

County Report By Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans

Your Councillor Community Fund – Open for Applications

The Your Councillor Community Fund is open for residents to apply for cash grants to improve their local area. Last year the Fund (previously known as the Members Community Allocation) funded over £390,000 of grants to community groups via Surrey County Councillors. The funding is flexibly designed to help with costs that can range from purchasing sports equipment for local clubs, to the creation of websites to reach more residents.

Applications are open until January 2024, however early applications are encouraged, so please do flag to any potential projects or community groups that may be interested.

If you have any questions, please refer to our [webpage](#), alternatively, you can send an email to communitypartnerships@surreycc.gov.uk

Update on our Additional Needs and Disabilities (AND) Strategy

To coincide with the new autumn term, we are updating families, schools and settings on our progress and priorities around Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) and annual review timeliness, as well as our recovery plan to address the delays and challenges in the system. We want to reassure these key stakeholders that we are taking decisive action in Surrey to counteract the local and national challenges, with a plan to improve timeliness and access to support while waiting, as well as to develop a more sustainable service for the future.

This latest update was issued to schools and settings on Thursday 14 September, and was available for parents from Tuesday 19 September via [Family Voice Surrey and the Local Offer website](#).

Through these above updates we're also highlighting two valuable resources for families where a child has additional needs and disabilities. Both are available via the [Local Offer website](#) as part of our early intervention and support offer to families.

- *NEW* [A guide for parents and carers of children with additional needs and/or disabilities](#)
- [Preparing for adulthood: a guide for young people in Surrey with additional needs and/or disabilities](#)

The new guidance booklet for parents and carers is a comprehensive guide to all the support and services available for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in Surrey. It clearly sets out the different routes to support with the aim to help them access the right support at the right time for their child. We would be grateful of your support to share them with your networks and communities, where applicable.

Ofsted – Local Area SEND inspection

On 11th September Ofsted and Care Quality Commission notified SCC of the start of a Local area SEND inspection. The inspection will look at education, health and care services for children with additional needs and disabilities (otherwise known as SEND) in Surrey, to assess their experiences and outcomes.

The inspection process for Surrey will last for three weeks. The [GOV.uk website](#) gives an outline of the inspection process and what the inspectors will expect over the next three weeks.

Grant fund now open for carers' organisations

Organisations which support unpaid carers in Surrey are able to apply for grants of up to £25,000 under the Surrey County Council and NHS Surrey Heartlands Better Care Fund Grant Programme. The scheme aims to help local providers, voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to start or grow innovative projects which support carers to improve their health and wellbeing. One-off grants up to a maximum of £25,000 per successful applicant will be awarded. There are two separate rounds of the grant - one focusing on improving the health and wellbeing of carers of people with dementia (including young onset dementia) or autistic people, and the other focusing on improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young carers. The deadline for applications is 5pm on 21 September.

Surprising Surrey

A new advertising campaign has launched with the theme Surprising Surrey. The aim is to show that there is more to Surrey than people's current perceptions, and to inspire pride in our county's attributes. The campaign highlights our innovative space industry, natural environment, disability arts and community celebrations. It will feature on outdoor (bus shelters), digital radio and social media for three weeks. The campaign is the first activity for **Our Surrey Story**, the brand for our county led by a partnership between Surrey County Council and representatives of all walks of Surrey life. *Please visit www.oursurreystory.uk for more on the campaign, and the brand*

Any of Us - Foster care recruitment event

Foster carers, care leavers and cabinet members including Sinead Mooney and Helyn Clack, will be attending an event on **Thursday 28 September** at Woodhatch to celebrate the launch of a new national recruitment campaign for foster carers.

The invite-only event will feature a screening of *Any of Us*, a fostering film jointly funded by over 70 councils across England. The film which looks at the potential of three people from different backgrounds becoming carers, aims to raise awareness of fostering, particularly among those people who may not have considered themselves suitable. This will also be an opportunity to thank Surrey's foster carers and families for the important role they play in providing a stable family setting for children in care.

Carers joining the event will explain how becoming a foster carer has been beneficial to their lives, and care experienced young people will also share their positive experiences of being children in care and becoming part of a foster care family.

In Surrey, there are over 1,000 children in care and SCC has just under 400 foster families. SCC's [Fostering Recruitment and Assessment](#) team want all children to live and thrive in Surrey and are hoping to achieve this by recruiting at least 30 new foster families in the county this year - and hopefully even more next year.

Fostering is an incredibly rewarding experience that can transform the lives of both the children being fostered and the foster carers themselves. *Please help spread this important message that 'Any of us can foster', so we can help more children in our county find loving, stable homes and families.*

For details on the event or to get in touch with the Fostering Recruitment and Assessment team, email fostering.recruitment@surreycc.gov.uk.

Surrey community recycling centres to accept small DIY waste from households free of charge

All charges on resident DIY waste have been lifted at Surrey's community recycling centres in line with Government policy changes that were proposed in June. Now up to two 50-litre rubble bags or one large item no larger than 2m x 0.75m x 0.7m per household will be accepted for free, at a maximum frequency of four visits over four weeks. Anything in excess of this will be chargeable at current rates. Find out more on the Surrey County Council [website](#) or in our latest [press release](#).

On demand bus service launches in five more areas in Surrey

Surrey connect, is an on-demand bus service which is now available across Tandridge, Farnham, Cranleigh, West Guildford and Longcross, in addition to the already established service in Mole Valley, to help residents travel sustainably. Rather than being restricted by traditional bus timetables, the accessible mini buses are available for travel for everyone, when they are needed. Find out more on the Surrey County Council [website](#). This is intended to be rolled out across the whole of Surrey in 2024.

Local work in Lightwater

- Ongoing road improvements around the village
- Recent road traffic and speed survey on Red Road (now awaiting results)
- Ongoing meetings with local Borough Councillors
- Ongoing meetings with the Lightwater Society
- Organising the replacement of the 'Library' sign that went missing.
- Ongoing work to provide a bike rack on SCC owned land in the centre of the village.
- Working with Cllr Tear on the proposed footbridge between Lightwater and Windlesham
- Supported the Library with a Your Fund Surrey Small Project grant for new lighting and fixtures and fittings.
- Awaiting the outcome of the ITS scheme submitted for Ambleside Road
- Requested a speed survey for Guildford Road.
- Supported local families with SEN issues.

Top Stories

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[Protect your health](#) – get tested

[Period dignity](#) – can you donate?

[Trading Standards](#) – successful raid at Kempton

[Change one journey](#) – ditch the car

[Home Fire Safety Month](#) – take these steps to check your home

[Civic University Agreement](#) - working closely with the University of Surrey