

Million-pound FIFA-standard football pitch opens at Glyn School in Ewell

11 December 2025



A new state-of-the-art FIFA-standard 3G football pitch and pavilion has been officially opened at Glyn School in Ewell after more than £1 million of investment from national and local partners.

The Premier League, The FA and the Government’s Football Foundation contributed just over half of the total cost, with further funding from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Your Fund Surrey (Surrey County Council) and the Epsom & Ewell Colts. The new pitch will be used by Glyn School, other GLF Schools, Epsom & Ewell Colts FC and the wider community.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s Playing Pitch Strategy and Corporate Plan identified the need for high-quality sports provision to promote healthy lifestyles, widen participation and meet the needs of a growing population. With more than 1,800 students at Glyn and around 5,000 across other GLF Schools, the facilities are expected to make a significant daily impact on school and community sport.

A partnership with Epsom & Ewell Colts FC means the pitch will become a major hub for grassroots football, supporting over 1,200 players across 82 teams, including 30 girls’ and women’s teams. The GLF Schools Foundation will help expand access for disadvantaged groups, disabled players and young people historically underrepresented in sport, aligning with both borough and national priorities for community wellbeing.

The official opening took place on Wednesday (Dec 10), with GLF Schools Interim CEO James Nicholson addressing guests and the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, **Cllr Robert Leach**, cutting the ribbon. Also present were Liz Pill from the Football Foundation and Rosanne Fine from Surrey Football Association. Visitors toured the pitch and pavilion after watching players take to the new surface.

Jo Garrod, Headteacher at Glyn School, said: “This new pitch and pavilion are a fantastic addition to the sports facilities at our school and will be a huge benefit to all our students. We’re extremely grateful to the Football Foundation for the funding and investment and delighted that they have made such a significant contribution to improve the quality of sports facilities for everyone in the community.”

James Nicholson, Interim CEO of GLF Schools, said: “The range of sports and activities we offer at GLF Schools is central to the educational experience for all students. Having the latest modern facilities is key to giving every student the best opportunities to reach their full potential and enjoy their time with us. I’d like to thank The Football Foundation, whose major grant made this development possible, Epsom & Ewell Council, Your Fund Surrey (Surrey County Council), and the Epsom & Ewell Colts, who also supported this project with substantial financial contributions. As well as Surrey FA for their strategic guidance and endorsement, and all the consultants in design, fundraising, planning, and project management who worked so hard to build such an impressive pitch and pavilion.”

Robert Sullivan, Chief Executive of the Football Foundation, said: “The Football Foundation is working closely with our partners, the Premier League, The FA and Government, to transform the quality of grassroots facilities in England by delivering projects like this across the country. Good quality playing facilities have a transformative impact on physical and mental health and play an important role in bringing people together and strengthening local communities. We’re delighted that the local community in Epsom and Ewell will now be able to enjoy all these benefits thanks to the new facilities at Glyn School.”

Epsom & Ewell MP Helen Maguire said: “The opening of this new pitch and pavilion at Glyn School is a real milestone for Ewell and the wider borough. It gives young people and local clubs a first-class space to train, play, and grow – and it strengthens the role that sport can play in building confidence and aspiration, as well as the improvements it can bring to both physical and mental health. I’m delighted to see this project completed and look forward to visiting soon.”

Many local clubs, organisations and community groups provided letters of support, including NESCOL, Chelsea FC Foundation, Fetcham United FC, Active Surrey, Surrey Schools FA, Surrey Cricket Foundation and Tidy Keepers.

A 3G (Third Generation) astro pitch is an advanced artificial turf surface combining synthetic grass, sand and rubber infill to mimic natural turf, offering all-weather durability and consistent performance.

About the Football Foundation

The Football Foundation is the Premier League, The FA and the Government’s charity dedicated to delivering outstanding grassroots facilities. Since 2000 it has raised £1.3 billion to improve facilities nationwide, including 1,300 3G pitches, 15,000 grass pitches and 1,700 changing rooms, attracting an additional £1.5 billion in partnership funding. It works with local authorities, County FAs and community partners to create Local Football Facility Plans for every area of England. More information at footballfoundation.org.uk.

About GLF Schools

GLF Schools is a multi-academy trust of 43 schools serving more than 17,000 pupils aged 2 to 19 across Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey, West Sussex and parts of London. The Trust includes eight secondary schools and 35 primary settings, each serving its own community while sharing a commitment to excellent educational outcomes.

Sam Jones – Reporter



New Pitch at Glyn School x 2. Credit: GLF Schools

Surrey SEND place surge - is it enough?

11 December 2025



Surrey County Council has announced the creation of almost 500 new specialist school places for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities during the 2025/26 academic year. The expansion forms part of the council’s ongoing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Capital Programmes running from 2019 to 2026.

Of these new places, 169 were ready at the start of the autumn term, with another 298 due for completion by summer 2026. Since 2021, Surrey has delivered over 250 new specialist places each year, supported by more than £211 million in capital investment.

New and expanded schools

Among the projects completed for the current academic year are new or enlarged SEN units at **Epsom Downs Primary School** in Epsom and Ewell, Dovers Green Infant School in Reigate and Banstead, and Guildford County School. Philip Southcote School in Runnymede now benefits from a new teaching block and hydrotherapy pool, while the Fordway Centre in Spelthorne has been completely rebuilt.

Walton Leigh School in Elmbridge has undergone significant refurbishment, and additional projects in Spelthorne and Elmbridge have already been completed this term, including SEN units at Ashford Park Primary and Cranmere School.

Before summer 2026, Surrey expects to complete 40 new places within Carrington School’s Specialist Resource Provision and a further 33 at the Woodfield Education Centre in Reigate and Banstead. The largest development, a new all-through Hopescourt SEN School in Elmbridge, will provide 200 places.

Headteacher Alex Burrows said: “We’re incredibly proud to be part of the expansion of specialist provision in Surrey. Our new school will give children and young people in the borough the support and opportunities they need to flourish – not just academically, but personally and socially too. We’re excited to build a community where every child truly belongs and can take their next steps confidently.”

Responding to rising demand

Over 17,000 children and young people in Surrey now have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a number that has more than doubled in a decade. The county council says its timeliness in completing assessments now exceeds 90%, compared to a national average of 46.6%, placing Surrey in the top 20 performing authorities.

To meet growing demand, the council launched a £15 million recovery plan in 2023 and has since committed a further £4.9 million, increasing staff capacity in statutory SEND services by 74%.

Councillor Jonathan Hulley, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, said: “These additional places are a crucial part of Surrey’s Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy. The strategy aims to improve inclusion and outcomes for children with additional needs and disabilities in Surrey, ensuring they can access the best possible education closer to home. To go alongside our unprecedented investment in building new specialist school places, we’ve invested heavily in our SEND service. We are determined that every child in Surrey with additional needs and disabilities gets the support they deserve.”

Continuing pressures

While the council’s figures point to record investment and rising capacity, parents, teachers and local MPs have repeatedly raised concerns about the system’s ability to keep pace with demand. Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire has called for urgent national action, highlighting the distress families face when children are left without appropriate school placements.

Other Surrey MPs have criticised the escalating costs of private specialist placements and the reliance on out-of-county provision – issues that have driven the county’s dedicated schools budget into deficit. Campaigners have argued that although capital investment is welcome, progress on staffing, assessment backlogs and mainstream inclusion has been slow.

As previously reported by the Epsom and Ewell Times, the county’s £4.9 million recovery package was described by some parent advocates as “a fraction of what’s needed” to fix systemic problems that have built up over years of under-resourcing and policy churn.

National backdrop

Surrey’s challenges mirror those across England. The number of children with EHCPs has risen nationally to more than half a million, with many councils facing multi-million-pound SEND budget deficits. The government’s own review of the SEND system, first announced in 2019, remains only partially implemented, leaving local authorities to balance rising expectations with limited funding flexibility.

For many families in Surrey, the creation of new places represents a long-awaited step forward – but for others, the daily struggle to secure assessments, placements and support continues.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Phillip South Cote School classroom. Credit SCC

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Surrey MPs unite against county on SEND silence.

Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity expands into 70 Surrey schools

11 December 2025



The Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINs) has begun its second year in Surrey, extending support from 41 to 70 schools.

The programme, a joint initiative by NHS England and the Department for Education, helps schools with early intervention, staff training, and improving communication with families to ensure neurodiverse children are fully included in school life.

From pilot to county-wide programme

The Surrey pilot, delivered between 2024 and June 2025 with Surrey Heartlands ICB, the charity Eikon, and Family Voice Surrey (FVS), worked with 41 schools to strengthen their whole-school SEND approach. A further 29 schools in North East and South West Surrey have now joined.

To mark the expansion, school leaders, governors, and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators gathered at Esher Rugby Club, Walton-on-Thames, alongside partners from Family Voice Surrey, Surrey Heartlands ICB, and the Team Around the Schools Support Hub. Colleagues from Active Surrey, Educational Psychology and Speech and Language Therapy also set out their roles in delivering the next phase.

Focus on inclusion and early support

Jonathan Hulley, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, said: “This programme represents our collective commitment to inclusion, early support, and meaningful collaboration across education, health, and family services. It places neurodiverse children and their families at the heart of school improvement, and empowers educators with the tools, training, and confidence to create inclusive environments.”

The programme emphasises family involvement through its partnership with FVS, ensuring that parent carers play a central role in shaping provision.

Families and schools working together

Kate Goode, Participation Lead at Family Voice Surrey, said: “Working on the PINs programme has been fantastic. It’s been a real partnership and an excellent example of co-production with families, Surrey County Council and all the partners. Families have really felt heard and given an opportunity to feel like an equal partner in decision-making.”

Barbara Tucker, SENCO at St Peter’s Catholic Primary School in Leatherhead, said the pilot “gave us the confidence to reflect, adapt and grow.” She highlighted practical changes such as providing noise-cancelling ear defenders at lunchtimes, which improved concentration in class, and the introduction of parent-led coffee mornings and social groups that boosted wellbeing and connection.

Training and support

Each school in the programme will receive up to 30 hours of tailored training. This includes Occupational Therapy and playground audits, Speech and Language support, and Neurodiversity Champion training, with input from parent carers, health professionals, educational psychologists and specialist advisors.

Background

Around 46,000 children and young people in Surrey have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Earlier this year Surrey County Council approved an additional £4.9 million investment into SEND services.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Surrey’s education failings cost £1 million

11 December 2025



Surrey County Council’s failings have cost the authority more than £1m in fines and redress payments over the past two years – the vast majority within its education services, newly published figures show.

In 2020/22, the council paid out £104,630, followed by a small decline in 21/22 to £92,698. That leapt to £258,730 in 22/23 and hit a peak of £540,611 last year before falling back this year to £480,797. The majority of its recent payouts, 93 per cent, were connected to delays or failures in its Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process, including delays in issuing EHCPs, missed or incomplete provision outlined in plans, or breaches of statutory timeframes for assessments and reviews.

Payments typically fall into two groups: fault in service provision, such as delays in EHC needs assessments, calculated at about £100 per month – and symbolic financial remedies for the distress, frustration, and uncertainty caused by its failures. About 74 per cent of the payments this year related to issues with its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities service.

Previous cases have included a Surrey teenager who lost almost a year of school due to council staff shortages, and there have been parent-led protests outside the council’s headquarters calling for better provision for children. The county council has previously stated that part of its long-running special educational needs problems had been the backlog of cases, made worse due to lack of staff, as well as the national shortage of trained educational psychologists.

The county council said it will focus on quicker, more empathetic complaint handling, issue new guidance and investigation templates to staff and carry out a ‘deep-dive’ review of issues impacting SEND.

Councillor Jonathan Hulley, cabinet member for children, families and lifelong learning, said: “We continue to work hard to reduce spend on fines, which we know is higher than it should be. However, the Government has recognised that SEND is a broken national system in urgent need of funding and reform. Since 2018, Surrey’s SEND service has made significant improvement against a hugely challenging national picture and an unprecedented increase in demand.

“Our longstanding dedication to and extensive investment in this issue has resulted in considerable progress, with the volume of complaints about education services down 12.1 per cent from the previous year. We also recognise that delays in issuing EHCPs have historically contributed to missed provision and subsequent fines, however considerable progress has been made in this area.

“Our average EHCP timeliness in Surrey across the 2025 calendar year to date is 91 per cent, well above the national average of 46.4 per cent. We have invested heavily in SEND and in July our Cabinet approved a further £4.9m to expand and restructure the service, including an increase to the team directly supporting families through the needs assessment and EHCP process from 81 to 141.

“This will reduce the number of families each staff member is supporting, and in turn create capacity for staff to work more closely and more responsively with children and young people, families, schools and settings. Over time we expect these improvements to have an impact on the number of Local Government Ombudsman complaints. It is our absolute priority to ensure every child with additional needs and disabilities in Surrey receives the support that they need.”

New Surrey County Council HQ, Woodhatch Place on Cockshot Hill, Reigate. Credit Surrey County Council

Epsom’s boys’ and girls’ schools celebrate A level results

11 December 2025



Epsom’s two prominent secondary schools, Rosebery and Glyn, are celebrating outstanding A-level and vocational qualification results, with this year’s achievements marking new highs in performance and student destinations.

At Rosebery School, staff and students are celebrating the school’s best-ever Key Stage 5 results. A-level attainment, vocational outcomes and overall achievement surpassed last year’s record figures, with 36% of entries graded A* or A, 70% awarded between A* and B, and 88% graded A* to C. Vocational entries averaged a Distinction.

Among the highest achievers were Sadie Smith (A* in Maths, Further Maths, Physics and Chemistry – now heading to Durham University to study Mathematics), Bethany Hatton (A* in Biology, Chemistry and Maths – Biochemistry at Warwick University), and Raadhika Wenham (A* in Biology, Chemistry and Psychology – Zoology at the University of Nottingham). Other top performers included Jessica Sheehy, Dasha Botha, Lily Browning, Stacey Boamah, Kate Blackall and Esther Scott, each with two As, *and Issy Carter, who achieved a Distinction* in both vocational qualifications.

Headteacher David Lach praised the “remarkable resilience, determination, and talent” of the Class of 2025, noting that students leave as “empowered, confident young women ready to make their mark on the world”.

Glyn School also reported a strong year, with nearly half of all grades at A*-B. Standout results included Faris Al-Ugaily (A* in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics – Chemical Engineering at Imperial College London), Brody Skinner and Lewis Ashworth (both achieving A* in Physics, Further Maths, Maths and the EPQ, with Ashworth progressing to Automotive Engineering at Loughborough University), and Eleanor Weston (A* in Biology, A in Chemistry and Maths – Biomedical Science at Newcastle University). Olivia Buchanan (A* in Geography, A* in Psychology, A in Politics and A* in EPQ) will study Law at the University of Exeter, while Head Boy Donovan Livesey (A* in English Literature, A* in Sociology, A in Media Studies, A* in EPQ) will study Journalism at the University of Sheffield.

Glyn Headteacher Jo Garrod described the results as “a testament to hard work, determination, and the support of our exceptional staff” and said she was delighted to see so many students securing places at their chosen universities, apprenticeships and career pathways.

Both schools are part of the GLF Schools Multi-Academy Trust. Chief Executive James Nicholson congratulated staff, students and families, saying he was “delighted” with the impressive achievements across the board.

Surrey MPs slam SEND profiteers

11 December 2025



A new analysis of Surrey’s special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision reveals growing concern over spiralling costs, limited local authority capacity, and soaring profits among private providers – all while many children with special needs remain without adequate support.

The situation has drawn particular attention following the release of financial data from companies operating independent special schools across the UK, including in Surrey. The Witherslack Group, which operates Bramley Hill School in Tadworth, reported a turnover of £208 million and an operating profit of £44.6 million this year – up from £172.8 million turnover and £34.8 million profit the year before. Some private providers, backed by private equity firms, have posted profit margins exceeding 20%.

In contrast, Surrey County Council – responsible for delivering education for over 16,000 children in the county with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) – faces an ongoing struggle to balance growing demand against limited state sector capacity. The Council’s own figures show that last year, it spent **£122 million**—almost half of its **£270 million high needs block grant**—on placements at non-maintained and independent schools.

The root of the issue lies in a long-standing shortage of suitable local authority-run SEND schools, which has left the Council heavily reliant on private sector provision. That reliance has come at a cost, both financial and human. According to Council data, **1,809 children in Surrey were recorded as being out of school for over a third of the time during the 2023/24 academic year**. Campaigners and parents report delays in assessments, a lack of transparency in placement decisions, and limited accountability from some providers.

The County Council has committed to increasing in-county SEND provision. Its **SEND Capital Programme**, launched in 2020, aims to create **1,500 new maintained school places by 2030**, with hundreds already in development. But critics argue progress is too slow, and that excessive profits among private providers are draining funds that could otherwise support local services.

Surrey’s six Liberal Democrat MPs – Al Pinkerton, Chris Coghlan, Helen Maguire, Monica Harding, Will Forster, and Zöe Franklin – have now called for **a legal cap on profits** made by private SEND providers. They propose a maximum margin of **8%**, aligning with figures cited by the Office for National Statistics for

average business profitability. The same threshold has also been suggested by the Education Secretary in the context of children’s social care reform.

In a joint statement, the MPs said:

“It is completely unacceptable that the top private SEND providers in Surrey are lining their pockets by exploiting a system that has been left in crisis by repeated failures from the Conservatives. Supporting places at non-maintained independent schools accounted for £122 million last year – money that could go further in public provision.”

“We are deeply concerned to see this greedy profiteering from private equity firms, especially when parents across Surrey are raising serious concerns about standards and support at some schools, including Bramley Hill.”

Surrey County Council has not commented directly on the profit figures but continues to highlight its strategic commitment to invest in new local SEND places. Its latest SEND Partnership Strategy focuses on co-producing services with families, improving timely access to support, and reducing reliance on high-cost placements. However, significant financial risks remain. In February, the Council acknowledged its high needs block deficit was continuing to grow, even with Government intervention schemes such as the “Safety Valve” programme.

Meanwhile, media scrutiny continues to follow the role of private companies in special education nationally. The BBC recently investigated complaints involving private SEND schools, and MPs including Monica Harding have raised questions in Parliament about accountability and off-rolling practices.

Parents and campaigners across Surrey continue to call for stronger regulation, more timely provision, and long-term investment in inclusive education. As one parent told *EET*: “We need a system that puts children first – not shareholders.”

Image: cc Bruce Matsunaga. Licence details

£4.9 million not enough to solve Surrey’s SEND problems?

11 December 2025



A £4.9m overhaul of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services in Surrey has been approved. But opposition members have claimed the investment won’t fix the system’s deep-rooted problems. The funding was signed off by ruling cabinet members for Surrey County Council at a meeting on July 22, as part of the council’s ongoing budget planning for next year (2026/27). But extra resources and staff “will not by themselves make the significant change the service needs”, according to opposing councillors.

Changes to the SEND service have been recommended as a result of the End-to-End review of the statutory service, council documents state. These include hiring 30 new permanent case officers, forming a new team dedicated to issuing Education, Health Care Plans (EHCPs), and reducing case load from over 200 to 150 per officer. Council documents detail there would also be two new operational groups formed – one focused on staffing, training and system development, while another group will focus solely on tribunals, mediations, dispute resolution, complaints and quality assurance.

But Cllr Fiona Davidson, the committee chair who oversees and scrutinises SEND services, flagged serious concerns to cabinet members. She said the committee “has already found that employing extra staff does not by itself result in the outcomes we so desperately need.” The member for Guildford Residents and Villages slammed the proposal and argued the funding does not describe specific, measurable outcomes or impacts: “How will we know we have made progress?” She said: “[The committee has] deep concerns that this additional funding will once again not deliver the services that the children with SEND, their parents and carers have a right to expect, and all Surrey residents should demand.”

Cllr Davidson said an injection of £15m into SEND services in July 2023 was promised to enable many process improvements in communications, IT changes and strengthen governance. “Was this £15m value for money?” she asked cabinet members. She said: “To make matters worse, many of the backlog EHCPs which the £15m funded turned out not to be fit for purpose. These backlog EHCPs have contributed to the rising number of appeals by parents to the SEND tribunal. The human cost of these poor EHCPs have been extremely depressing [...] Children not in school for months and years, families wrung out by trying to get support, schools at the end of their ability to cope trying to get very specialist support for their students. So we wondered, was that £15m value for money?” Although she agreed the investment has delivered significant EHCP timeliness, she said it is not clear that it has achieved much else promised two years ago.

Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council, defended the new plans, insisting the focus would be on prevention, early intervention and supporting families more effectively. He said: “It’s absolutely wrong that families feel pushed down that route to find the solution that is right for their child. This cabinet is very focused on spending every pound or penny of public money effectively.”

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[New Surrey County Council HQ, Woodhatch Place on Cockshot Hill, Reigate.](#) Credit Surrey County Council

Victory for parent power after axed bus route is replaced

11 December 2025



Campaigning parents whose children were told to bring torches and walk across unlit heathland by Surrey County Council have won a long-fought victory after it was announced that axed school buses would be replaced. Early this year Surrey County Council said it was saving money and cancelling the free bus service between Molesey and Esher High, advising children to instead walk through dark alleyways, unlit heathland and unguarded viaduct sluice gates. The council’s decision was made after bureaucrats decided the route was safe and that there would be no alternative provisions put on, to the horror of worried parents.

Now after months of campaigning, petitions and pressure from senior politicians to stop the ‘cruel and needless punishment of children’, the council has announced Falcon will trial an extra, paid for, 814 service from Molesey to Esher. Parents, though welcoming the news, are asking why the extra service could not have been announced at the same time, saving needless stress and worry, and why it took the community to fight back to make it happen?

Parent Kate Maxwell said: “This whole process has been so stressful on everyone involved, the parents, children, and schools, and for what? I’m thrilled they’ve seen sense but it could have been handled so much differently. They would have known it would cause a lot of problems for everyone, including the children already using paid buses. Surely, if they wanted, they could have put these arrangements in place when they axed the free buses instead of wasting everyone’s time. Why did it take the community fighting back to make this happen?”

In a letter to parents, Esher High School headteacher Andy King said they were pleased to share that an additional 814 bus would be running as a trial from September, following “strong and sustained advocacy from our school and parent community.” It added: “This outcome is the result of collective determination. When 81 of our students lost access to free coach transport, we were placed in a deeply challenging position – one we strongly opposed. But thanks to the powerful, united voice of our parents, carers, staff, governors and supporters, a positive step has now been taken. We want to thank everyone who spoke up, wrote in, and stood with us. Your efforts made the difference. While we regret that such a campaign was necessary, we are relieved that this decision has finally been confirmed. This will support our students getting to school safely, reliably, and ready to learn. At Esher C of E High School, we remain committed to doing what’s right for our students – and this is an example of what we can achieve together.”

MP for Esher and Walton, Monica Harding, has held meetings with the school and written to the council over the matter. She described it as a win for school children who were facing walks of up to three miles across unlit heathland with concerns about safety, after Surrey County Council decided to withdraw the Esher High School bus service. The MP added: “It’s a shame this decision took so long, causing so much uncertainty and stress for parents. Surrey must ensure that its policy making is joined up and reflects the lived experience of our children – I’m glad that this time local families have been heard. We now need to know that this much needed bus provision will be sustained over the longer term.”

Following Falcon’s decision to introduce an additional bus service to transport pupils to and from Esher High School, there will now be four buses on the 814 route. The extra service will initially run as a trial for the first half-term of the 2025/26 academic year with its use monitored before a decision is made on whether it is needed on a longer-term basis.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth at Surrey County Council, said, “We’re very aware of the challenges raised by parents and carers and have worked with Falcon to address these. As with all bus services, we need to ensure they are used to make them viable, so I encourage parents and carers to take up this new provision. This additional bus is being provided by Falcon at no cost to Surrey County Council.”

Image: Esher CoffE High School headteacher Andy King (Image Google and Esher High)

Epsom Library celebrates refurbishment this week

11 December 2025



To celebrate its extensive refurbishment, Surrey Libraries is holding a **Taster Week** at **Epsom Library** from **Monday 16 to Saturday 21 June**. The newly transformed Library Hub in the heart of Epsom town centre will offer a vibrant programme of free and ticketed activities for all ages.

What’s On

Throughout the week, visitors can enjoy face painting, yoga, author talks, and the library’s regular sessions including **Rhymetime**, **Storytime**, **digital support**, and **craft groups**.

Councillor Denise Turner Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, said:

‘We know that our Library Hubs are in the heart of our thriving and bustling communities. Every effort has been made to ensure that this investment delivers essential services, event, work, study and socialising spaces that our local residents need and want, creating a lasting legacy to serve our communities now and for years to come.’

Two special exhibitions will be on display during the week:

- **‘In the Margins’** – celebrating the voices of marginalised disabled artists.
- **Conquest Art Exhibition** – showcasing work by individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

Daily Activities Schedule

Monday 16 June

- 10:00am–4:00pm: Digital Skills Support – NHS App help (Drop-in)
- 10:30–11:00am: Rhymetime (Under 5s, free)
- 3:00–4:00pm: Knit & Natter Group (Free)
- 3:45–4:15pm: Craft: *Medieval Flags* (Ages 4+, £1 suggested donation)

Tuesday 17 June

- 10:15–10:45am: Storytime (Ages 4–8, free)
- 3:45–4:15pm: Craft: *Helicopters* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
- 4:00–5:00pm: Author Talk – **S.J. Bennett** (£6, book via Eventbrite)

Wednesday 18 June

- 10:00am–12:00pm: Bourne Hall Museum
- 12:00–2:00pm: Digital Buddy Session (Free, book in person)
- 2:00–3:00pm: Talk by Surrey History Centre Archivist **Julian Pooley** (Free, book via Eventbrite)
- 3:00–4:00pm: Exercise Class with Rainbow Centre (Free, book in person)
- 3:45–4:15pm: Craft: *Pirate Flags* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)

Thursday 19 June

- 10:30–11:00am: Rhymetime (Under 5s, free)
- 3:45–4:15pm: Craft: *Dinosaurs* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
- 6:00–6:30pm: Choir Performance – Refugee Network Choir (Free, book in person)

Friday 20 June

- 10:00am–4:00pm: **Smoothie Bike** – pedal for a fruity reward
- 2:00–3:00pm: Yoga (All abilities, free, book in person)
- 4:00–5:00pm: Craft: *Butterflies* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)

Saturday 21 June - Family Fun Day

- 9:30–11:00am: Face Painting (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
- 12:30–2:00pm: Balloon Modelling (Ages 4+, £1 donation)
- 2:00–3:00pm: Children’s Author Workshop with **Sam Stewart** (Ages 8–14, £4, book via Eventbrite)
- 3:45–4:15pm: Craft: *Create Your Own Bookmarks* (Ages 4+, £1 donation)

Explore the New Library Hub

Epsom Library now features:

- Flexible event and performance space
- Upgraded furniture and study areas
- Two new meeting rooms
- **Super Access technology:** extended access for members beyond staff hours (book an induction in person)

This refurbishment is part of the first phase of the **Surrey Libraries Transformation Programme**, supported by Surrey County Council’s Land and Property and Capital Projects teams.

The initiative aims to improve accessibility, modernise facilities, and offer more to Surrey’s communities.

Get Involved

- Visit the Epsom Library webpage for more event details.
- **Joining your local library is free** – sign up at the Surrey Libraries website.

Surrey schools shorter Summers?

11 December 2025



Summer holidays could be shortened in Surrey in favour of a longer October half-term break, after a county council decision. The change by Surrey County Council (SCC) means the October half term will now be two weeks long instead of the normal one week, with five days taken off the usual summer holiday period in July 2027 instead.

A public opinion survey carried out from December 2024 received 3,775 responses. Approximately 56 per cent of people agreed with having a two week autumn half term, while 36 per cent opposed the idea. Clare Curran, SCC Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, said the results from recent public consultations with schools and residents show “there is a clear appetite for change”. She said 60 per cent of schools that responded were in favour of a two week autumn half term, 30 per cent were against, and a further 10 per cent were undecided.

The two week autumn half-term break for community and voluntary controlled schools will begin in the 2026/27 academic year. Cllr Curran added: “This work is in response to the national conversation regarding school term times, and the feedback received by the council from schools, school staff, and families regarding the challenges of differing term dates. It is our intent to facilitate the council, schools and multi academy trusts working in partnership to set term dates that are consistent across the county.” The school year will still have 195 days, including five INSET days, the council said.

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