



Walking the talk on Epsom Downs

15 September 2024



On 10th September, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council hosted a Walk & Talk event at Epsom Downs Racecourse to mark World Suicide Prevention Day. Over 65 people, including residents and representatives from voluntary and statutory organisations, joined this insightful, moving and inspirational event, developed and delivered as part of the council's Suicide Prevention Action Plan, produced in January 2024.

Chris Waller, founder of We Power On, led the walk around Epsom Downs. **Dale Millar** MBE from the Samaritans opened the second part of the evening talking about skills used in conversation and the impactful nature that this can have. **Joe Stroud** from End Stigma Surrey talked about the negative impact that silence can have and how we, as a community, can stand together to break the chains of stigma around mental health. And finally, Chris shared his own experiences including the importance of being able to talk openly. Cllr **Clive Woodbridge**, the Chair of the Council's Community and Wellbeing Committee, also joined him to discuss his journey from crisis to hope.

Local scribe, **Annalees Lim**, designed boards and captured key messages at the event. These boards will be shown at locations around the borough, starting at the Epsom Downs Racecourse and finishing at the Epsom Picturehouse around 10th October to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Day. More information to follow.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee said: "I'm proud that through our Suicide Prevention Action Plan, we've been able to provide a platform for residents and organisations to come together and have conversations about mental health and suicide, and also raise awareness of where support and resources can be found for those suffering from mental health issues or directly impacted by the loss of someone to suicide."

A huge thank you to We Power On, Epsom Downs Racecourse, End Stigma Surrey, the Samaritans and to the scribe who captured messages at the event. Thanks also to everyone who volunteered their time at the event. Without the support of all the volunteers and supporting organisations, this event would not have been possible. We look forward to continuing building on these relationships for the benefit of those who need our help the most.

As Chris himself said, "there is hope, and there is help out there".

Funding was allocated by the council from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to We Power On to help residents access support in the borough. Chris, founder of the organisation, led the walk for adults aged 18 and above.

For more information on some of the mental health support and resources available across Epsom & Ewell - <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/resources-support>.