

FOCUS



www.epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk

www.surreylibdems.org.uk

www.libdems.org.uk

E mail town-focus@epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk

Ofsted slams Surrey over vulnerable children

Surrey County Council Ofsted Review 2008

Vulnerable children and young people at risk or requiring safeguarding	Pass	Fail
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	Pass	Fail
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Capacity for the Council to improve these services	Pass	Fail
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

INADEQUATE

Action: Leader of Surrey County Council must resign

Vague and woolly

“Even now, the Executive’s action plan in response to this highly critical report is vague and woolly. It really doesn’t give us much confidence that the appropriate practical action will be taken speedily enough. The report highlights appalling failures and Surrey’s residents deserve better.”

Inadequate CRB checks

A key issue highlighted was the inadequate provision of Criminal Records Bureau checks - a national requirement for anyone working with children and young people.

Ofsted noted: *“Although the council state in their self-assessment that all staff are robustly CRB checked, this information is false, with high numbers of staff identified by the human resources database as either not having had CRB checks or three yearly re-checks.”*

Leader must resign

Colin Taylor commented: *“This report is one of the most shocking ever to come before this council. There’s nothing positive to say.*

Surrey is an Executive-run council, so the Executive must be held responsible.

It’s a shame that Cllr Nick Skellett, the Tory Leader of the Council throughout the period leading up to this report, did not resign as soon as the news broke.

Ultimate responsibility must rest with him and that’s why we called upon him to do the honourable thing and resign.”

Vulnerable young people in Surrey are being failed by children’s services at Conservative controlled County Hall, according to a damning Ofsted report.

Three out of five areas covered in the report have been described as inadequate - the worst possible ranking. As a result, the Lib Dems have called upon the Tory Leader of the Council to resign.

Cllr **Colin Taylor** (Lib Dem) said: *“Many of the underlying problems highlighted in this report, such as lack of respite care, too much reliance on agency staff and a limited range of preventative services, have been known for years, but the Conservative administration failed to act.”*

Note: Surrey County Council is run by the Tories. The Lib Dems are the main opposition.

NATIONAL, COUNTY AND BOROUGH-WIDE NEWS

LIB DEM PETITION COULD SAVE £150M

At present the European Parliament has two homes - one in Brussels and the other in Strasbourg. Every month all 732 MEPs, with staff and trunks full of files, have to make the trip from Brussels to Strasbourg. "It's a total waste of taxpayers' money" says **Sharon Bowles** MEP. "There need only be one seat in Brussels and this would stop the monthly fiasco of travelling to Strasbourg." Sign up at www.oneseat.eu

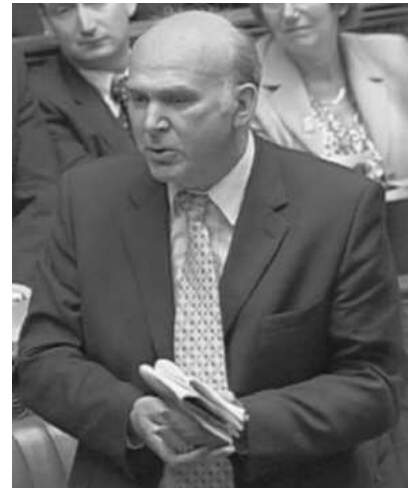


COUNCILS URGED TO SNOOP ON LOCALS

A report published by MI5 says that not enough local councils are making use of their powers to obtain people's communications data in order to investigate crime. These powers can be used to identify criminals who persistently rip-off consumers, cheat the taxpayer, deal in counterfeit goods and prey on the elderly. However, Simon Milton, chairman of the Local Government Association defended local authorities and said that councils were often caught between "a rock and a hard place", portrayed as using the powers for trivial offences, yet told to use them more often.

TODAY PROGRAMME PRAISE FOR VINCE

Whilst interviewing Chancellor Alastair Darling and Conservative treasury spokesman George Osborne on Radio 4's 'Today' programme on 29th September, Evan Davies gave both a dressing down for their economic failures, but reserved particular scorn for George Osborne. Then, in reply to one of Osborne's lightweight comments, Davies cited the record of Vince Cable, Lib Dem MP for Twickenham and snapped back: "**It sounds to me like I should vote for Vince Cable. Vince Cable was against demutualising the building societies back in the 1990s when your government was doing that. Vince Cable was sending me as an economics editor emails every three weeks, about the levels of debt through the last five years and he has been instrumental in saying that the taxpayer needs to be protected, and nationalising the banks and in having the upside risks as well as the downside ones, are the way to go. Why, if I'm angry, would I vote for you over him?**" Why indeed, says FOCUS!



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FOR EPSOM

The one-man campaign for Christmas lights in Epsom High Street by a Residents' Party councillor continues, boosted by the support of the local press. Strangely this same RA councillor voted against the borough council spending £10,000 on Christmas lights on a "matched funding" basis, when this was proposed by the Lib Dems recently. FOCUS can only assume that he wanted to keep all the credit for himself! Fortunately the Lib Dems, who have consistently supported Christmas lights, don't give up easily, and **Colin Taylor** subsequently persuaded SCC's Local Committee for Epsom & Ewell to provide an additional £5000 to help fund a decent display.

ALLOTMENTS ARE ON THE AGENDA

There are now 168 people on the waiting list for an allotment in Epsom & Ewell, according to Lib



Dem councillors. **Colin Taylor** has made sure that the subject will be discussed at the next meeting of the borough council's Leisure Committee. The Lib Dems want demand for allotments and new sites built into development plans, better "policing" of plots that are not worked and a review of multiple tenancies.

*Lib Dem county councillor **Colin Taylor** was recently shown around the Alexandra Road site, where the waiting list is over 50.*

TOWN WARD NEWS

Rosebank is now being dug up again to make ready for the new housing development. The pavement is still coned off but SCC engineers advise Cllr **Alison Kelly** they have come up with a redesign of the area that they hope will not collapse. Work is scheduled for November.

Meanwhile County Councillor **Colin Taylor** has been consulting the residents about the new design for extra parking spaces on the grassy area at the top. The aim is to find 10 spaces and move forward soon rather than wait for a more expensive scheme with more spaces.

Station Approach still looks like a building site. After **Colin Taylor** asked them to check the shoddy appearance, the Planners found that the new flats had not been built to the approved design. They are now working hard to ensure that the agreed design is implemented and that the windows in the flats meet the standards required. Meanwhile Network Rail assure us that **Epsom Station** is high up the list for redevelopment, but in these economic times there is still no timescale.



Graffiti: Unfortunately any graffiti that is placed high up, such as on the **Playhouse**, cannot be removed at present. This is because the vehicle used was in an accident and the council are awaiting the insurance payout!!!

Rosebery Park is now having its play area renewed as a result of the contributions from the flats that have been developed. The emphasis on this park is for equipment for young children in an attempt to stop groups of teenagers congregating in the park. The pond is also due to have a new island that is suitable as a duck shelter and Epsom Preservation Society have provided funds for a small fountain.

Street Lights: Cllrs **Kelly** and **Taylor** have been working their way round Town Ward to report street lights that are faulty. We are assured by Surrey County Council that the lamps are being replaced. However, some lights have faulty wiring and therefore new columns are required.

Kerb Stones: Cllrs **Wood** and **Buxton** have been working with County Cllr **Colin Taylor** to ensure that the Kerb stones in **Hazon Way** are replaced as they had become a trip hazard. Several other kerbs, in **Waterloo Road**, **Grove Road** etc have also been added to the list.

Waiting Restrictions: The next phase of yellow lines will be going ahead between January and March 2009 following the recent consultation. **Colin Taylor** has ensured that the views of residents who responded have been taken into account. A few lines have been omitted and several shortened. However this does not include requests to add lines in roads that were excluded, such as **Wimbourne Close**. There will be another phase of consultation in 2009. The RA Party have ensured that this will not address the issue of residents parking schemes even where they are wanted, so in the short term it may make parking harder for locals and commuters alike.

Planning: The blocks of flats proposed for the site of the old **Magistrates' Court** have been turned down due to their bulk.

COINCIDENCE?

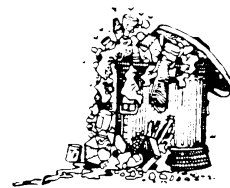
After your Lib Dem councillors complained to the council that there was no "vision" for Epsom Town Centre, two consultations are underway and shortly to be completed. The first is about changes to the Epsom Town Centre conservation area and the second is about the retail and roads aspects of our town. We will report back in due course."

FEEDBACK

This summer we were out and about in the ward gathering your views, thank-you to those of you that completed the surveys. The facilities for **young people** continue to be a priority which the council are keen to address. As more houses are built many of you felt **parking** and roads were going to come under greater pressure. More than half the people are keen to see residents parking, although not if it is expensive. The **Heathcote Road** area was the most enthusiastic area of the ward. We will therefore continue to work on this issue at the Local Committee where we can liaise with the county council.

Most people feel at least as safe as they did last year. **Crime** is not a high priority in this ward but it is notable that concern was expressed over the Police stations opening hours and the availability of the Police.

The greatest concern was expressed over the changes to the **bin collections**. The plan is to have rubbish of a smelly nature collected every week, provided it is placed in the food waste bin. The council officers intend to survey flats nearer the time and we intend to come back with more information in the next Focus.



Again thank you to everyone around the ward who contributed and the many of you who took the time to speak to us individually. Through your continued input to surveys and our continuing mobile street surgeries we know what to focus upon to try and make life better for you in the borough.

How to contact your Liberal Democrat Focus Team

Cllr Alison Kelly	8 Whitehorse Drive, KT18 7LY	Telephone 01372 726504
Cllr Charles Wood	26 Horsley Close, KT19 8HB	Telephone 01372 747042
Cty Cllr Colin Taylor	32 Christ Church Mount, KT19 8NB	Telephone 01372 721336
Julia Kirkland	20 Monro Place, KT19 7LD	Telephone 01372 739430

Email town-focus@epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk

Please use this space to send us your ideas and grumbles : Epsom & Ewell Liberal Democrats (Town), FREEPOST KT3525, Epsom KT19 9BR (If you use a stamp it saves us money!)