

FOCUS

News from your Lib Dem team



Alison Kelly
Julie Morris

Clare Clark
Steve Gee

Printed by Summit Press, Holmethorpe Avenue, Redhill RH1 2NB. Published and promoted by Epsom & Ewell Liberal Democrats, 98 Nork Way, Banstead SM7 1HP.

New Housing Targets



We believe the only way current housing shortages in Epsom & Ewell, particularly affordable rented homes, can adequately be dealt with as well as meeting national house-building targets is by adopting the following option outlined in the recent local planning consultation:

“A balanced approach where much of the need is met within the urban area but some is allocated to land currently within unused and secondary Green Belt”.

This would include some green belt land that no longer serves its original purpose. It would not include Parks, Epsom Common or Epsom Downs.

This position was supported by 74% of those who responded to the consultation as the “least bad” option for the Borough.

Do you have a Grouse?

If you have a problem that we can help with, please contact your Town ward FOCUS team by **email** at:



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

or by post at: 7 Bridge Rd, Epsom KT17 4AN

Keeping in touch



We are a local team, making local policies based on input from local residents, but we also keep in touch with the bigger picture, which is so important for getting things done.

Sir Vince Cable was the guest speaker at our recent Annual Dinner, where he shared campaigning issues with local members, including Town Focus team member Julie Morris.

Keep in touch with us:

Follow us on **twitter** at:

[@Epsomewellfocus](https://twitter.com/Epsomewellfocus)

[@Epsomlibdem](https://twitter.com/Epsomlibdem)

[@jorrisam](https://twitter.com/jorrisam)

See our **facebook** page at:

www.facebook.com/epsomlibdems/

Visit our local **website** at:

www.epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk

Register on our website for **news updates**.

Record Council Tax Increase

Our council tax is made up of three portions:

- Epsom & Ewell Borough Council gets 11%,
- Surrey County Council gets 76%,
- and the Surrey Police get 13%.

For 2018/19 the Borough Council has agreed to increase its portion by 3.0%, the County by 6.0% and the Police by 5.3%. So the overall increase is 5.6%.

This is the biggest increase for years. Both councils blame the changes on government cuts, but the Lib Dem opposition at County Hall says it is also partly due to inefficiency and waste by the Conservative administration.

Zero income for services from Surrey County Council's £298 million property investments

Questions from Lib Dem county councillors have revealed that so far Surrey County Council has not used any of the income from its £298 million commercial property portfolio on council services.

SCC has a wholly owned subsidiary company which holds 23 commercial properties, mostly situated outside the county. The council's original agreed strategy was to generate additional income to support delivery of its services.

Despite millions of cuts to services, this income is being used to purchase yet more property, instead of protecting services for Surrey residents.

The Lib Dem opposition has called for the Conservatives to explain why this income has not been used for its original purpose and for the County Council to cease acting like a private sector property investment company, when it is supposed to be a local authority providing public services to local people.



Aldi and Lidl



Aldi's appeal against refusal of planning permission failed. Apart from repairs to the hoardings, there is no further news up to the time of going to press.

There isn't much news about Lidl either, but we do know that they are getting involved in sponsoring some community events.

Good news !

The LibDem Fightback

How's it going ? Quite well, actually !

As well as numerous by-election gains this year, our spectacular wins in the recent local elections in Kingston and Richmond meant that the Liberal Democrats were the only party to gain control of more councils, as well as winning the most additional seats.

As well as retaining control in Sutton, we also gained seats in four of the six Surrey districts and boroughs where elections were held this year.

Can YOU help the LibDem Fightback ?

Contact Julie or Steve.

Epsom Hospital



Unlike local Tory MP Chris Grayling, we want to see Epsom & St Helier upgrade their facilities, which will require new buildings for their more specialised services.

Their recent consultation received 80% support for consolidating acute care (some 15% of current services) on a single site.

This proposed acute centre would be a centre of excellence, with better specialist cover and a higher standard of care than can currently be provided on two sites.

They plan to continue running 85% of current services at Epsom and at St Helier, which would both have to be refurbished.

The location for the combined acute centre has yet to be decided. The options are Epsom, St Helier or South Sutton next to the Royal Marsden.

All of us living in Epsom & Ewell would prefer Epsom. The Sutton site offers the possibility of working with the Royal Marsden, though transport links need improving. We have expressed our opposition to siting it at St Helier.

£754m to fix Surrey's streets



Liberal Democrat county councillors have revealed that it would take £754 million to repair Surrey's roads and footways to an "as new" standard. At their current rate of spending, it would take the Conservatives almost 50 years to complete this work.

The state of Surrey's roads and footways is not news, but the £754 million needed to fix them is shocking and only highlights the total inadequacy of the county's recently announced £5 million additional funding for road repairs.

Cycling UK recently rated Surrey as the worst authority for potholes in the UK, whilst a recent Freedom of Information request revealed that Surrey paid out £459,552 compensation in 2017 on 265 successful claims for damage or injury caused by road defects.

The County Council should do more to prioritise funding for improving the condition of its roads and footways.

Instead of spending millions of pounds on commercial property outside Surrey, the county council should invest in resurfacing Surrey's roads. This would save money on compensation as well as future repairs.



Police Station Plans

A planning application has been received to demolish the former police station in Church Street and build two blocks of flats.

The plan is for 29 flats in total: 11 x 1 bed, 14 x 2 bed & 4 x 3 bed, with 23 car parking spaces.

Yes 23, less than 1 per flat - but this is in line with the borough council's parking standards !

Horton Chapel



A listed building which is part of Epsom's history should soon get a new lease of life.

The derelict Horton Chapel had been given planning permission for use as an arts centre serving the local and wider community.

The final hurdle has now been overcome by the award of a major capital grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund for the redevelopment of the building.