

Epsom and Ewell U3A Chairs Annual Report 2026

General Update

Epsom and Ewell u3a continues to grow stronger, and a steady rise in membership is evidence of this. Currently, there are 1,229 members, not including people who are keen to join our membership. Our interest group listing continues to rise and, at the time of writing, stands at 150+.

Our social calendar has been very busy over the last year. Ticket-only theatre trips are very popular, helped by members making their own way to the venue. We have a new Social Group who are organising trips without coaches because the price of a coach is extortionate and not viable, including a day trip.

In the meantime, we were contacted by a company called “What’s On Trips”, which is run by Nicky Mathias, who currently has spaces on her coaches. We will advertise her trips in the newsletter, and members will apply and deal solely with her. At some stage, we will be contacting her for a meeting so that the Social Group can sit down with her, discuss their ideas and perhaps she can assist us with her access to coaches, which could be shared between our membership and hers. This is a wonderful opportunity for both parties to have a great outcome.

We continue to build bridges into the community by supporting local initiatives such as the Safe and Well Programme, run by Surrey Fire and Rescue Service; the rebuilding of Glyn Hall, which is an ongoing project; the Repair Café; and, recently, Help the Aged.

Administration

We have nine Committee Members. Our newest member is Patsy Delahunt, who came onto the Committee as a General Committee Member. She has recently taken on the role of Social Secretary, nominated by Sybi Trowsdale and seconded by Annie Ralph.

She will be amongst a wonderful group of people who work really hard for the benefit of all u3a Members.

Finance

Our finances remain strong and are handled by our Treasurer, Bob Knight. He ensures we have sufficient funds to be able to supplement two trips due to low numbers.

We make use of many options to safeguard our account and protect our financial future. Full details of our finances can be found in the Trustees’ Annual Report and Statement.

Membership

Our current membership stands at 1,229 and continues to grow. This is due to the huge variety of groups and events we offer to our members.

Monthly Meetings

Bourne Hall continues to be our main venue for the monthly meetings, and this year we have had a very diverse mix of topics for our talks, including *The Tale of Nonsuch*, *The Art of the Cartoonist*, *The Life and Crimes of Double Agent Zig Zag*, and *Working with the Ghosts at Hampton Court*.

Our Vice-Chair, Rachel Raywood, handles these events and is now working on the programme for 2027 and 2028.

The rota for the refreshments at these meetings is working very well, and the members are very grateful for their tea or coffee and a very good-quality biscuit. All the people on this rota are volunteer members and belong to RUGS (Really Useful Group).

Well done to a wonderful group of people.

Groups

As already mentioned, we have 150+ groups, including 18 brand-new groups with six new Group Leaders:

- Bridge Beginners
- Current Affairs
- Exploring London x 2 *
- Moto
- Padel Tennis
- Poets Corner
- Rummikub
- Science
- Scrabble
- Spanish Beginners*
- Sustainable Solutions*
- Theatre Goers
- Walking with Your Bus Pass*
- Welsh Speaking*
- Writers Book Group*

You will notice there are asterisks next to certain subjects. These indicate the new Group Leaders.

Well done, and thank you, everyone. What a wonderful selection.

Social / Website

The Social Group is now being headed up by Patsy Delahunt, our Social Secretary, assisted by Susan Cripps and Janet Cross. They will be holding meetings and brainstorming events. Eventually, they will be working with Nicky Mathias of What's On Trips. This can only be good for the Membership.

Our website and publicity have been working very well for some time. Tony and Sue Skelton very ably handle this important part of our organisation.

Through the use of email, our website, social media and the Epsom and Ewell newsletter, we continue to keep our Members up to date with all that is going on within Epsom and Ewell u3a.

The website also lists social events and announcements to "SAVE THE DATE". Members have found the website to be a proven place to go for information about social and current events. The volume of photographs and written accounts with updates is increasing, which is a great sign.

We continue to offer our Newsletter service to non-internet Members. Any Member can send a pack of stamped, addressed envelopes to the Membership Secretary.

The Newsletter is printed, placed in the envelope and sent out by return of post. Introducing this service has achieved a shared expenditure while reducing waste and costs, and supports our inclusivity policy.

Open House

Open House was a great success this year. The attendance was lower due to the dates, but we did have 110 people walking in, and many Members were signing up for groups. The meeting was buzzing.

Everyone was very buoyant, which was infectious.

The Group Co-ordinator has arranged a Group Leaders' afternoon tea for 29 September 2026. This is a thank you to all the Group Leaders for all their hard work.

At the time of writing, this has not yet taken place, but in 2025 we organised an afternoon tea and it was very well received.

New Members Meet and Greet

Seventy new Members turned up for tea and cakes. There was a lot of positive feedback, with Members saying that this was very enjoyable.

I made sure one Committee Member was on each table, ensuring that any questions the new Members had could be answered. Many Members signed up for various groups, which made for a very successful event.

Lots of happy people found new friends and gained the confidence that this was the place to be.

The Future

Epsom and Ewell u3a continues to look forward with more diversity and inclusivity. We push hard to reach out to all those who are no longer in full-time employment. We encourage the younger demographic and recognise the need to keep the membership strong and vibrant.

We also appreciate the importance of long-term Members, whose contribution and loyalty are much appreciated.

Epsom and Ewell u3a is still one of the best, if not the best, in the Surrey network. We have a very strong administration and a packed programme to offer a person looking for fulfilment in their third age.

The world struggles to find a peaceful path; tragedy and success go hand in hand. The Committee tries to keep the Membership buoyant and happy, hoping Members find refuge in the u3a with like-minded people who want to have fun and, along the way, learn something new.

Sybi Trowsdale

Epsom and Ewell u3a – Chair