for a statutory right of access for relatives, stronger powers for local authorities to intervene, and safeguards against speculative ownership and redevelopment. While the Commission acknowledges many of these issues—particularly the importance of access to graves—it stops short of recommending firm legal rights or stronger local enforcement mechanisms.

Speaking after the report's publication, Lionel Blackman, solicitor and secretary of the Friends of Horton Cemetery and author of the legal submission said "The recognition of the problem is an important step, even if the solutions remain incomplete."

The charity's work has also fed into ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Justice. At a recent meeting, organised by Patron of the Charity and local MP Helen Maguire with trustees of the charity, Theresa Keneflick and Kevin McDonnell and junior Minister Alex Davies-Jones MP, Horton Cemetery was cited as a real-world example of the kind of site falling through gaps in the current legal framework.

The Law Commission's reforms are expected to take several years to translate into legislation, with an initial Government response anticipated within six months.

For campaigners in Epsom, the message is clear: what began as a local effort to restore dignity to a neglected burial ground is now influencing the national conversation.

And while the law may not yet have caught up fully, Horton Cemetery is no longer being overlooked.

Sam Jones – Reporter

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Image: Horton Cemetery 1971

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Local community gathered at Horton Cemetery

Epsom man runs marathons in memory of sister who died from epilepsy

25 September 2026



Barry Ahearn, 45, is running one of the world's most famous marathons in memory of his younger sister, Abbie, who passed away just three months before her 30th birthday in 2023. Barry is a long-term supporter of Epilepsy Action and has raised almost £23,000 for the charity so far.

Abbie passed away following an epileptic seizure that was so severe, it sent her into cardiac arrest. Last year, Barry completed a total of 27 half-marathons in memory of his sister. "The reason I chose to do 27 half-marathons is because this represents the amount of time Abbie's brain was without oxygen, whilst paramedics tried to revive her.

"According to Epilepsy Action, around 1000 people die from epilepsy-related causes, which is about three people every day. I want to make sure Abbie is not just 'one of the three'."

Since his first big challenge, Barry has completed an ultra-marathon, been a finalist at the BBC Make a Difference awards, and has planned many future challenges, including the London Marathon. His efforts have been recognised by local MP Helen Maguire and the pair completed a Parkrun together last November. Helen has since been working with the charity.

Helen said: "I'm so inspired to see Barry taking on the London marathon to honour his sister Abbie and support Epilepsy Action. Having joined Barry for a recent park tun in support of Epilepsy Action, I know how powerful these efforts can be in bringing people together and raising awareness. I wish him the very best of luck and commend his incredible commitment to this cause."

Barry is determined to continue spreading awareness of epilepsy, and highlighting how serious the condition can be. "Losing my sister has been the worst experience of my life. Abbie was kind compassionate, attentive and loyal. She was so much fun to be around, always making jokes and playing pranks. She brightened any room she walked into with her smile and is sorely missed by everyone who knew and loved her.

"Many people think epilepsy is just about 'seizures', when in reality there's so much more that goes along with the condition. Epilepsy takes away people's independence, stops them driving, can be very socially isolating and some of the medications have really bad side effects, including extreme fatigue and mood swings. Abbie had only been diagnosed with epilepsy six weeks before passing away, but this is the reality she could've been living with if she was still here, and I know she'd want me to do something about that.

"I want her passing to mean something, to help make a difference, not only by raising money to go towards research, but also to raise awareness of how serious this condition is."

"After the London Marathon, I'm already planning my next big challenge. I'm not quite set on what I want to do, but I think it might involve something like doubling the 27 halves…."

Philippa Cartwright, director of fundraising at Epilepsy Action, said: "We're honoured to have Barry as one of our 2026 London Marathon runners. The challenges he has taken on over these past couple of years have been incredible, and we're so grateful for his ongoing support.

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“Barry has shown extraordinary resilience and determination since losing his sister, choosing to turn the hardest experience of his life, into something that will help so many others. The money he has raised will go directly towards helping Epilepsy Action to continually campaign for better care for people with epilepsy across the country, and funding the frontline services the charity provides including its helpline, support groups and one-to-to one support.

“Epilepsy Action would like to say a big thank you to Barry and we are wishing him and all of our runners the best of luck – we are sure his sister Abbie would be so proud.”

Epilepsy affects around one in every 100 people in the UK and around 80 are diagnosed every day. Epilepsy Action is committed to improving the lives of people with epilepsy, by campaigning for better services and raising awareness of the condition. The charity provides a national network of support groups, with expert advice available on its freephone helpline 0808 800 5050 and online at www.epilepsy.org.uk.

Epilepsy Action

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Epsom author shares personal epilepsy journey amid town’s historic link to the condition

Epsom Runner’s Tribute to Sister Raises Over £22,000 for Epilepsy Charity

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