

Focus

Stamford
ward
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The Greenbelt – Tory scare-mongering?

A recent Conservative leaflet “*Save our Green Belt*” accused the council’s ruling Residents Association of planning “extensive building on our Green Belt”. We don’t often defend the RA, but this simply is not true.

What is true is that the Conservative government’s recent changes to the planning rules make it more difficult for councils to reduce their planning targets to protect sites currently classified as Green Belt.

What is important is to solve the national housing crisis. This will mean building 300,000 houses per year for the next few years. Every part of the country must play its part, including Epsom & Ewell.

However, the borough council must retain control over the type of housing built, to ensure that:

- ❖ it meets local needs, particularly for rented affordable homes, rather than maximising developers’ profits.
- ❖ the necessary roads, buses, schools, doctors’ surgeries etc will be adequately funded.

There is a better solution.

Currently about 250 homes are built in Epsom & Ewell each year. Sites are available for another 3,500 without any loss of Green Belt.

That’s enough for about 500 a year for the next 7 years.

Meanwhile the council’s *Green Belt Study* will have shown if any of the current Green Belt designations are inappropriate.

In 7 years time the demand for new homes may be less and further brown-field sites may be available.



Fed up with Brexit?

Different newspapers give us different opinions. **Here are a few things that are clear:**

1. When the UK voted “Leave” in 2016, Epsom & Ewell voted “Remain”, by a very similar margin.
2. Since 2016 some people have changed their minds, as more information has come to light.
3. Liberal Democrats have consistently opposed Brexit as harmful to the British people.
4. Recent surveys show most people now see Brexit as a mistake.

When full details of the Brexit “deal” are known, we need a “People’s Vote” on the outcome.



Epsom MP in the News

“Failing Grayling”?

Epsom’s MP is often criticised. Does he deserve this nickname?

Links to some news items are listed at: <http://e-e.lib.dm/EMP>

Alternatively visit the Facebook page: **Epsom MP in the News**

<https://www.facebook.com/Epsom.MP.in.the.News>

Zone 6 – Oyster or Mirage?

Before Zone 6 was extended to East and West Ewell, the FOCUS team’s call for Epsom Station to be included was ridiculed, but later it was adopted by Epsom’s local paper and its MP.

Epsom Station in Oyster Zone 6 is now supported by all parties, yet despite Epsom’s MP becoming Transport Secretary, like a mirage it still seems as far away as ever.



Liberal Democrats – Local Action – Global Values

Woodlands Road

For a number of years, this part of Woodlands Road which runs alongside the top of the railway embankment, has had surface cracks and suffered a marked slope towards the tracks below.

Surrey County Council say it is not their responsibility, it is down to Rail Track.

Rail Track have said nothing.



Surrey County Council update

Conservative county councillors in Surrey recently voted to award themselves thousands of pounds in extra allowances, whilst at the same time proposing huge cuts to essential services.

This money could have gone to fix our crumbling roads or inadequate children's social services, see:

<http://e-e.lib.dm/pay>

Since then, Surrey County Council has now, for the second time in two years, had to pay for external experts to review its financial resilience.

This follows closely after the sudden unexplained resignation of the council's director of finance.

Town centre road works

The 'Plan E' road works should be complete later this year. Traffic from West Hill to Dorking Road will benefit, but at the expense of other traffic.

The RA believe that the net overall benefit will prove worthwhile. Let's hope so, because the predicted net benefit is within the margin of error.

The FOCUS team regret the RA councillors' rejection of the more ambitious Liberal Democrat plan to free the Market Place from through traffic, by making Ashley Avenue two-way as originally intended.

Horton Chapel



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

The derelict Horton Chapel had earlier been given planning permission to be used as a new Arts Centre, serving the local and wider community.

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

News from the Local Committee

Surrey CC's Local Committee is a joint organisation with Epsom & Ewell BC that deals with highways, social services and various other matters.

There are opportunities for the public to ask questions and have a say on agenda items.

In June, it was agreed to have a public consultation on a Residents' Parking Zone in Wheelers Lane. A similar scheme was rejected a few years ago, after confusion about the number of parking spaces.

There was also a fresh plan for Manor Green Road.



Is there a car coming?
You really cannot tell.

[Tree at corner of West Street and Station Way]

On behalf of residents, your Focus team asked about the shoots around tree trunks, which can obscure sight lines for drivers and pedestrians.

Help desks at Epsom & Ewell and Surrey had both seemed to think the other council was responsible for cutting them.

Surrey said they should be cut between June and September and promised to get them cut as soon as possible.

This had still not been done by the end of July.

Wells Centre planning costs soar

In February the borough council accepted that:

- ❖ if the site is sold to a developer, the promised small community centre cannot be guaranteed,
- ❖ their alternative of building 25 rented flats cannot cover the cost of including affordable units.

Instead, they agreed to pay £15,000 for advisors to develop a mixed scheme, with some flats for market rent, some for affordable rent and some for sale.

Then in July, RA councillors agreed to pay a total of £160,000, up to submission of a planning application.

After a "consultation with residents", a final business case must show the scheme to be financially viable, before a planning application can be submitted.

Your FOCUS team wonder how much more money the RA are prepared to waste before giving up.