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

29th October 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

Sudden hike in Council room charges threatens community groups

22 March 2023



Letters to the Editor from **Peter Prowse** and **Kevin Meager**.

From **Peter Prowse** – 22nd March 2023

For the past year, Epsom and Ewell French Club has been hiring a room (The Studio) at Bourne Hall for its monthly meetings. The Council had agreed a discounted hire rate of £20 per hour, so £40 for our two hours, on the third Tuesday of each month.

Without any prior consultation and with very little notice, the Council has just announced that from April (ie in 10 days' time) the Club will be charged a new 'discounted' rate of £35.36 per hour, so £70.72 for its two-hour booking, plus a new charge of £25 per session for use of the hot water urn (which has until now been provided free of charge).

Image: Bourne Hall Ewell Credit Bobulous – Own work. CC BY-SA 4.0

That would put the cost to the club up from £40 per booking to £95.72.

The club cannot possibly afford these prices. Other community groups who use Bourne Hall will be in the same position. Unless small, local clubs and societies can continue to use Bourne Hall for something very close to the 2022 prices, many will have to close.

Epsom & Ewell French Club is a non-commercial community group, provided for the benefit of its members and anybody else who want to come to its meetings. It is closely allied to the Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association, which is supported by the Borough Council.

The club almost folded during the Covid pandemic and its committe worked very hard to build it back up to the point where it is now attracting enough interest and support to keep going – provided it does not have to pay these new ridiculously expensive room hire costs. Bourne Hall exists for the benefit of local residents. This latest price hike means that many of them will no longer be able to use it.

Peter Prowse.

Letter from **Kevin Meager**

23rd March 2023

I would like to follow up on the letter to the editor regarding the hike in hire charges at Bourne Hall. I organise weekly dance classes in the main hall on Monday evenings through my organisation, Ceroc Surrey and we've been hit with similar charge increases with little to no notice. If this increase remains in place, we will have to stopping running classes at Bourne Hall as the new hire charges are unaffordable. The vast majority of our dancers are local, many are of retirement age and this is either their main or only weekly social event. Apart from lockdown, we've been using the venue continuously for over 20 years!

Your faithfully,

Kevin Meager

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