

FOCUS

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News from your Local Lib Dem team

Autumn 2018



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Delays and cancellations, but Where's Grayling?

The RMT Union strike from October 23rd to 27th has seen one of the biggest travel upsets to hit Epsom & Ewell this year.



As employees of Southwestern Rail Services went on strike for 5 days, local Conservative MP and Secretary for Transport Chris Grayling, was nowhere to be found, continuing a chronic track record of unaccountability for departmental failures.

The strike issues were exacerbated by a major signal failure, leading to complete chaos on the line between Epsom and Ewell, and London Waterloo.

Passengers were left on railway platforms in the coldest week for months, after not being able to squeeze onto overcrowded trains, which only came twice an hour. When the Surrey Comet approached Chris Grayling for comment, their request – unsurprisingly – went unanswered.

This comes after a 3.4% fare rise last January, with a further 3.5% increase expected in the new year.

Residents in Epsom still have to pay a far higher price to commute to London than those in Ewell, due to the continued exclusion of Epsom from Zone 6.

Chris Grayling – whose relationship with Individual Ministerial Responsibility has been a unique one over the years – has been promising to get Epsom station into Zone 6 for over a decade.

The transport minister has not made progress with bringing Oyster cards to Epsom Station either, since his suggestions during the 2017 General Election.

However, it was a cause of light relief for residents of East Ewell, whose Southern Rail service – for once – was not affected.

This comes after Epsom town centre has experienced some of the most disruptive road works in recent history, spanning months and causing major delays to residents.



It is possible that Mr Grayling's time has been in short supply lately, as he was forced to defend government plans to turn the M20 in Kent into a lorry park post-Brexit.

Epsom News and Views

Town Centre Roadworks



The seemingly endless town centre traffic chaos was expected to come to an end by Christmas, but it now seems it will continue until at least May 2019.

Alison Kelly says it is still too soon to be sure how the new two-way system in South Street will work in the long term, but reminds Town ward residents it is mainly intended to help traffic from West Hill reach Dorking Road more quickly.

It will improve the Spread Eagle and Playhouse junctions, but does nothing to deal with the many bottlenecks that restrict the traffic flow.

There is little sign so far of reduced queues during the rush hour - and some are a lot worse due to the **Abelea Green** dispute, see the back page.

Future 40 consultation shows that residents' views matter

The **FOCUS** team were so impressed with the ideas for improving Epsom that residents suggested in one

of our recent surveys, that we asked the Borough Council for a public meeting to discuss it.

Following this, the council have (coincidentally?) launched their own survey called "Future 40".

All residents have been invited to contribute their ideas about the future development of Epsom and how it should evolve.

Full details are on the website:

<https://www.future40.org>

We encourage everyone to take part in this survey.

Epsom Hospital Improvements



Most people who have been treated recently in Epsom Hospital will have seen a range of minor improvements there - but too many who have been in-patients will also have faced the indignity of being wheeled on a trolley out of one door and back in through another, sometimes in the rain.

So it was disappointing that Epsom councillors (RA, Conservative and Labour alike) voted unanimously to oppose the plans for further improvements.

Conservative MP Chris Grayling's opposition to the scheme is well known - but even his party colleague the MP for Mole Valley says he's wrong.

The planned improvements will be in addition to the proposed new acute facility. The site is large enough for both, even allowing for population growth.

Fortunately, councillors' worries about selling the old disused and derelict buildings that need to be replaced are unlikely to delay the much-needed repairs and refurbishment.

Threat to one of Epsom's Historic Buildings



Planning consent has been sought to demolish the building on the corner of Station Approach and West Street, and replace it with a modern one, see planning application **18/00940/OUT**.

Besides the ornate facade on its end gable wall, this building is amongst the oldest built using reinforced concrete, possibly the very first one in England.

For more information, please refer to the **Epsom Civic Society** website at:

<https://epsomcivicsociety.org.uk/>

Taking care of our historic town

Global Values - Local Action

Did you see this on TV?



'The Secret Life of Landfill : A Rubbish History', was shown on BBC4 on 23rd August.

This documentary gave a fascinating insight into how we deal with landfill, how Europe is 'mining' old landfill sites to reprocess plastics and metals, and how new bacteria are evolving that might help deal with the vast quantities of waste buried in our planet.

There was also 'Inside Out' on BBC1 on 17th September, where the benefits (or otherwise) of 'mining' plastic already in landfill were discussed.

The BBC had a new programme 'Drowning in Plastic' in October. 'Gardeners World' is also onto the case of plastic plant pots that can't be recycled.

So is the government, at long last, getting to grips with the problems we have created?



Epsom & Ewell Lib Dems were campaigning against single-use plastic bags back in 2002 (see the photo) but it took 13 years before a charge was introduced.

Liberal Democrats are still campaigning all over the country to get our councils and government to take the problem seriously.

Lib Dem controlled Sutton Council is planning to phase out single-use plastics. Their plan will see the council replace single-use plastics with sustainable or reusable alternatives wherever possible.

Our Town ward Focus team is here to help

If you have problems with:

- Commuter parking
- Hedges invading footways
- Litter or Graffiti
- Minicabs hanging about
- Pavement parking
- Pools of rainwater
- Pot-holes
- Street lights
- Weeds in the gutter

contact the Town ward Focus team:

- by **email**: town-focus@epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk
- by **post**: 7 Bridge Rd, Epsom KT17 4AN

Keep in touch:

Follow us on **twitter** at

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See our **facebook** page at:

www.facebook.com/epsomlibdems/

Visit our **website** at:

www.epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk

Liberal Democrats – working all year round

News from around the town

Exclusive estate bars access to school

The directors of the Abelea Green management company have forced St Joseph's church to bar the gate between the church car park and St Joseph's primary school, to prevent St Margaret Drive being used to reach the school via the church car-park.

After spending years trying, the directors who live on the estate eventually succeeded by pointing out that the lease for the car park access road mentions the church and the hall, but not the school.



Surrey County Council say this is a purely legal matter. They propose a meeting in March 2019 to discuss the resulting chronic traffic congestion in Rosebank and White Horse Drive. Borough councillors point out that schools and traffic are both matters for the county council.

Epsom has two county councillors, both Conservatives. One of them lives in a road on Abelea Green estate.

Perhaps this is a case for Lib Dem "pavement politics".

Martin has the last word

It's cool to hate potholes too, young people



Martin, a younger member

Nobody knows when exactly this happens. It varies from person to person – but one day you wake up and realise you don't actually know who's in the Top 40. You take one less sugar in your tea – and you prepare your lunch the night before work.

It just sort-of happens. It's not something you can really control or remedy – save for purchasing a mid-range, second-hand convertible sports car.

One part of this ancient rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood, is a furious, increasing, intolerance of PPI calls — and of potholes.

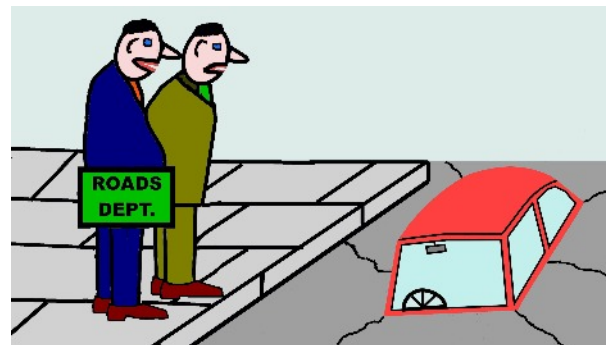
I know all this happens, because it's recently happened to me.

Last winter saw the creation of some of the biggest, most cavernous potholes I've ever seen in the 24 short years I've lived in Epsom.

Despite the constant swerving required to navigate Epsom's High Street earlier this year – making me feel like a seasoned rally-driver – I can't say it's something I'm looking forward to in 2019.

But, you may remind me, in his autumn budget, the Chancellor has announced that next year the government would be giving a bigger spending boost to potholes than to schools.

You'd be right. Your children may be buying their own textbooks – and holding bake sales to keep the lights on at school – but at least you'll be able to drive them there, safe in the knowledge that the car isn't about to disappear into a crater in the road.



Of course all this rests on the government successfully negotiating a Brexit deal.

Is it too much to ask for well-maintained roads as well as PE equipment? (Although, as someone that hated physical education at school, I think the latter might come as a welcome reprieve to some.)

So kids, I hope I've persuaded you to see potholes for the important issue they are – there's room in life to love "Love Island", and complain about potholes.

And your friends probably secretly do too.

Join the Liberal Democrats at: www.libdems.org.uk/join