



Are you emoji aware?

Over the past two weeks, Surrey Police has been raising awareness about the alternative meanings of emojis, which some young people may use to reference drugs and sexual behaviour.

Have you ever wondered how children use emojis in their day-to-day life? Does that snowflake really mean snow is on the way? Are fruit emojis always only used to reference fruit?

These are some of the questions we have been addressing in our most recent campaign, which is focused on being 'emoji aware'.

Throughout the campaign, we have aimed to educate parents, carers, teachers and those working with children on this secret world of emojis and their more concerning meanings. While this campaign might sound worrying, and we want to highlight the serious meaning these emojis can take on, we are keen to stress that the use of these emojis on their own does not necessarily mean a child is involved in drugs. Instead, this may be seen as part of a bigger picture of a change in their behaviour. Other changes may include (but aren't limited to):

- Changes in their mood
- A change in their performance at school

Them becoming increasingly secretive

Detective Chief Inspector **Kate Hyder** said: "We really want parents and guardians to feel confident to have a conversation with their children about this, if and when they need to. We have shared a lot of information around emojis over the past couple of weeks, both on social media and with our local partners to help raise awareness and start the discussion around this.

"Our focus on this doesn't stop with the end of this initial campaign. We will be continuing to work with local partners to extend the conversation around emojis. We're also aware that emojis and their alternative meanings are something that will constantly change, and so our work and research into this will continue."

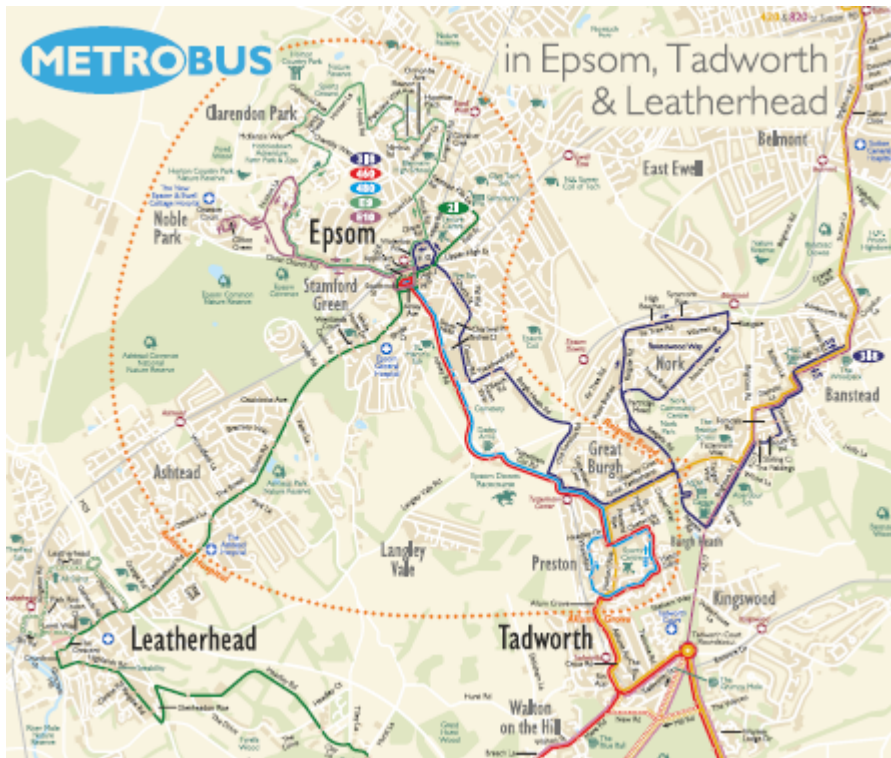
For guidance on starting these conversations and support if parents or guardians are concerned, there are a number of resources and services that can help, some of which are specifically for children:

- Catch 22 - Surrey's Young People Substance Misuse Service
- Talk to FRANK has helpful advice about drugs for children and parents
- NSPCC has advice about keeping your child safe, including how to have difficult conversations
- Childline - information for young people about drugs and sexual relationships
- YMCA WiSE (What is Sexual Exploitation) supports young people around staying safe in relationships, online and in the community
- Surrey Police website about county lines drug dealing

This isn't a campaign that starts and finishes within this two-week window. Instead, this is about encouraging parents and guardians to have conversations with their children at a time that works for everyone involved. What is vital in these discussions is trust. We're very aware that checking phones could break down this trust between a parent and their child, and therefore we are not suggesting parents do this. Instead, we want people to be aware of what these emojis mean, in case they do happen to see them.

Epsom bus fares being capped at £2

Epsom's main bus operator Metrobus joins nine other bus operators across the county in signing up to the Department for Transport's £2 bus fare cap scheme announced 19 December 2022. The Epsom buses include numbers 318, 460, 480 and the E9 and 10.



From 1 January to 31 March 2023, a single bus journey will cost no more than £2 on selected routes across Surrey, helping people to save money and use their car less. With an average single local bus ticket costing £2.80, passengers are expected to save almost a third of the ticket price per journey.

Operators taking part so far are:

- Compass operating in Cranleigh, Dorking, Godalming, Guildford, Redhill and Reigate
- Stagecoach operating in Camberley, Farnham, Guildford, Haslemere, Hindhead, Woking
- Metrobus operating in Banstead, Caterham, Epsom, Horley, Leatherhead, Lingfield, Redhill and Reigate
- Falcon operating in Addlestone, Byfleet, Chertsey, Cobham, Epsom, Esher, Leatherhead, Molesey, Sheerwater, Staines, Walton, Weybridge and Woking
- Waverley Hoppa operating in Godalming and Guildford
- Thames Valley Bus operating in Camberley
- Surrey Connect (Mole Valley DDRT) operating in Leatherhead and Dorking
- East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership operating in Tandridge
- First operating in Staines and Egham
- Southdown operating in Caterham, Horley, Lingfield Oxted, Redhill and Reigate

Matthew Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth said: “We welcome this scheme which will help our residents to take the bus at a significantly reduced price, at a time when many are facing pressures from the rising cost of living.

“The bus industry is also facing a challenging time, resulting from the drop in passenger numbers and rising costs following the COVID-19 pandemic, so we hope that this scheme will also encourage new and old passengers to get back on the bus.

“We are currently investing £50m to improve bus services and grow patronage. This will see more zero emission buses, more real time passenger information and more measures to help buses run to time. When this £2 flat fare scheme ends, we will introduce a half fare scheme for young people aged 20 and under to further encourage bus usage.

“With transport accounting for 41% of carbon emissions in Surrey, it is hoped that cheaper bus travel will also lessen the need to travel by car for some journeys.”

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All change in Surrey's County Town?

Guildford town centre is going through some huge changes, with developments taking place on the sites of some former big names and plans to open up the riverside. The LDRS* has broken down the areas which will see new homes built, and how the town centre will be changing over the coming years.

Guildford's town centre masterplan sets out the future vision for the town, including developing the town's underused sites around North Street and hundreds of new homes. New homes in the town have been put forward as the more sustainable option, with shops, facilities and public transport all within walking distance and a need in the area for lower-priced homes. But the amount of affordable housing has been an issue on some developments, with developers citing rising construction costs and lengthy planning processes meaning schemes are no longer able to offer high numbers of affordable homes, if any.

We round up some of the biggest developments below and how they will change the face of Surrey's county town.

Debenhams

A planning application for nearly 200 homes on the former Debenhams site was narrowly approved by councillors on November 22. The development will see the old store knocked down and two new buildings replacing it alongside shops, a riverside walkway and possibly a boutique cinema. Councillors approved the controversial plans by six votes to five, debating the limited amount of affordable housing and the flood risk, with the Environment agency ultimately satisfied with measures put in place to reduce the risk of flooding. This site will be a key part of the town centre redevelopment and opening up the riverside for the public.

Train station

In February 2018, planning permission was granted on appeal for developer Solum's £150million regeneration of the land around Guildford Station. The borough council had refused the application because of concerns about the development's impact on the Grade II* listed St Nicolas Church, among other things. The Station Quarter when complete will include a new station building, more than 400 homes, as well as shops and office space. The developer's website highlights £25million of station improvements including a multi-storey car park and new plaza with shops and cafes.

Old Orleans restaurant

The former restaurant next door to the Odeon cinema is currently empty and the council, as the owner of the site, has no current plans to lease it out. Councillor Tim Anderson (Residents for Guildford and Villages, Clandon and Horsley), the authority's lead councillor for assets and property, said it would not be cost-effective to lease it in the short-term while there were plans to develop the building. He added: "The full plan for the Bedford Wharf area, including this site, forms part of the emerging town centre masterplan, Shaping Guildford's Future. Proposals are that the land will support a wide mix of uses. It will support the town centre with new homes, jobs, community and service spaces."

North Street

The area around North Street has been called the "poor relation" to the town's picturesque high street - just don't call them cobbles. The redevelopment of land around the bus station, including the refurbishment of the bus station itself, could bring nearly 500 new homes and part-pedestrianise North Street. Plans originally put forward in December 2020 included 700 homes, this has steadily been reduced after public consultations, as has the height of the buildings in the scheme. The tallest building has been reduced from 14 to 13 storeys and the second tallest from 10 to nine storeys. A video on the developer's website shows public squares, restaurants, and new shops and cafes as part of the plans, which should be considered by the council's planning committee in January 2023.

Wisley airfield

While it's not within Guildford town centre, the proposed new town which may be built on the former Wisley Airfield could still have an impact. Campaigners have raised concerns about how local village roads will cope with traffic from the residents of the proposed 1,700 homes. The new town would be around a 20 minute drive down the A3 from Guildford, and a similar distance from Woking. The site is also just over a mile from the A3's junction 10 with the M25, where junction upgrade works have started.

It may be just another reason to look again at Guildford MP **Angela Richardson's** calls for the A3 to tunnel under Guildford to help with traffic and pollution, as she called for in Parliament in December.

An outline application for the plans will come to the council's planning committee in 2023.

North street "fly through" video by developers: <https://www.northstreetregeneration.co.uk/virtual-flythrough.html>

Solum webpage on station development: <https://www.solum.co.uk/development/guildford/>



*Epsom and Ewell Times BBC partner – Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Related reports:

Tunnel vision for Surrey's A3?

Housing plan flying in the face of opposition

Local poverty moves 12 year old to give up pocket money

Merland Rise church caretaker told LDRS* reporter: "Last week a young girl, about 12 years old, came and knocked the door. She'd gone to Asda with her pocket money and spent it on food for the food bank. I was nearly in tears."

Decision makers need to listen to the "lived experience" of people using food banks to tackle the root causes of poverty, according to one organiser. **Tadworth's Merland Rise church** is home to a weekly food bank, as well as being one of Surrey County Council's warm hubs, where people can go if they are struggling to heat their own homes.



Image: Staff, volunteers and councillors at Merland Rise church, which holds a weekly food bank and warm hub. Emily Coady-Stemp

While uptake on the warm bank had been slow, the modern church was still a hive of activity when the LDRS* visited in late November to talk to some of those involved. The food bank has seen a rise in its users, and has moved downstairs to a bigger room in the church, while organisers are sure that as people use the church for other activities, the news will start to spread about the warm hub.

The building, where warm hub visitors can get a tea or coffee and a hot meal, is large and modern, and used for many community activities. Its administrator **Christina Lane** said she probably takes the building for granted given she goes to church there every week. She recognised that many people were struggling at the moment, and didn't want anyone to feel embarrassed about coming down. "There's no shame, we just have to club together," she said.

Jen Barnard is strategy lead at **Good Company**, which was established this year and is an umbrella organisation working with several food banks, the **Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network** and the **Epsom Pantry** among others.

She said there had been a rise in numbers of people using the food bank, compared to pre-pandemic levels, and that 10,000 food parcels have been given out this year across the five food banks in Banstead, Leatherhead, Tadworth, Epsom and Ewell.



Offering advice to those who visit on all aspects of their life, Ms Barnard said people may be referred on for mental health support, help with applying for disability benefits or advice on reducing energy consumption.

A key part of the work, she believes, is in listening to users and looking at what changes might help them.

"It seems like a small thing," she said, "but listening to people and understanding that everyone is an individual, everyone is unique. And a willingness [is needed] to try to think in new ways, and trying to really hear what people are saying and respond to it."

She said the organisation's aim was to work towards a poverty-free future, but in the meantime to support those who needed it. "Very much a part of our strategy is participation and trying to bring together people with lived experience with decision makers, trying to say: 'We can make changes locally that are going to improve people's lives,'" she added.

Andrea Lewis is the Merland Rise church caretaker, who helps run the building including the many events that go on there, from the food bank to birthday parties, exercise classes and more. Speaking before December's cold snap hit Surrey, she said the warm hub hadn't really "kicked off" but she thought the word would spread as more people visited the church, including for a Surrey County Council bingo event taking place that afternoon.

Word spreading throughout the community also means people are being brought together at a time when many are struggling. Surrey County Councillor **Rebecca Paul** (Conservative, Tadworth, Walton & Kingswood) and Reigate and Banstead Borough Councillor **Rod Ashford** (Lower Kingswood, Tadworth and Walton) both recognise that people get a lot out of volunteering for projects such as the food clubs that run in the borough.

The borough council scheme offers people discounted food for an annual subscription of £1 and £2 payment to attend each week, giving people more ownership of the situation. Cllr Paul said: "In an ideal world we would hope that we wouldn't have to do this. It does strengthen communities, it's building the social fabric that these things are going on."

The warm hub is open on Tuesdays from 10am-6pm, though it won't be open on December 27.

*Epsom and Ewell Times BBC partner - Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Cover image - for illustration only.

Surrey woman's coercion experience shared

The powerful testimony of a woman who was subjected to years of coercive controlling behaviour has resulted in a man being handed an eight-year restraining order against her at Guildford Crown Court on 19 December.

Image - is purely for illustration. Neither the defendant or victim are represented.

The court heard how **Douglas Martin**, 42, of Winkfield Lane in Windsor, would intimidate and bully her so often as their relationship progressed that she has been left with acute anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Over a period of around three years, Martin would control where she could go, who she could be friends with and what belongings she was allowed to have, throwing away items he believed were not acceptable in their shared home.

Chores had to be done to a standard he would accept and he would become verbally abusive when things weren't done his way. The jury saw evidence of the extent of Martin's controlling behaviour after they were shown a photo of a Christmas tree she was made to decorate in the garden because he wouldn't allow her to have decorations inside the home. In addition, the court was played recordings of Martin's relentless berating and aggressive verbal abuse, used to belittle, exert control and a sense of superiority.

Martin was given an 18-month custodial sentence, suspended for 18 months, after the jury found him guilty of coercive controlling behaviour. He was also ordered to attend rehabilitation programmes, including a course on how to build healthy relationships.

In an impact statement, she relayed how constantly living in fear made her feel physically ill with heart palpitations and nausea. Speaking after the trial, she said: "Coercive controlling behaviour is happening to so many people who don't realise they are experiencing domestic abuse. I want those people to read what I have been through, recognise similarities in their own relationships and understand that it is not a situation they simply have to endure. They can find the strength to say enough is enough and trust in the fact that there is help, support and justice out there."

Investigating Officer **Natalie Ridley** said: "Today's result is testament to the courage of the victim in coming forward, disclosing



the abuse and giving evidence in court, which is ultimately what secured Martin's conviction.

If someone is continually behaving in an abusive way towards you which controls how you live any aspect of your life, that is coercive control. You do not have to suffer alone or in silence. We have specialist support in place to help you and will do everything possible to pursue offenders and hold them to account for their appalling actions."

Some of the signs of coercive controlling behaviour include:

- controlling your finances, such as taking your wages or benefits or only allowing you a small allowance
- preventing you from working or studying or controlling your ability to go to work
- controlling what you wear
- controlling when you can sleep and eat
- repeatedly putting you down such as telling you that you are worthless
- isolating you from friends or family

You can find more information on how to report domestic abuse, including coercive controlling behaviour, and details of support organisations here.

Recycling for food

A group of environmental volunteers in Surrey is helping support its local community by recycling items that the council cannot accept through their kerbside recycling bin collections.

Catherine Banks, Founder of Tadworth TerraCycle, has signed up to a number of free recycling programmes offered by TerraCycle, collecting items including cheese packaging, Baylis & Harding products and packaging, and biscuit and snack wrappers that would ordinarily be destined for landfill or incineration. For each item of waste the group sends to TerraCycle, they are awarded with a monetary donation to the charities of their choice.

Pictured: Catherine Banks from Tadworth TerraCycle with two young volunteers and some of the items they have collected so far

The group has been raising money for charity since 2019 but recently its members have been prompted to donate funds to **Epsom and Ewell Foodbank** where they will be used for purchasing and sorting food and distributing it to those who need it most. More than £300 has been raised for the foodbank so far by collecting waste from the community via a public drop-off location in Tadworth.

The Trussel Trust reported that deliveries of aid parcels were up 14 percent compared with pre-pandemic levels, amounting to more than 2.1m parcels in the year to April 2022, and with the growing cost of living crisis facing the UK, this number is likely to increase in the coming months.

Catherine explained: *"We initially signed up to the TerraCycle programmes as a way to inspire the children at the local primary schools. By teaching them the importance of recycling and taking care of the environment at a young age we can ensure that the Earth will be in safe hands with future generations."*

"One of the schools we work with decided they would like to support the food bank and unsurprisingly all the other schools agreed it was a good idea. The cost of living crisis is affecting so many people and giving to the foodbank is the best way to help those most in need."

As well as the foodbank, the group also donates to other good causes including funding books for local schools and donating litter picking equipment to the local community group, and in the last 6 months more than £1,000 has been donated to the Dementia Society.

Catherine continued *"This really is a worthy cause so we encourage the entire community to get involved and drop these items at Tadworth Terracycle, 36 Bidhams Crescent, Tadworth. The more we recycle together, the more money we can raise for those who need it."*

The free recycling programmes which the group has signed up to include the Cathedral City Cheese Packaging Free Recycling Programme, the Baylis & Harding Free Recycling Programme and the Pladis (McVitie's and Jacob's) Biscuits and Snacks Free Recycling Programme.

The items the group sends to TerraCycle are recycled by shredding, cleaning and turning into plastic pellets which can then be used by manufacturers to create new plastic products such as outdoor equipment – reducing the need to extract new resources



from the planet.

Related reports:

Reaching recyclables others cannot reach

Epsom students put Xmas style in Centre

Fashion Imaging & Styling students studying at **Epsom's University for the Creative Arts (UCA)** have created a festive window display for the town's Ashley shopping Centre.

The local students created work that interpreted the festive season through cutting-edge fashion styling and eye-catching photography.

Their work was inspired by colour themes, seasonal climate, festive paraphernalia, and clothing - from wearing a wrapping paper design, referencing traditional tartans, or joining the ski elite.

"Collaborating with local shops and retail allows us to play an active part in the Epsom community. It will give residents the chance to view and share in the creative journey of our young creatives," **said Martin Sparkes, a senior lecturer at UCA Epsom.**

The Ashley Centre's Manager added: *"The Ashley centre is the heart of the town of Epsom for retail, and it is important that we work closely with the community. So, we are delighted to be able to collaborate with these talented students by giving them the opportunity to showcase their talent, as well as learn more about the retail industry from the shopping centre."*

The window installation will be up until the end of January 2023.





Top snow dog gallery heats up

Dog ownership in Epsom and Ewell saw a big rise during the pandemic, especially among young families. Poodle mixtures being evidently the most popular varieties purchased. And sometimes for £1000 or more. The Epsom and Ewell Times invites you to submit photos of your dog of any type in any of the open spaces we and our canine friends enjoy in the Borough. Please send in new photos taken outdoors during the Christmas period.

Image: Harvey, a two and a half year old male Goldenpoodle photographed by Claire Beim in Nonsuch Park on 13th December.

Send your photo with your name (let us know if you want anonymity or not), name, type, age and sex of dog and where and when the photo was taken.

Email to

admin@epsomandewelltimes.com

Related story:

Dogs in Frost and Snow

We will publish a gallery in the early New Year.

Thank you

Xmas balloon race and a hamper for charity

Epsom Rotary are raising funds for many local good causes this Christmas. Take part in a virtual balloon race or guess the value of a hamper donated by **Honey and Bamboo** of Ewell.

Ballooning venture:

At a loss as to what to buy someone for Christmas? Buy them a balloon in our Christmas Day Balloon race. These are just like helium balloons and the aim is to see which balloon travels furthest in the week following Christmas. There is a prize for the winner!!

You can choose how much helium is put in the balloon and how thick the rubber of the balloon should be. You can choose the shape of your balloon and you can decorate it appropriately. You can also name the balloon eg Grandad Ron.

The difference is that the balloons do not exist in the real world. A computer simulates the flight of all the balloons, updating where they would have got to every 15 mins.

No ruining the environment and causing mayhem with birds and fish. You can log in at any time to see where you have ended up. Real weather data is collected for the simulation so, at Christmas, you may have strong winds and cold to contend with. You are racing against the other balloons in the Rotary Christmas race and a fun thing for your family is to phone round every day to see where the balloons have got to, plot the positions on a map and share it with the family members.

Its great fun and so cheap. Each balloon costs £3 and £2 of that goes to our charity account. Fun and doing good at the same time!!!

You can buy a set of codes to give to others and they can log in using the code - your gift to them.

THEY MUST LOG ON THEMSELVES BEFORE CHRISTMAS DAY TO SET UP THEIR BALLOON READY FOR THE RACE WHICH STARTS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Click [HERE](#) to buy your balloons



Hamper Competition

Honey and Bamboo Ltd, in Ewell offers a Christmas Hamper as a fundraiser. Entries are charged £5.00 per entry to guess the total value of the hamper. The winner would be the nearest guess below the actual value of the Hamper.



Details of what the hamper contains are:

Bottle of Surrey Honey, Christmas pudding. Bottle of Red wine, Bottle of White wine, Roast potato spice mix, Ferrer Roche Chocolate, Bottle of Honey and Ginger, Mature cheddar Cheese, Spice mix for turkey stuffing, Gravy mix, Box of Ceylon tea, Box of mince pies x 2, Caramelised Onion Chutney, Two packets of Afiya wax melts, Bottle of dried tomato, Olive and Garlic in Virgin Olive Oil, Wax wrap, Box of Christmas Crackers, 250 grams of mix fruit and nuts, Christmas stocking filled with sweets.

Send your £5 (or more!) to Epsom Rotary Trust Fund and mark it Hamper

Account Number 17256844 Sort Code 60-08-01

[Click here to Entry Form](#)

Examples of local good causes supported in recent years by **The Epsom Rotary Charity Trust Fund** include:

Kids Out & Carers/Activity Holiday, Surrey Youth Games, Nescot Award , Young Musician, Rosebery School, Blenheim School, Youth Speaks, Young Photographer, French Speaking Competition, Young Champion, Employment Fair etc.

Giraffes adapt from Serengeti to Surrey vegetation

Surrey County Council has partnered with Chessington World of Adventures Resort to help provide additional food for the Giraffes over the winter months. Surrey's countryside estates team regularly coppice the council's woodlands as part of essential habitat management on Surrey's countryside sites. Chessington have been working with them to coppice hazel, chestnut and other local tree species within Norbury Park near Dorking to feed their herd of Giraffes.

During the autumn and early winter, the hoofstock team at Chessington made regular visits to Norbury Park where they cut back browse (leaves, shoots and branches). The team transport the browse back to the Zoo where they chop into smaller pieces and store in airtight containers which are then placed in freezer storage. This enables an ongoing stock of fresh food to feed the giraffes throughout the winter months.

The 1,340-acre Norbury Park is part of a European Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and forms part of Surrey County Council's countryside estate which comprises over 10,000 acres open for public access.

Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for the Environment comments: "We are delighted to partner with Chessington to benefit not only the endangered Giraffes, but also the wildlife in Surrey. Coppicing areas of land on Norbury Park helps to improve the health and biodiversity of the woodland by opening it up to the sunlight, which allows a wider range of plants to flourish. We hope to extend this partnership with Chessington to benefit other parts of Surrey's countryside estate."

Rebecca Apperley-Gawn, Senior Hoofstock Keeper comments: "It's been great to partner up with the countryside estates team at Surrey County Council. Norbury Park is closely located to our Zoo so it's great to keep food miles down and the browse fresh for our herd. The Giraffe spend up to 75% of their day eating and it is vital for their diet that we include fresh food particularly during the long winter months. We look forward to continuing with this partnership over the coming years".

As well as providing feed for the Giraffes, the Chessington team also took back to the Zoo the stems of coppiced material to make additions to animal enclosures and entertain the Rhinos who love to push them around their enclosures!

For information on Surrey County Council's countryside sites, visit the website.