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Play streets coming to Epsom and Ewell

20 October 2023



A closed-street scheme is being launched in Epsom to “get more children away from their ipads and TVs and actually play outside”.

A ‘play street’ for Miles Road was approved by **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** after residents pushed for temporary closures so their children could play outside.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, chair of the community and wellbeing committee, said: “More than 90 local authorities have introduced the Playing Out scheme in their areas, and I’m really pleased to see this initiative come to Epsom and Ewell. “We believe the scheme will help support the mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of children and the community by creating a safe and inclusive space for everyone to play in and by fostering a much needed sense of neighbourliness.”

The scheme has already been adopted by neighbouring Elmbridge Borough Council.

Playing Out is a not-for-profit organisation set up by parents in 2009 with the aim of getting young people out and about more freely.

The schemes, which have the backing of Play England, allow for streets that are not a main road or bus routes to be closed to through traffic for up to three hours.

Play streets are resident-led and need the agreement of neighbours. They are designed to give children the freedom to play outside and bring communities together.

Volunteers steward the roads and parents are responsible for their own children.

Applications to become a play street are handled by the same council team responsible for street party road closures.

Addressing the October 10 meeting, Cllr Woodbridge said: “We’ve looked at it and wherever it’s been adopted there has been some significant benefits and it’s a useful scheme.”

He told the committee the decision would be reviewed in a year to determine what, if any, changes were needed. He added: “But it’s quite valuable to get it up and running. “One of the most important things is to let our residents know that they can do this. “It would be great to get more children away from their ipads and TVs and actually play outside.”

As part of the application process Surrey County Council and the emergency services are notified of any road closures.

Cllr Chris Aimes (Lab, Court Ward) said: “I and my fellow councillors from Court Ward are very much in favour of this.”

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