

Surrey musical quartet to play Jubilee concert to fundraise for their local NHS

11 May 2022



Epsom Music Charity will host an NHS Staff Benefit concert, featuring the Salieri Quartet, as part of local Jubilee celebrations on Friday 27 May at midday at the Epsom Playhouse in the presence of Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Mayor Elect of Epsom and Ewell.

The long established and experienced Salieri Quartet, whose members have played with orchestras across Europe and worked on West End shows, will treat the audience to a relaxing hour of classical favourites such as the Pachelbel Canon along with works from famous and familiar composers like Bach and Mozart to name but a few. The quartet will then 'string out' the entertainment by setting up in Market Square to entertain shoppers and businesses with a more contemporary programme, ranging from Beyoncé to Game of Thrones, and where donations will also be gratefully received!

READ MORE: Police appeal for witnesses after assault on Waterloo Road, Epsom

Simon Littlefield, Chief Nurse of the Trust, who will be attending the event said: *"A huge thank you to Epsom Music and the Salieri Quartet for dedicating their time to organise this event to support our charity; our people and the NHS. We are very grateful for the effort that has been put into this and would encourage people to come along and support this special day-time musical interlude."*



Jubilee Concert poster

Lionel Blackman, Trustee of Epsom Music, said: *"Our charity supports the education and performance of all music throughout Epsom and Ewell. Many in the music community were sadly affected by Covid in one way or another, and now that events can once again take place, we wanted to take the opportunity to show our immense gratitude to our local*

NHS. We are honoured the Mayor Elect can attend, and we hope other people can show their support by getting a ticket and coming along!"

The concert will be for one hour and start at midday on Friday 27 May. A minimum donation of £10 per ticket is requested which can be made online at www.epsommusic.org and all funds raised will go to Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity.

READ MORE: Enter the Dojo of the Code Ninjas

Enter the Dojo of the Code Ninjas

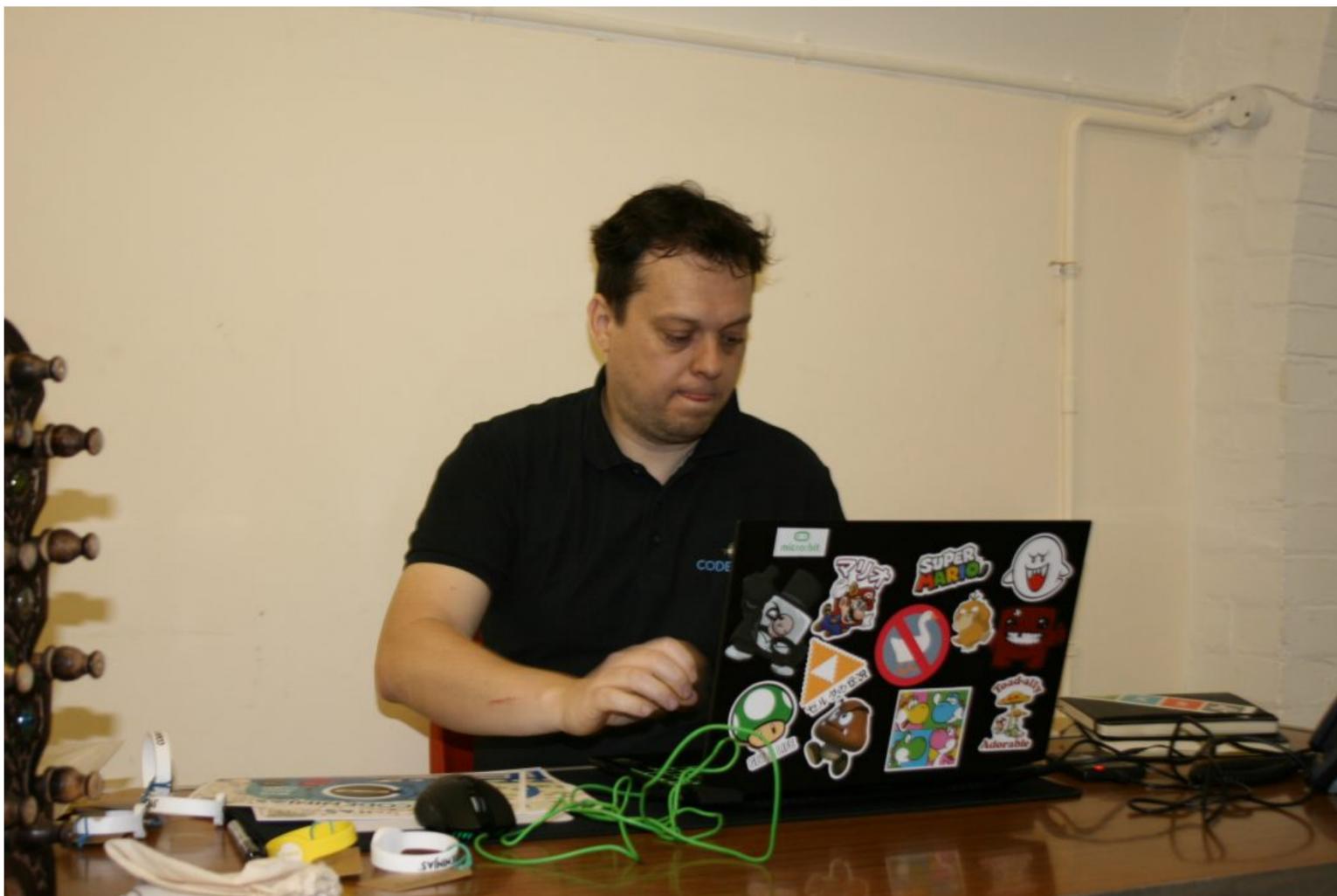
11 May 2022



A brand new coding school has opened in Epsom, teaching kids how to create programs, build robots and code video games.

Code Ninjas is a brilliant school whose Epsom branch has recently been set up by Lee Richards, a former English teacher and tech worker, that focuses on teaching young kids (aged 5-15) how to code and make their own video games. I was lucky enough to be invited to their grand opening at St. Martin's Church on Saturday to check out their set-up and have a chat with some of the organisers, and I was far from disappointed.

While working from home at the start of the pandemic, Lee reflected on both his 9 years of teaching English and the time he spent working online game development in Sweden and thought to himself, is there a more effective way to teach? Can I merge these careers together? Armed with a Masters in Philosophy and a post-graduate degree in teaching, Lee decided to open Code Ninjas Epsom.



Lee Richards, Code Ninja Master of Epsom Dojo

In the basement of St Martin's Church, walls adorned with detailed whiteboards and gaming paraphernalia surround 10 or so hard-working pre-teens, some are coding their own games, designing art assets to be used in said games, and some are using programmable toys. One thing they all have in common is they're clearly having a blast. With computers spread out across the rooms, and "Code sensei's" on hand to help the kids out, they couldn't have been in better hands. Their whiteboards are covered in plans, designs and diagrams informing the kids' coding decisions. Level names, level structure

and other design plans are scattered over the board, between cute doodles of popular gaming characters.



The Ninjas, hard at work.

Much like a regular dojo, the kids track their coding progress through “belts”, with different colours awarded for different levels of proficiency.

READ: Meet the man cycling to Ukraine for charity

“We’re agnostic about languages”, Lee tells me when I ask about which coding languages they focus on. “Most expect to be using Python”, (Python is commonly used for amateur video game development), Lee gets the kids started on C#, which is a more versatile language that is quite similar to Python but allows you to do more.

Even the mayor, Pete Donovan, was getting in on the fun, checking out the kids’ projects and congratulating the little Ninjas for getting their belts. Upon speaking with me, he cheerily recounts his brother’s youthful obsession with Sega games that used to keep him up at night.



Mayor Pete Donovan, checking out the handiwork of one of the ninjas.

Also on display at the church is an entire room dedicated to retro gaming, featuring consoles that are years older than me and decades older than the kids who were so gleefully using them. A ZX Spectrum, a Commodore 64, classic Nintendo consoles (NES and SNES) along with more modern consoles capable of 3D Graphics (Sega Dreamcast, Nintendo 64, PlayStation 1 and an original X-Box).

Coding, being so versatile and used for so many useful things, is commonly associated with the design and creation of video games. Through piquing the curiosity of the kids through their love of gaming, Lee is nurturing what could be a lifelong interest, or even career, for his Ninjas. It's not just about careers for Lee, Lee believes that a digitally-literate generation of kids would be nothing but beneficial to humanity, and hopes to help forge these Ninjas into the digital pioneers of tomorrow.

If you think your child would like to become a Code Ninjas, have a look at their website for all the information you need: <https://www.codeninjas.co.uk/epsom-sry-uk>

READ: Queen misses opening of Parliament - Derby in question?

Queen misses opening of Parliament - Derby in question?

11 May 2022



Queen Elizabeth was represented by the Prince of Wales at today's parliamentary ceremony, due to "episodic mobility problems" (according to Royal Doctors) preventing her from appearing in person. Her Majesty has only missed 2 of these events, both due to pregnancy. In these cases, the Lord Chancellor read her speech. Her Majesty has not missed a parliamentary opening ceremony for 60 years.

Prince Charles standing in as Queen's counsel for the ceremony represents an enormous shift in the duties of the Prince of Wales. Another future King, the Duke of Cambridge, Prince William, was also in attendance, making his first appearance at the ceremony. Prince Charles carrying out the duties of the Head of State will surely attract media attention across the globe, as the longest ever serving Heir Apparent begins to share duties with his Mother.

READ MORE: Epsom Derby: Queen's horse pulled out of race

The Queen's absence raises questions around other events planned for year, Her Majesty celebrates her Platinum Jubilee this year, marking 70 years on the throne. Events are planned up and down the country. Perhaps the most famous of these events is the Epsom Derby, which the Queen is known to thoroughly enjoy, despite it being the only one of the 5 'Classic' races she is yet to win.

Speaking to Hello! Magazine, Racing broadcaster Brough Scott said: *"The thought of The Queen winning The Derby this year, of all the fairy-tale stories, that would be beyond it. It's a wonderful thought."*

However, due to her mobility problems that have been plaguing her since last Autumn, is an appearance from Her Majesty at Epsom Derby going to be called into question? The Queen was absent from the Derby in 2021, due to the restrictions in place at the time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If the Queen feels she cannot attend this year either, it's safe to say that the mood will be severely dampened.

READ MORE: Platinum Jubilee: 5 things to do in Epsom!

Council: Horton CPO debate shelved

11 May 2022



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council were due to a debate on a CPO (Compulsory purchase order) regarding Horton Cemetery 5th May 2022. This CPO was formally requested by the charity Friends of Horton Cemetery, as the land has fallen into rough shape since being sold by the Department of Health 1983 to a private property company. Marked as 4th on the agenda for the Strategy and Resources Committee of the Council on 5th May 2022, the item was declared withdrawn by Chairman Cllr Colin Keane. We understand that the Council will revisit the matter later in the year.

This is not the first time that Horton Cemetery has been on the council's agenda, at its 9 September 2021 meeting, the Council's Licensing and Planning Policy Committee agreed to the Local Listing of Horton Cemetery, including the boundary railings and a war memorial built in 2004 outside the railings and facing onto Horton Lane.

The local charitable organisation, The Friends of Horton Cemetery ("the FHC"), are very active in preserving it's historic and cultural significance. Their stated goal is to:

"Bring dignity and respect to the thousands of mental health patients, including war heroes, who died within the Epsom Cluster of asylums and are buried, forgotten and unmarked on a neglected piece of land in Surrey, England. Our ambitious plans include reclaiming the derelict site and transforming it into a beautiful, calming garden-arboretum, with a lasting memorial and 'book of the dead' containing the names and details of all known burials."

The FHC were instrumental in securing the Local Listing. They have also tried repeatedly, without success, to engage with the private owner to seek a sale of the site to the Charity.

Council 'Stumped' for tree cash?

11 May 2022



At a meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Strategy and Resources Committee on Thursday 5th May 2022 Councillors voted for a controversial new £186,000 per annum tree maintenance contract with regular supplier Advanced Tree Services Ltd (ATS).

ATS is a family-owned and run Woking-based business employing in the region of 50 workers. The sole director is Daron Mitchell who has run the company since 1997. Profit and Loss accounts have not been filed with Companies House.

The Council is responsible for trees on its land and an Officer's report to Councillors stated that there are approximately 32,000 trees within the Borough. The Report is not clear if that is the number of trees on Council land or the Borough as a whole.

The Council is liable to persons injured by trees on its land if trees have not been inspected and maintained. The Council put a three-year contract for the Borough's tree maintenance out to tender and received four bids.

ATS will undertake the full range of tree inspections and maintenance works. The works are to be performed on trees located within the borough on the Council's land and co-managed sites - Nonsuch Park and the Downs. The contracted works include a tree inspections programme, tree planting and aftercare, tree maintenance, emergency callouts and Oak Processionary Moth control.

The annual cost of the previous tree contract was £81,000 plus a budget of £5,000 to address Oak Processionary Moth. The cost of the new contract is £185,000 per annum, an increase of £104,000.

Of this £104,000 increase, £59,500 can be linked to industry inflation as the contract has not been re-tendered for a number of years. The remaining £44,500 increase is due to new service requirements

The £185,000 cost of the new contract exceeds the Council's existing budget by £99,000. Officers proposed that the £59,500 increase due to industry inflation can be funded by the Council's "budgeted contingency for contract inflation". However, the unbudgeted £39,500 increase attributable to service enhancements will need to be found within the tree maintenance service's existing "budget envelope", or from "alternative service areas".

Not all Councillors were convinced that this shortfall of £39,500 could be found and questioned the wisdom of proceeding with the contract. Officers appeared "stumped" as to where the money will come from.

The motion was passed with 8 votes for and 1 against.

Read more of our council coverage here

Meet the man cycling to Ukraine for charity

11 May 2022



When raising money for charity, some people do bake sales, others go on a sponsored run or maybe organise a benefit concert, but one Epsom resident is doing something a little different.

If you're in the town centre today, look out for Rob Carin who has popped himself on an exercise bike to cycle the whole distance from Epsom to Ukraine, in order to raise money for the Ukrainian people. Rob Carin is a volunteer for SSWU (Surrey Stands with Ukraine), a wonderful charity we've spoken about before, they're set up in the Ashley Centre, taking donations for much needed medical supplies to send to Ukraine, along with other essentials. SSWU has done amazing work, uniting local people and inspiring charitable spirit for a country in crisis.

Rob tells me that the volunteers take it turns on the bike, and that they average 100KM a day. Collectively, they're going to cycle the full distance of 2504KM from Epsom to Independence Square in Ukraine.

Go along and donate to him if you can, and support the fantastic work that he and SSWU are doing during this crisis.

To donate to Surrey Stands With Ukraine, please follow the link below:

surreystandswithukraine.org

Read more of our community and volunteer-based coverage here.

Epsom Derby: Queen's horse pulled out of race

11 May 2022



The Queen's racehorse Reach For The Moon has been pulled out of the Classic after failing to recover from an injury in time. The horse was injured late last year.

The horse, trained by father-son duo John and Thady Gosden and ridden by Frankie Dettori, was the 3rd favourite.

The colt was tipped as one of the favourites to win on June 4th after finishing first at the Solario Stakes at Sandown Park last August. He later sustained an injury that was not thought serious enough to rule him out of the Epsom Derby, this was apparently not the case.

John Gosden told the Racing Post he would not contest the Classic at Epsom.

"Following a setback last autumn, Reach For The Moon has been given all the time and care he requires in his training programme," said Gosden.

"We had planned to run him in the Dante Stakes at York next week. However, in the best interests of the horse, we have decided that this race is coming too soon for him."

"Consequently, he will not run in the Derby and will be pointed towards Royal Ascot."

Platinum Jubilee: 5 things to do in Epsom!

11 May 2022



Pictured above provided by The Jockey Club

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations are coming up in early June, commemorating 70 years on the throne for

her majesty. Events, celebrations and street parties will be held up and down the country in honour of the Queen's long reign.

Are you at a loss for what to do during this time? Curious about what's going on here in Epsom? Well look no further, we've curated a list of events, parties and celebrations going on right here in Epsom. Read on!...

The Derby Festival - Epsom Downs Racecourse



The Queen with her horse 'Highclere' at Epsom Racecourse in 1974 - CREDIT: The Jockey Club

The Royal world will converge on Epsom Downs as the Queen attends Epsom Derby. A life-long lover of horses and racing, the Queen will be present in the royal box on June 4th as she has been for almost every year since 1946, cheering on her horse. No monarch-owned horse has won the Derby since 1909 when King Edward VII's horse Minoru took first place. A victory for her majesty would be a wonderful cherry on top of her celebrations.

A world-famous event, undoubtedly the highlight of the jubilee, it's not one to miss.

Hat Making Workshop - Epsom Square



One for the kids! In celebration of the world's most famous hat-wearer, "Make Your Jubilee Hat Day" will be held on May 14th in the Atrium, next to Epsom Library at Epsom Square. Kids will be welcome to come along and make their own hats inspired by Her Majesty's sense of style, to wear around the town at any of the Jubilee events.

The event will be run from 11 am to 3 pm on Saturday 14th of May. Free for all.

NHS Staff Benefit jubilee Concert - Epsom Playhouse



Epsom Music presents The Saleri Quartet for a very special Jubilee performance at Epsom Playhouse. The performance is in honour of NHS key workers who work so hard on our behalf.

Free tickets will be allocated for Epsom Hospital staff, all proceeds from other tickets will go to a local NHS staff benevolent fund.

The concert will take place on May 27th at 12noon

Tickets available at www.epsommusic.org

Street Parties



A classic British street party - CREDIT @EpsomHR on Twitter

Street parties and royalty go hand in hand, from coronations, marriages, births and jubilees, the British public love an excuse to eat sandwiches on a big union-jack patterned table in the middle of the road. So what better way is there to celebrate Her Majesty's jubilee then attending or organising a party for your street?

Organising a street party for residents in Epsom is easy, with no need for council permissions or licenses. However, all public health guidance must be followed. If you wish to close your road temporarily you must make an application to Epsom & Ewell Council. Council's guidance on this can be read [here](#).

Epsom Jazz Club Jubilee Night



Fancy some Jazz and a cheeky jubilee drink? Epsom Jazz Club will be hosting a very special Jubilee themed evening of music, drinks and much more!

Nigel Price and Vasilis Xenopoulos will be performing at Epsom Jazz Club in the Oaks Room of the Conservative Club. Come and celebrate our Queen's long reign with some tantalising jazz from some of Jazz's most accomplished musicians.

Tickets £10 (£12 on the door), available from epsomjazzclub.com

READ MORE: [Emily Elizabeth Campbell - Horton Cemetery Stories](#)

Man injured in car crash at Epsom General Hospital

11 May 2022



On Tuesday afternoon, a serious collision took place in Epsom General Hospital's car park. At 3:07 PM, the driver of a red Kia is believed to have lost control of their vehicle and driven into a passing pedestrian. The pedestrian, who is male, is currently receiving medical attention for his injuries.

The police are appealing for information following the incident. If you have a dashcam or a helmet cam that may have captured what happened, or if you were in the area from 3:00 pm - 3:10 pm, the police urge you to get in contact.

Get in touch with Surrey Police quoting PR/45220046682 via their live webchat or on their online reporting tool.

If you don't wish to speak with the police, you can call independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

READ MORE: [Idling drivers in Epsom & Ewell face £40 fines](#)

[Read more of our news coverage here](#)

Idling drivers in Epsom & Ewell face £40 fines

11 May 2022



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has vowed to fine drivers who leave their engines running while stationary. Engine idling produces air pollution and increases the amount of toxic air that we breathe. The act enforces Rule 123 of the Highway Code, which states: "You must not leave a vehicle's engine running **unnecessarily** while that vehicle is stationary on a public road"

Numerous studies have established that long-term exposure to air pollution reduces life expectancy, due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and lung cancer. Even short-term exposure affects lung function, exacerbates asthma and results in respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions. Every minute, an idling car produces enough exhaust emissions to fill 150 balloons with harmful chemicals, including cyanide, nitrogen oxide and

tiny particles of poison.

The Royal College of Physicians believes that 40,000 people a year die early because of air pollution, with car idling being a contributing factor. Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable. An idling engine burns fuel less efficiently than when the vehicle is moving and so produces more emissions. Because toxic gases from idling are emitted in the same place, localised air pollution is much worse, especially near schools. Research shows that exposing children to high levels of air pollution can stunt lung growth and cause behavioural and mental health problems.

Engine idling has been an offence since 1988 and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is now taking action. Enforcement officers will ask drivers who are caught idling to switch off their engines. Refusal to do so will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of £20, rising to £40 if not paid within 28 days. Councillor Neil Dallan, Chair of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee said *"Idling is sometimes unavoidable but there are instances, such as waiting for a takeaway or when collecting children from school, when idling is not necessary. We don't want to issue fixed penalty notices, and it will be the last resort, but we do want to enforce anti-idling regulations effectively to improve air quality"*.

More Council news:

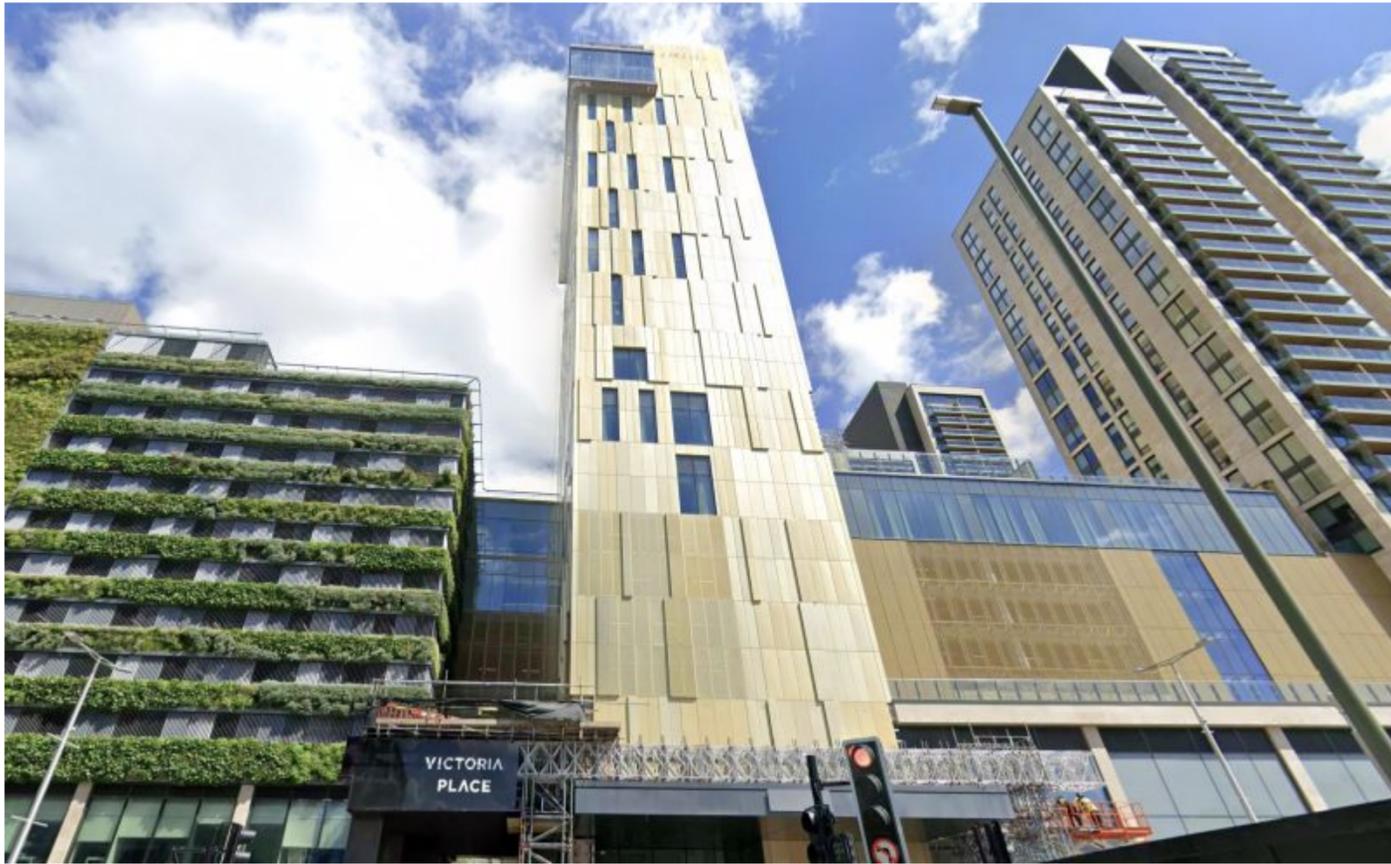
▪ **Epsom on road to twin with world-famous Ukraine town of Bucha**



BBC reports: Epsom and Ewell has taken the first step towards twinning with a Ukrainian town. Epsom & Ewell councillors have backed plans to explore a twinning link with the ... [Read More](#)

21 March 2026

▪ **Woking bankruptcy sell off**



Woking Borough Council is selling off its flagship regeneration projects - including the town's new Hilton Hotel and shopping centres to private investors to claw back public money - branded ... [Read More](#)

21 March 2026

Guildford goes a different way to Epsom with Parish Council on a narrow margin



Guildford Borough Council has approved plans for a new town council despite warnings from its own leader that the move could hit the borough's most financially disadvantaged residents hardest. Council ... [Read More](#)

21 March 2026

Council losing “the plot”?

11 May 2022



Is Horton Cemetery in Epsom about to be condemned for good by the Borough’s own Burial Authority?

In a rushed special meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Strategy and Resources Committee on 5th May, Councillors will be asked whether to impose a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) against the private property speculator owner who has totally neglected for 40 years this burial ground of 9000 patients of the former five psychiatric hospitals of Epsom.

In a Council Officers’ Report, Councillors have been advised that the compensation payable to the owner will be in the region of £1/4 million. The valuation is based on the market value of “woodland”. The Report advises the owner will mount legal challenges against a CPO, leading to more expense for Council taxpayers.

Sheila Berry and Honorary Alderman Alan Carlson, former Mayors of Epsom and Ewell and now trustees of the **Friends of Horton Cemetery**, a Charity requesting the CPO, in a joint statement said: “If the owner gets the correct compensation a high value does not make it more likely that he will challenge a CPO than a low value.” On the valuation, they state: “We have expert advice from both a chartered surveyor and a lawyer that the comparison with “woodland” values is erroneous. The Cemetery is unique and is subject to a wide range of legal restrictions rendering it virtually worthless as a land asset. There is no development value and no possible income value due to these restrictions. We hope the Councillors on 5th May will not be discouraged by this misleading Report in pursuing a long-overdue intervention. A CPO is necessary to rescue the Cemetery from oblivion and belatedly show respect to 9000 souls who died in our Borough.”

You can attend the Council committee meeting on Thursday 5th May at 7.30 pm in The Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom or online.

UPDATE 6th May 2022: Marked as 4th on the agenda for the Strategy and Resources Committee of the Council on 5th May 2022, the item was declared withdrawn by Chairman Cllr Colin Keane. We understand that the Council will revisit the matter later in the year.

Surrey Police shows support for Muslim colleagues and communities during Ramadhan and wishes a blessed Eid Mubarak

11 May 2022



Last week, 78 volunteers from Surrey Police and Sussex Police joined Muslim colleagues and communities to show their support and learn more about Islam and observe Ramadhan, as part of a ‘Fasting Collective’ organised by the Force’s Inclusion team.

Ramadhan lasts for 30 days, coming to a close around this Sunday, 1 May with the celebratory day of Eid ul-Fitr on Monday, 2 May. During Ramadhan, Muslims abstain from food and drink, including water, during daylight hours, as a means of strengthening and reflecting on their faith.

The Fasting Collective’s day began shortly after 4 am with a short virtual group meeting and an inspirational welcome from Imam Mansoor Clarke.

At the end of the experience, at the invitation of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, 30 police officers and staff attended Mubarak Mosque in Farnham for Iftar, the breaking of the fast, a tour of the Mosque and an evening meal.

For those who didn't attend in person, food parcels were supplied by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Organisation for participants to enjoy after sunset.

This is the second year Inspector Chris Pike has fasted for the whole of Ramadhan to understand and support some Muslim friends.

Chris says: *"I was intrigued by how it feels to fast and what my colleagues and friends experience when they fast. Fasting for Ramadhan last year made me appreciate the things in my life that I take for granted, not just people, but also things like having a roof over my head and the community I live in. I feel that I have been fortunate to learn through my experience of fasting. Ramadhan also helps me consider my lifestyle and re-centre, giving me an opportunity to be healthier. Also, zakat, the making of donations to charity, is something which is central to the Muslim faith and has highlighted to me how we can make a difference in other people's lives; not just giving money, but giving people our time too, to give support and compassion to the people around us."*

Hibat ul Mohsin Abid, Director of Outreach for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association said:

"This is the second year that Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association (AMYA) UK has supported Surrey Police's Fasting Collective. AMYA is an organisation with a passion to serve the community and being a driver for positive change at its heart. To support this initiative, we were graciously permitted by His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the current head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, to hold the Iftar (breaking of fast) at the Mubarak Mosque. The Fasting Collective has been a great source of inspiration for our youth as well, as not only does it provide us with an opportunity to engage with the police, but also we are truly amazed by the positive experiences and warmth shared by the police. The positive feedback that we have received from those who took part in this initiative has been very encouraging and motivating. For this day, everything was done by volunteers, which included activities such as cooking and packing food, delivering food parcels to several police stations and hosting a physical and virtual Iftar. We really hope that the Fasting Collective will have allowed those who took part an opportunity to better understand the importance of Ramadhan and fasting. It has been an absolute pleasure to host Surrey Police and Sussex Police, and we sincerely hope that in the future we are able to continue with such initiatives and more."

Having taken part herself, Surrey Police's Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Ali Barlow reflected on her experience:

"Being one of the 78 officers and staff involved in the Fasting Collective has given me a much better understanding of why there is a fast and what it means to Muslims - a time for reflection, self-restraint and thinking of others less fortunate. On a practical point whilst I was thirsty rather than hungry during the day it really did make me stop, reflect and focus and made me realise just how much time during the working day we spend grazing on food, drinking endless cups of tea or coffee and getting absorbed in the demands of the everyday. Surrey Police has, through our commitments, promised to be kind, friendly, inclusive and supportive of our police families and to respect and reflect the differences in the communities we serve. We have also committed to valuing and learning from the different perspectives and experiences of others and this is exactly what being involved in the Fasting Collective has helped me to do. It has been an absolute privilege to be involved in the Fasting Collective, to show our support for our Muslim colleagues and communities during the Holy month of Ramadhan, and to experience the fast together. I would like to thank the community for welcoming us so warmly to the beautiful Mubarak Mosque - which has such a sense of peace - and for their generosity, kindness and support today. On behalf of us all, I wish everyone celebrating a wonderful Eid Mubarak."

Farhan Hayat, Deputy Inclusion Lead and Chair of Surrey Police Association of Culture and Ethnicity (SPACE) said: *"As a race and ethnicity staff network, we have been so touched and humbled by the support seen throughout Surrey Police for Muslim colleagues observing the holy month of Ramadhan."*

"For Muslims across the world, Ramadhan is without a doubt one of the most important and holiest months of the year and having the support of colleagues means so much. By authentically living the experience of others we strengthen both our knowledge and our connection with them, and we're so pleased that almost eighty colleagues chose to do that."

Competition IS OVER: Winner announced!

11 May 2022



The competition is officially over! Delighted to announce that Lee Richards correctly guessed the location! It was the pathway along the side of St. Martin's Church! Well done Lee, your details have been passed on to the event organisers.

They will be getting in contact with you to set up your free family ticket for the Nonsuch Town and Country Show, enjoy it!

Aldi donates 2000 meals to Surrey charities over the Easter period

11 May 2022



Aldi helped local charities in Surrey provide 2000 meals to people in need over the Easter school holidays.

The supermarket paired its stores up with local charities, community groups and food banks to donate surplus food, making the most of unsold fresh and chilled food throughout the Easter period.

Around 105 tonnes of food were donated throughout the UK, with more than 187,000 meals expected to be donated to causes focused on supporting families and children.

The donations followed research from Aldi and community-giving platform Neighbourly which found that 98% of food banks in the South East have seen demand soar since the start of the year.

Neighbourly recently polled more than 700 food banks and community causes nationwide and found that an estimated 30% of people using these services in the South East in recent months have been new to the food banks.

On average, food banks in the region reported an average rise in demand of around 24% for their services so far this year, with expectations of further increases of around 28% in the next three months as higher energy bills and an increase in national insurance contributions add to the pressure.

Liz Fox, Corporate Responsibility Director at Aldi UK, said: “The school holidays can be a busy time for the local charities and organisations we support, but, especially in the current climate, food banks are experiencing even greater demand than usual.

“We’re proud to support so many good causes in Surrey, helping them to provide meals to those in need over the recent school holidays.”

Steve Butterworth, from Neighbourly, added: “The findings of our latest survey highlight that the cost-of-living crisis is clearly deepening, with families and households up and down the country really starting to feel the pinch and turning to charities and local causes for support as a result.

“During what is a hard time for everyone, anything people can do to give back in the coming weeks will make all the difference.”

Aldi has community donation points in stores nationwide to help those in need and is encouraging customers to help in any way they can. According to its poll with Neighbourly, products that are most in-demand at local community groups include tinned food, tea and coffee, UHT milk, toiletries, and household cleaning products.

All’s well that ends well for the Wells Centre

11 May 2022



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is to transfer the running of the long-mothballed Wells Community Centre, located at the end of Spa Drive, The Wells Estate in Epsom, to Epsom Wells Community Association (EWCA). EWCA is a charity newly registered in December 2021, whose stated aims are: “..... to reopen The Wells Community Centre. The centre will be available to the community for hire purposes. We also aim to run classes that fulfil our values of education, wellbeing, environment and community.” The Charity has a nine-strong Board of Trustees chaired by Vanessa Marchant, all residents of the Borough.

The Strategy & Resources Committee of EEBC agreed at its meeting on 29 March 2022 that the community group would take responsibility for the building and put it back into use for hire, a café, and a range of community-led activities. The Council will grant a lease of the site with an initial two-year rent-free period after which the rent payable will reflect the community use of the building.

EWCA have produced a viable business case that sees the existing building renovated, and long-term managed by the Wells residents at no short or long-term costs to the Council and council taxpayers. The business case proposal is for a “reimagined centre” which will mix community group use, private hire, a business hub and hot desk space with a community café.



The Wells Centre - Image © Alan Becken

It plans to reinvigorate the offering on the premises to deliver a modern, forward-looking, multi-generational community centre. The centre will support Epsom & Ewell’s “Future 40” plans, helping to make the Borough an even better, brighter place.

EWCA proposes to be responsible for the Wells site in its entirety and release the Council from any ongoing financial responsibility. In addition, the Council would receive rental income from the commencement of the third year of the lease.

Councillor Colin Keane, Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee said “We have listened to the local community and worked with EWCA to enable them to develop a business case to run the centre.

“The Council is committed to enabling and encouraging EWCA to succeed and a revived facility would support the principle that enhances the Cultural and Creative opportunities in the Borough where people work together for all the community.

“Crucially, this plan will also remove any financial call on the Council’s resources to enable the Council’s other key priorities for residents to be pursued”.

The decision of the Council was a culmination of a five-year campaign by local residents to re-open the centre.

The plan to close the Council owned and run Wells Centre first came to light during the November 2015 County Council bye-election when the Labour Party candidate Kate Chinn brought it to light.

The Council had decided the decision should be made in secret. The minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee for September 2015 indicate that an item was shielded from public scrutiny on the dubious ground of “*Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)*”. It would be very odd if this right to exclude the public could be used to hide information about the Council’s own finances.

The Council eventually called a consultation meeting at the Wells Centre when every suggestion that residents advanced was stonewalled.

When the Wells Centre originally closed, a small group of locals decided to find out exactly what local residents thought of the closure. It became clear that there was not just a desire for the centre to re-open, but also a desperate need.

The group found isolated lonely people, families with nowhere to go within walking distance, entrepreneurial returning-to-work mothers who now had no premises, young people no longer able to access youth groups, and many more.

This core group formed EWCA and was supported by like-minded residents from elsewhere in the Borough and after petitioning, marching, canvassing, and researching, they were satisfied that a reopened centre was a viable business idea.

Supported in particular by Borough Councillors Kate Chinn (Lab), David Gulland (Lib), Bernie Muir (Con) and Nigel Collin (RA) and helpfully advised by council officers the business plan was finally presented to the Council.

The business plan is over 80 pages long. In essence, the plan is for an integrated centre offering activities that fall into the following categories; wellbeing, education, fitness and environment. For a more in-depth overview visit <https://indd.adobe.com/view/73d5b9e9-62ae-40ae-a457-282ada7246fa>

Vanessa Marchant adds: “Post pandemic we are all more aware of what is on our doorstep, our communities rose to the fore and many don’t want to return to the commuter corridor lives they were living previously. With approx 70% of commuters now having a flexible week, activities within a 20-minute neighbourhood are due to get a real boost according to multiple news stories. So our already strong business case has been made stronger by the turbulent times we are living through. We will create a shorter version of the plan to share with people in the coming months.”

On funding, she said to the Epsom and Ewell Times - “We will not receive a subsidy from EEBC. We intend to apply to any and every fund we can, but primarily we are looking to YourFund, the National Lottery, CIL, local philanthropists and community fundraising initiatives.” In conclusion, EWCA thanks and appeals - “We are extremely happy with the Council decision. This result is the culmination of many years of hard work on the part of the local community, the members of the charity Epsom Wells Community Association (EWCA) and our council member advocates from Labour, Liberal Democrats, Conservative and the RA. The hard work of fundraising now begins and we will need help from the local community to make this happen.

Vanessa Marchant said, “That we won the vote is still sinking in but the real work in bringing the Centre back to life is just beginning.”

If you would like to be involved please get in touch via the EWCA website at <https://epsomwellscommunityassociation.org/contact/> or via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/savethewellscentre>

Council passes “Stand with Ukraine” motion, Labour amendment rejected.

11 May 2022



On Tuesday night 19th April 2022, at a meeting of the Full Council of Epsom and Ewell Borough, the Council debated and passed a motion titled “Stand Together with Ukraine”. It was a motion setting out to:

- a) Note the Commitments already made by the Government to house displaced Ukrainian families.
- b) Utilise the support funding provided by the Government to meet the welfare and care needs of Ukrainian families arriving in the borough via the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- c) Signpost those residents who house people displaced by this act of aggression to the information and support they are seeking.



Councillor Alex Coley (Residents Association - Ruxley Ward) authored the “Stand with Ukraine” motion

Cllr Alex Coley (Residents Association - Ruxley Ward), proposing the motion, stated: “*In these worst of times for the Ukrainian people, we have seen the best of people in our Borough, who’ve responded with an outpouring of kindness and generosity.*” The motion was unanimously passed by the Chamber, with one amendment (rejected) being submitted by Labour Party Councillors, Kate Chinn and Debbie Monksfield of Court Ward.



Councillor Kate Chinn (Labour Part - Court Ward) authored the amendment

The amendment called on the Government to take in more Ukrainian refugees, to step up its humanitarian obligations and provide more support to European countries, who are taking the majority of refugees. Councillor Chinn said, *“The government has been dragging its feet on the biggest refugee crisis in a decade.”* The reception was frosty, with members describing it as “Confusing” and “Political point-scoring”. Cllr Liz Frost (Residents Association - Woodcote Ward) stated her uneasiness, telling the Council more leniency in refugee policy could lead to *“terrorists”* finding easier pathways into the UK. Cllr Coley responded by stating that the aims of the amendment were better addressed to the Home Affairs House of Commons Select committee who could *“look into some of the things that are happening that perhaps should be done in a fairer and more effective way”*, concluding that as a Borough Council, it isn’t their place to scrutinise Government policy.

The motion is an important message to Ukrainian citizens, some of whom will be relocating to Epsom under the Government’s Homes for Ukraine scheme, and an important reassurance of solidarity for Ukrainians already living in Epsom and Ewell, and beyond.

If you’re local to Epsom, and you’d like to help during the Ukraine Crisis, please get in contact with Surrey Stands with Ukraine and the Epsom Refugee Network, two fantastic community charities that are doing excellent work for disenfranchised people.

Have any thoughts on this motion? Let us know via email: admin@epsomandewelltimes.com, or through the contact form, found [HERE](#).