

# FOCUS

Winter 2019/20

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From Your  
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# GAGGED!

## RA Council Bans Public Questions

**HAVE YOUR SAY? Not when it comes to anything on the agenda!**

Until earlier this year, residents could address a Borough Council policy committee about matters on the agenda. Now they can't!

This is now forbidden by the ruling Residents' Party, following a change made to the Council's Constitution earlier this year. Now residents have been gagged and can only ask questions about something which is **NOT** on the agenda? REALLY!!! What's the point of that?

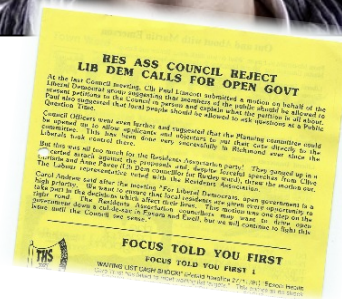
**FOCUS Liberal Democrat Councillor David Gulland** said "The Lib Dems have fought hard to open up the council chamber to public participation since the 1990s. This is a big backward step and sends a message that residents are not allowed by the council to be

involved in what's actually happening in their own borough."

David points out that having your say on Planning Committee matters hasn't changed, but if your particular interest is Audit, Scrutiny, Planning Policy, Community, Wellbeing, Safety, Environment ... make sure you pick something that isn't on the agenda of the meeting!

**FOCUS Lib Dem Councillor Julie Morris** added "Even a review by the Standards Committee has not overturned this decision. It's a great shame not to allow residents to engage with the council in this way."

Contact David if you need help with speaking at council meetings.



The FOCUS newsletter that started it all off way back in 1991. At the time, the Liberal Democrats were just suggesting that members of the public should be allowed to present petitions to the Council in person and to explain what their petition was all about. Even then, this was all too much for the Residents' Party, who threw the Lib Dem proposal out at that time!

## Concern at the state of Rifle Butts Alley

When a resident reported to us that this path was in a poor state of repair, we went to have a look. FOCUS campaigner Andre Kubicek says "I'm not a horse rider but it must surely be a very poor surface as a bridleway."



We've reported it to the county council as they are responsible and they are supposed to be doing an inspection. It then has to take its place in a priority list.

BUT another resident has been in touch arguing that, as it was resurfaced some years ago and subsequently deteriorated quickly, it is therefore not worth repairing.

We'll keep you informed if anything happens on this. If you know of any other footpaths or bridleways that need attention, or if you just want an update, then contact Andre.

## South Hatch Plans Under Starter's Orders

A new racehorse training establishment, was given the go ahead by a tiny majority at a special Planning Committee meeting in September.



The development has been "enabled" by 46 dwellings which will increase the building footprint on Green Belt Land. The Committee voted 6 in favour, 5 against. The proposals then had to be sent to the Secretary of State but, at time of printing, the Council has not yet received a response.

**STEVE SAYS 'THANK YOU':** Although naturally disappointed with the national general election result, Liberal Democrat candidate Steve Gee would like to thank all those residents who voted for him here in Epsom & Ewell, where the Lib Dem share of the vote nearly doubled to 23%. Nationally, the Lib Dem vote share increased by more than any other party.



## ANDRE'S AGENDA The regular column by Andre Kubicek on environmental issues

**OUR FIRST TREE!** We've decided to plant a tree for every issue of FOCUS. Fast growing trees store the most carbon during their first decades and long-lived trees keep carbon stored for generations. Poplar, pine, oak, maple are all good trees to plant. Ours is a walnut, which we chose because everyone eats walnuts at this festive time of year! We will let you know in our next issue where it's planted. And, in the meantime, **Happy New Year to you all!**



# CALLS FOR COUNTY COUNCILLOR TO RESIGN



**Residents in College Road were shocked** when their petition to get Residents Parking Zone M split into two (which had taken a year), with their section having reduced hours of operation, was **sabotaged by their own county councillor!**

County Cllr Tina Mountain started her own petition half way through the official public consultation on the proposed change, attempting to persuade residents to stick with the current hours and days of operation.

Even more worrying is that the final decision is made by three people, the County Council's Parking Manager, the Chairman of the Local Committee (Mrs. Mountain) and the County Councillor for the area (also Mrs. Mountain). Complaints have been lodged and we will keep you informed.

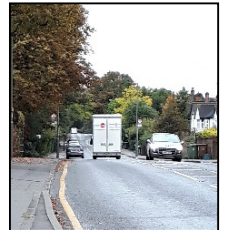
## REPAIRS DONE IN A WEEK AT ALEX REC

When a resident got in touch about the surface breaking up and causing a trip hazard, we were in touch with the council straight away. They sent out an inspector and the repair was done within a week. The entire surface is scheduled for renewal in the future.



## COMMUTER PARKING UPDATE

We reported in the last issue that proposals for **new parking restrictions** in many roads in our area were going out to public consultation this autumn.



A problem has arisen with the all-day restrictions proposed for **Alexandra Road**, as it's used by **Old Cottage Hospital Surgery** for overflow parking. A 2 hour daytime "curfew" might be more appropriate - this means that parking would be restricted for just two hours in the middle of the day, with parking ok at other times. It would stop the all day parking but allow short-term parking. What do you think? Contact **Julie** for more information.

## CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

The council's **Climate Change Action Plan** is due to be approved on 20th January. It's long, detailed and ambitious and your Lib Dem councillors have played a big part in it. The Plan should be available on the council's website from 13th January.

Local resident **Sarah Clayton** has founded an Epsom & Ewell group of Extinction Rebellion (XR). An inaugural meeting in October was held at the Glyn Hall in Ewell.

Sarah says "We have now formed a small Epsom XR group, to keep building the movement. Extinction Rebellion is calling for change, radical change, in the way our politics, economics and society works, in order to cut carbon emissions and attempt to keep the planetary climate stable enough for life as we know it."

**Julie** and **David** organised a meeting between Extinction Rebellion representatives and the council, which has informed the council's forthcoming Climate Change Action Plan.

## WE'RE NOT WINNING THE BATTLE!



**The Battle of the Bin Lids continues.** Refuse crews are supposed to shut bin lids after emptying. We have now complained four times. If the bins are emptied early in the morning and there's heavy rain, by the time some residents return home from work they have inches of water inside. This photo was taken at 10am on a day scheduled for heavy rain and obviously the message isn't getting through! We'll keep trying.

# HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Your details:

Let us know your issues, concerns or ideas...

Name .....

Email .....

Telephone .....

Postcode .....

- I can give about 1 hour every quarter to deliver leaflets in my area.
- I would like a poster at the next election to show my support for the Liberal Democrats.
- I would like to join the Liberal Democrats.

If you return this form, the Liberal Democrats, locally and nationally, may use information provided, including your political views, to further our objectives, share it with our elected representatives and/or contact you in future using any of the means provided. Some contacts may be automated. You may opt out of some or all contacts or exercise your other legal rights by contacting us. Further details are in our Privacy Policy at [www.libdems.org.uk/privacy](http://www.libdems.org.uk/privacy).



**Return to: College FOCUS, 7, Bridge Road, Epsom, KT17 4AN**  
**or email [college-focus@epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk](mailto:college-focus@epsom-ewell-libdems.org.uk), or phone 01372 744297**