

Ukrainian Independence Day celebrated with music, film and community spirit in Epsom

25 August 2026



Epsom Picturehouse was filled to capacity yesterday afternoon as the local community came together to mark Ukrainian Independence Day with an afternoon celebrating Ukrainian culture, music and film.

The event began in the Picturehouse foyer, where three young Ukrainians performed a selection of Ukrainian songs. Singer **Diana Zadorizhna**, guitarist **Vlad Verteba** and percussionist **Vlad Voloshin** provided live music as audiences gathered before the film screening.

Visitors were also able to browse a colourful display of Ukrainian crafts, handmade by local Ukrainian women. The crafts offered a glimpse into Ukraine's rich artistic traditions and gave members of the community an opportunity to share something of their heritage with their neighbours in Epsom.

Nina Kaye of **Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network** welcomed the audience, and the afternoon began with everyone standing to sing the Ukrainian national anthem.

Roy Deadman, founder of **Surrey Stands with Ukraine**, introduced the film and spoke about the importance of cultural exchange and of continuing to share Ukrainian culture with the wider community.

The audience went on to enjoy *Mavka: The Forest Song*, one of Ukraine's most successful animated films. Inspired by Ukrainian folklore and Lesya Ukrainka's celebrated 1911 drama *The Forest Song*, the film combines fantasy, romance, comedy and music with a powerful celebration of Ukraine's natural and cultural heritage.

The screening attracted a full house, demonstrating once again the strong support that the local community continues to show for Ukrainians living in the area. For those attending, the event was not simply a film screening, but an opportunity to come together, celebrate Ukrainian identity and culture, and strengthen the friendships that have grown between Ukrainians now living in Epsom and the wider community.

The enthusiastic response reflected the continuing message of solidarity that has characterised local support for Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion: Ukrainian culture is alive, vibrant and something to be shared and celebrated.

Nina Kaye