

# focus



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## Jonathan says “Thank You!”

Councillor Jonathan Lees wishes to thank all local residents who voted in May’s historic General Election.

“There was a good turn out, as together we began to rebuild trust in British democracy. Those of you who Voted for me helped establish the Liberal Democrats as the clear challengers in this constituency. Together we increased the Lib Dem vote by over 4000, reduced the Tory majority and pushed Labour into a very poor third place.”

## Looking Ahead – 2010 to 2015

People have mostly been surprised by the way our political leaders have reacted to the verdict handed them by the British people on 6th May—but once recovered from their surprise, a good deal of support is evident for the positive steps taken to provide stable government through the Liberal Democrat-Conservative coalition agreement.

For the sake of the economy and the future well-being of the country, we all have to hope that this bold initiative will be given a real chance to succeed. In addition, the coalition agreement offers a great many advantages in its own right. Only those policies that the majority of people agree with can be implemented—no extremism.

As the Lib Dems, we are pleased to see so many of our constructive ideas in the agreed programme of the new government, whilst at the same time Conservative supporters are also pleased to see so many of their manifesto commitments included. This does NOT mean that our parties are merging—far from it. We have fundamental differences. But from now until 2015 we have agreed to work together to govern the country and to tackle Britain’s severe economic problems.

Meanwhile, despite a few departures, the growth in net Lib Dem membership which surged prior to the election has continued apace. We face the future with confidence.

## THE COALITION - Does it affect us locally?

The Liberal Democrat-Conservative coalition agreement applies only to **WESTMINSTER!** As previously, there will continue to be a variety of arrangements in councils where there is no overall majority, but this is not the case locally, either for **Surrey County Council** or **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**.

At **Surrey County Council** the Tories will continue to form the administration and the Lib Dems will continue to be the main opposition party. Two by-elections are expected to be held later this year to replace one councillor who has now been elected as an MP and one who has died. Our borough has 5 county councillors, each representing an area called a division. A division covers about two and a half wards. Of these 5 county councillors, 4 are Residents' Party and one is Liberal Democrat. County council elections take place every four years and the next is in 2013.

The **Residents' Party** continue to control **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** with a reduced majority following the resignation of one of their councillors (in protest at plans at charge disabled people in council car parks). Here too the Lib Dems are the opposition. The borough is divided up into 13 wards with 3 councillors elected to each ward apart from one small ward which has only 2 councillors. There are therefore 38 councillors making up the borough council. At present there is one Labour, one Independent, four Conservative, 10 Lib Dem and 22 Residents' Party (or RA as some people call them). Borough council elections take place in 2011.

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## NATIONAL, COUNTY AND BOROUGH-WIDE NEWS

The planning application for **Epsom Station** was permitted, mainly because there already is a scheme with planning permission. Developers will build on the land in front of the station, moving the taxis onto Station Approach with the buses. The new parking area will be for flat owners.

*Two evening taxi ranks for black cabs have been provided in Epsom. One is near to the Ebbisham Centre and one is near the Odeon Cinema in **Upper High Street**. The plan is to help people leave the town centre as quickly as possible after a night out.*

A recent meeting between residents, councillors, policy and licensing officers discussed reducing the noise level in Epsom town centre late at night, after people leave clubs and bars. Residents living in the centre of town are going to work together and log noise nuisance. Residents can help by attending neighbourhood police panels to report problems. Contact your councillor (see back page) for details of these meetings.



*The **StonesRoad** pond SSSI will be open on 19th June from 10—12 noon. Local residents are welcome to view the pond which is home to the rare Great Crested Newt and is managed by the Lower Mole Countryside Project. The entrance to the pond is at the end of Farriers Road.*

Lib Dems have proposed that free meals for councillors and their partners at two civic events each year should be scrapped. Even though Lib Dem councillors attending such events had paid for themselves for some years, the money was not the entire issue. The Mayor's budget was faced with cuts in 2010 and surely it was better to pay for some civic functions than reduce some of the Mayor's activities, e.g. visits to voluntary organisations. Needless to say, the ruling Residents' Party did not agree and their spokesman said the Lib Dem proposals could "diminish the civic life of the borough".



*Buses waiting at the Bus Stand in Epsom High Street should now have their engines turned off. The 460 still seems to block the road for far too long at this bus terminus — we are still working on that one!*

## WARD NEWS

Councillors Christine, Anna and Julie have been tackling the problem of recycling in flats, with some success. Thanks to their intervention flats **Alexandra Mansions and Cleves Court** are now either already in the full recycling service, or soon will be. **Linden House** is keen to get involved and other blocks of flats are being approached. If YOU live in a block of flats which still has no cardboard/plastic bottle recycling service, please get in touch.

*The plans for three new houses at Dame Annis Barn were approved, despite a proposal from Anna (who sits on the Planning Committee) that they should be refused. RA councillors voted in favour of the development.*

New yellow line parking restrictions in **Ashley Road** and **Alexandra Road** were removed just a few weeks after they were painted! A ludicrous lack of coordination within the county council meant that new yellow lines were painted just before surface dressing works were carried out which obliterated them. At the time of going to press, we are still waiting for the yellow lines in these roads to be re-painted and will be raising a question at the Local Committee meeting on 7th June. The situation is a good example of just how badly the county council is run and how money is wasted—small in this instance, but surely representative of a much bigger problem?



The centre white lines were put back straight away after resurfacing but not the yellow lines at the side

*Julie and Christine recently took part in a “bedding tour” of the borough : a survey of the numerous flower beds to try and find up to £10,000 worth of savings. The lovely display outside the entrance to **Alexandra Rec** could be scaled down, but certainly won’t disappear. A small triangular bed at Mount Hill Gardens (South Street) will be grassed over along with some small areas of planting. (See also Editor’s comment overleaf)*

Anna will be presenting the Petition to reinstate the mini-roundabout at **Treadwell Road** to the Local Committee in June. Contact her to find out the latest on this.

*Watch out for rats! Vermin can be attracted from the indiscriminate feeding of birds. One such case is being taken up by the borough council at the moment. Make sure bird food is kept in containers, those containers are kept clean, any overspill is cleared up on a regular basis and bread is not left lying around.*

### REPORT IT !

Your don’t have to go through us! Sometimes councillors and Focus team members report things in just the same way as local residents would do. Going direct can therefore save time and be more efficient. So if you see an area which needs litter picking or a street which needs cleaning, graffiti, or damage of some kind, or your recycling collection is missed, contact the borough council on 01372 732000. Report pot holes or road problems to the county council on 03456 009 009 or online at [www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk) using their “report it” menu. You are, of course, always welcome to go via us or ask us to follow up for you if you are not satisfied.

*Anna and Julie are persevering to get resolution of a highway problem in the south of the ward where a large concrete slab of the highway is loose and causing noise and vibration problems. “Street light queen” Christine is still keen to hear of problems—she pursues the county council until they mend the faults!*

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

Anyone who watched the three General Election debates and the analysis thereafter, will probably remember the Worm graph. This was a chart showing audience reaction as each of the three leaders spoke and most importantly, how an audience reacted to the content of what was being said. Popular policies showed the Worm rising whilst unpopular policies showed the Worm sinking. However, the Worm also began to sink when the speaker began to criticise the other parties, the other leaders or their policies. The audience didn't like it. They didn't like the negative campaigning aspect of the debates nor did they like any of the three leaders trying to score points from the failings of others.

Local residents have also told us that they dislike negative campaigning. They prefer positive stories, news of successes and do not like pages of criticism of other parties or policies. However, the political playing field is a complex one. How does a party convey its strengths over and above another, without resorting to comparisons or highlighting failings and mistakes, all supported by factual information? Also, at least one of our local parties does resort to telling lies. Isn't it important to counter such falsehoods before they take hold. Then it becomes a kind of tit-for-tat. Sadly, whilst negative campaigning is largely unpopular, it undoubtedly works. Both Labour and the Tories nationally resorted to personal negative campaigning (one such ad. used the TV programme Life on Mars + Audi Quattro). The damage done to a party by a strong negative campaign can certainly make the difference between winning or losing—the Labour victory in 1997 perhaps?

What do you think about negative campaigning? Does it put you off voting for the originating party? How do you judge if literature is truthful? Let us know via the Freepost or by email.

## SEND US YOUR IDEAS AND GRUMBLES

**Epsom & Ewell LibDems (College),  
c/o 16 Sunnymede Avenue, Ewell, Surrey, KT19 9BR**

COME AND VISIT US AT THE EBBISHAM CENTRE COUNCILLOR SURGERY HELD ON THE SECOND SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH 10AM – 12NOON. **OR MEET US ON OUR MONTHLY WALKABOUTS. IN MAY IT WAS THE DOWNS AVENUE AREA. WE MOVE ON TO COLLEGE ROAD AND LONGDOWN LANE SOUTH DURING JUNE AND JULY. THEN WE START AGAIN AT BURGH HEATH ROAD !**

I can deliver Focus in my road  
I'd like to help at election time  
I'd like to become a member  
I'd like my councillor to visit

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
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***To advertise in Focus contact Julie :  
Focus is hand-delivered to over 10,000  
households in Epsom and Ewell,  
four times each year.***

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### CONTACT YOUR FOCUS TEAM :

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