

Stamford Ward FOCUS



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Issue 70

ARMED FORCES GIVEN 'FREEDOM' HONOUR

(after Residents' Party
does U-turn!)

The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment were granted the Freedom of the Borough of Epsom & Ewell in January after both national and local press exposed the negative views of the ruling Residents' Party.

The Residents' Party (comprising Residents Association councillors) had also voted against holding the "special" meeting which was needed to decide whether or not to bestow the honour.

Liberal Democrat support was fundamental to the "special" meeting taking place, public opinion won through and the ruling group took notice of it!

Cllr Jonathan Lees (Stamford), who is also parliamentary candidate for the LibDems, said:

"The outcome was good but what a great shame the issue became a political debate. Nobody can put a price on the sacrifices made by our armed forces, but recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have revealed the disparity between what we expect of our soldiers and how they are rewarded."

LibDems want action immediately to restore the military covenant between the armed forces and the people. There is dissatisfaction over pay among the lower ranks and this has a dreadful impact on morale and retention.



Jonathan and Vince Cable MP, LibDem Treasury Spokesman

Jonathan reports that over 51,000 (a quarter of the armed forces) receive less in pay than a new recruit police constable or development-level fire-fighter. He says:

"Under LibDem proposals no service personnel would receive less than a police constable or fire-fighter. A fully trained Private would receive an average basic hourly wage of £9.44, up from £6.74 per hour."

At the moment there is 1 desk job for every 2 servicemen and the LibDems want that ratio reduced. In equipment terms, the pay of all Privates and Lance Corporals could be raised for the price of 4 Eurofighters (unit cost around £70m), Mandelson's loan of £340m to keep the ailing A400M aircraft going and by diverting other wasted money. Also, 1 Eurofighter would pay a battalion of Privates (400) for a decade: the budget over-run (c. £1bn) on new Destroyers would cover salary increases for five years.

Contact Jonathan for further details :
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EPSOM AND EWELL NEWS



At a public meeting in November, the Chief Executive of the Epsom & St Helier Hospital Trust revealed that £70m should be available for redevelopment of the Epsom site, excluding any “third party” support offered by the Denbies Trust. This sum relates solely to the buildings and not the services to be provided within them. The CE confirmed that A & E, children’s services and maternity are all safe. The recent “Local Needs Local Health” review had concluded that Epsom and St Helier should remain merged.

Parliamentary candidate Jonathan Lees commented: *“It’s good that there is now a clearer plan of what is to happen but it’s a shame it’s taken so long and cost so much to get there – a figure nobody is prepared to state.”* A more detailed review of the public meeting can be found on the November news page of our website at www.epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk

THANK YOU COUNTY COUNCILLOR !

Epsom had some Christmas lights this year helped along by cash from county councillor Colin Taylor’s “discretionary allocation”. The borough council’s ruling Residents’ Party steadfastly refuse to donate any money toward brightening our town at Christmas.



CONTINUING TO ENGAGE WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS

Lib Dem councillors organised three public meetings during November and December:

- On the Tesco proposals for Upper High Street. Numerous questions from local residents were put to Tesco via email and comprehensive replies from them were forwarded on to nearly 100 people and the local press;
- On the plans for Epsom Station. Questions were put to the developer in a similar way, including concerns about the “drop off” area, taxi ranks, parking and the bulk of the building;
- On proposals for Horton Water tower, where an open meeting was held on site. The proposals were subsequently refused permission by the Planning Committee.

The Tesco planning application is now expected to be determined at a special meeting of the Planning Committee on Thursday 11th February 2010, 7.30pm at the Town Hall.

The date for debating the plans for Epsom Station is not yet known.

PROGRESS ON PARKING

A Parking Strategy Group has been set up following pressure from Lib Dem councillors. Cllrs **Colin Taylor** and **Julie Morris** are members of this group. Dealing with commuter parking problems around the town centre and elsewhere around the borough is top priority for your **FOCUS** team. The needs of residents, shoppers and businesses need to be balanced and there is no “quick fix”.

DECISIONS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

It’s good news that the borough council has signed up to the 10:10 movement, but disturbing that this decision was taken behind closed doors and no-one knew! 10:10 is a campaign which seeks to persuade individuals, businesses, organisations and the UK government to reduce their CO₂ emissions by 10% in 2010. When asked, a senior RA councillor admitted that the matter should have been formally debated by councillors in committee first, but no explanation has been given.

There seems to be a trend for some RA councillors to make decisions behind closed doors, without regard for the democratic process – even without consulting their own party colleagues.

We are used to RA councillors being out of touch with local opinion. Now, it seems, they are out of touch with their own party colleagues as well. In political language, is this a dictatorship?

WEST STREET TRAFFIC LIGHTS

The new traffic lights in West Street are not working as intended. Pedestrians can cross Station Approach more safely, but vehicles are being badly delayed at busy times.

Highways engineers are pressing BT to supply the necessary connection to the computerised control system that coordinates all the other traffic lights in Epsom town centre.

LOCAL NEWS IN BRIEF

CYCLING FROM PILLAR TO POST !

The Lib Dem councillors are still working to get a better deal for cyclists. Cllr Anna Jones's proposal to create a "Year of the Bike" failed to get support from the Residents' Party, but having been debated at the Environment Committee, then at a Full Council meeting, it has now been pushed sideways to the Leisure Committee to discuss before coming back to Full Council again.



The lifespan of this debate will ultimately be almost nine months – no wonder people complain about council bureaucracy and don't understand how decisions are made or why they take so long.

PARKING RESTRICTIONS

The following changes requested in 2007-8 and advertised in Dec. '09, should start by April 2010:

- Corner of Common Side and Woodlands Road;
- Junction of Stamford Green Road and Christ Church Road, length less than advertised;
- Junction of Parklawn Avenue and West Hill;
- Christ Church Mount, near Stamford Green School, timing less than advertised;
- Christ Church Mount, on the bend by Drummond Gardens, length less than advertised;
- Manor Green Road, at the corners of Lower Court Road, Meadway and Christ Church Mount.

The yellow lines proposed in Manor Green Road will not be implemented and the proposals for Church Side, Bracken Path, Bramble Walk and Stamford Green have also been withdrawn.

Further proposals are due to be advertised in April 2010 affecting the junction of Ridgeway with Manor Green Road and Christ Church Mount. Watch out for notices on lamp posts.

There are now 2 more parking enforcement officers; they were originally employed for a 2 month trial period before Christmas. The contract has been extended until April at which point the Parking Manager is hoping to persuade Surrey County Council that they can be retained permanently.

HORTON CHAPEL

The council wants to form a Community Development Trust to manage and maintain Horton Chapel as a centre for the local community.

There is money invested to produce an income to pay for routine maintenance. The funds available for repair and renovation are not sufficient, but the council plans to supplement this with money from the development of the West Park site.



Horton Chapel lies derelict

A steering group of councillors and local residents will be formed to investigate how a Community Development Trust might work. Currently there isn't enough progress to justify holding another public meeting, but at the suggestion of Lib Dem leader **Cllr Julie Morris**, it has been agreed that the council will write to update local residents about the situation.

MAYORAL ROLLS

Some years ago Lib Dem councillors proposed replacing the mayor's Rolls Royce with a more economical car. Now cash is so short that even RA councillors are considering it.

SOME USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

From talking to residents during our popular "mobile street surgeries" it seems that it might be useful to list the following phone numbers:

- Epsom & Ewell Borough Council:** To report a missed bin: 01372 732000
- Surrey Highways:** To report a pothole or a street light not working: 0300 200 1003
- Surrey Police:** to report cars obstructing the footway, or a crime where those responsible have already fled, use their non-urgent number: 0845 125 2222

In an emergency or to report a crime in progress always ring 999

STAMFORD WARD FOCUS TEAM

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Select monthly, weekly or daily digests,
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COUNCILLORS' SURGERIES

Lib Dem Councillors' advice surgeries are held in the Rosebery Room in the Ebbisham Centre on the second Saturday of every month, from 10.00 am to 12.00 noon.

These sessions are free of charge and open to all. No appointment is necessary.

The next three surgeries will be on:

- 13th February,
- 13th March,
- 10th April.

MOBILE STREET SURGERIES

We are continuing our street surgeries around the ward. We walk down your street and deal with any issues that you want to raise.

We have dealt with trees, blocked drains, poorly parked cars, speeding motor bikes, graffiti, litter and neighbourhood issues.

Cllr **Jonathan Lees** said "Street surgeries are an excellent way for us to visit every road in the ward and see the real problems!"

If we miss you, visit us in the Ebbisham Centre on the second Saturday of each month.

GOT A PROBLEM? Use this space for any problems, complaints or ideas that you want the **FOCUS** team to take up. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary. Add your name and address in the box below if a reply is needed.



HELP US TO HELP YOU

Stamford **FOCUS** is a local community newsletter that is produced, financed and delivered entirely by volunteers. It keeps you in touch with what's going on, tells you what the **FOCUS** team have been doing for our area and asks for your views. Would you be willing to help deliver **FOCUS** in your road?

- I can deliver Stamford **FOCUS** in my road.
- I'd like to help the Lib Dems at election time.
- I'm interested in joining the Liberal Democrats.
- I'd like one of my councillors to visit me.

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to: Epsom & Ewell Lib Dems, (Stamford FOCUS), c/o 16 Sunnymede Avenue, Epsom KT19 9BR.

