



The Hersham News

Edited by Ruth Mitchell | www.esherwalton.com | Local issues, local action, local Conservatives



Your views matter to us

Last September Ruth Mitchell and the Hersham Conservative Team launched our Survey of local residents. Our plan is to visit every home in Hersham – even the wind and rain won't stop us – so that we can truly gauge what matters to our community and then produce policies and actions that address your concerns.

Already the large response and feedback has been invaluable. We promised in the October's *Hersham News* to report the main findings we've received so far.

We really appreciated the time residents have taken in completing the survey.

Summarising the findings, Ruth (who is pictured, left, with a resident) tells us: "Far and

away topping the list were, not surprisingly, potholes and the state of the roads. Comments on this came up in almost all responses.

This was often combined with problems with the state of pavements, speeding, parking on pavements and parking in general.

"This was notably from residents in the centre of the village and those near large developments such as schools and stations.

"Preservation of our Green Spaces is also a priority as is the retaining and upgrading of our Village Hall. Other issues highlighted were Transport and Congestion, minimising council tax, and the importance of local shops".

What have we done with all this useful information?

As you see from other articles in this *Hersham News*, we are focusing on improving the appalling state of our roads, pressing for increased funding but also reporting on some potentially encouraging initiatives.

In addition, we have been able to resolve a number of individual issues raised by residents, including intrusive car park lighting that has affected those in Havers Avenue.

Ruth adds: "We shall be continuing our surveys throughout February to ensure as wide a coverage as possible - please contact us to make your voice heard, either through the survey, via the *Hersham News* or directly to me or Cllrs Mary Sheldon and John O'Reilly".

Crossing safely

OVER a year ago Hersham mum Lauren Twilley and her father Steve Clark sought Cllr Mary Sheldon's support to make crossing safer at the Molesey Road drive-in to the Hersham Green (Waitrose) Shopping Centre.

This busy entrance has caused real concerns for children and families walking to and from Burhill Primary School.

After lengthy discussions with JLL, the agent for the Centre's owners, a zebra-style crossing has been installed - this will make it so much safer for everyone to cross and is a great outcome. Sara and Libby are pictured using the crossing on the day it was installed.



■ JUST before Christmas last year, local resident Peter Stephens was killed whilst crossing Esher Road. His family has launched a petition calling for positive measures to address speed at this very busy road. The petition will be presented to the Elmbridge Local Committee in the next few months.

End the pain of potholes

Local residents are justifiably angry at the state of our roads and Hersham's Surrey County Councillor, John O'Reilly, shares their indignation.

He tells the *Hersham News*: "While Surrey is in financial straits, largely through no fault of its own but because of massive reductions in government funding, the Council still has to act to improve our roads.

"It's a service that is critical to our residents and businesses. I am applying maximum pressure to increase spending on local highways, and making myself unpopular in certain quarters for doing so. But I don't care: we cannot go on as we are".

John can already report some progress. Next year's budget for local highways will be doubled and we may have around £200,000 in total for work in Elmbridge.

This will certainly be a help but much more needs to be done: John pledges, "I will keep on fighting!"

One piece of good news relates to the urgently-needed resurfacing of the Seven Hills Road. After so long, this may now be happening!



In January, the Elmbridge Local Committee chaired by Cllr John O'Reilly submitted a bid of £455,000 for the full resurfacing for 2,000 metres of the road from the Chestnut Avenue entrance to Whiteley Village southwards to the Byfleet Road.

The bid will be considered by Elmbridge Borough Council using funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy, which currently stands at around £7 million.

Speaking jointly to the *Hersham News*, Ruth Mitchell, Cllrs Mary Sheldon and John O'Reilly said, "We have received so many complaints about the dire and dangerous condition of Seven Hills, a major route for Hersham and other residents, we very much hope that this application will be approved and work start as soon as possible".



HERSHAM'S County Councillor, John O'Reilly, fulfilled one of his election pledges in October by voting to cut the total amount paid to Councillors by around 4%, going further than the recommendations by the Independent Panel. John is pictured addressing the Council strongly supporting the reduction. This is in stark contrast to the Residents/Lib Dem administration in Elmbridge raising their allowances by a shocking 12.4%!



Thumbs down for 'tennis tax'

THE decision by the Residents Association political parties and Liberal Democrat coalition that runs Elmbridge Council to introduce charges for playing on Elmbridge tennis courts has left many residents fuming.

Sadly, despite our continued pressure for a re-think, the current Administration's policy looks set to continue, despite a few concessions that only make the process of accessing the courts even more complicated.

Resident Mrs Bennett of Molesey Road, whose home backs onto the Coronation Recreation Ground tennis courts, and who was instrumental in persuading the council to retain and re-surface the courts several years ago told the *Hersham News*: "I think tennis should be available for all children and having locked courts and making a charge does not make it an inclusive sport. It means children from less well-off homes are unable to access the courts so easily".

Along with many other residents, we completely agree.

Astonishingly, as the Council had no record of how many people were using the courts before the charging system, they can't comment on whether usage has increased. What we do know is that many of the courts are now empty and unused.

What an awful waste!

In brief:

■ There is weekly recycling of small electrical items and clothes and home textiles from their homes (place in tied plastic bag and leave next to wheeled bin).

■ Please do support our hugely successful Hersham Centre for the Community in Queens Road – hairdressing, beauty treatments, reflexology and aromatherapy, exercise classes, art and craft classes and iPad training – all available and more information www.elmbridge.gov.uk/css/centres-for-the-community/

Park upgrade is a hit with kids



THE much-loved children's play park in Burwood Road/Vaux Crescent has been completely refurbished and is open for everyone to enjoy.

The new equipment contains a play unit house, swings, including a Tango Seat for adult and child to swing together, and a new Spin Together Roka-Roka.

Don't forget to check out the intriguing play panel on the side of the unit house – a sort of flat "Rubik Cube"! Here are Archie and Alexa enjoying playing on the play unit.

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Never forget, your Hersham Conservative Team of Ruth, Mary and John is always here for you. Please contact us if you have any problems or concerns relating to Hersham, particularly regarding Elmbridge Borough and Surrey County Councils - we'll do our best to help. And don't forget to take our Residents Survey when it arrives.



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New start for Three Rivers

BY THE time you read the *Hersham News*, students at Three Rivers Academy will have returned to occupy their magnificent new school building, which will open on February 26th.

What a milestone this will be in the long development of a well-loved Hersham-based school. Congratulations to everyone involved with the project.

Cllr Mary Sheldon has been regularly updated by Bewley Homes on what happens next, as all movements around the very busy A244/Hersham Road have a big impact on residents and the huge flow of traffic moving through this part of Hersham.

Speaking also on behalf of Ruth Mitchell and John O'Reilly, Mary told the *Hersham News*: "We are all determined that safety remains the number one priority for students and residents."

Demolition of the old school will commence around the middle of March and will take about 18 weeks. The newly constructed bell mouth entrance on Hersham Road will now be used for all site works and the entire building programme is expected to take 18-24 months.

From 26th February staff and pupils of Three Rivers Academy will access the school via the new entrance and a specially constructed footpath protected from traffic by metal barriers.

The long suffering Felcott Road and Close residents may be interested that all the units are now on the market with many already let or sold. Once the entire housing project is completed, only the 12 new houses at the end of Felcott Road will use it for vehicle access - all the other units, including the flats at the end, will use the Boulevard off Hersham Road for access.



Ruth raises traveller issues with the Home Secretary

IN OCTOBER'S *Hersham News*, we promised to report back following Ruth Mitchell's raising with Dominic Raab the disruption to Hersham residents by travellers' incursions during the summer.

Last year there were 14 unauthorised encampments on council owned land in Elmbridge costing the council almost £25,000 not including extensive staff costs. This is YOUR money!

Recently Ruth met again with Dominic Raab (*pictured*) who commented: "I recognise the widespread local frustration with the incursions in Hersham and across Elmbridge. I have been working with Ruth Mitchell and our local Conservative Councillors to co-ordinate a better response between the local authority and the police. I have also written to the government to see whether the law itself needs to be tightened as well as assessing the local enforcement of the law."

But Ruth has gone further in speaking up for Hersham residents. Only a few days ago she also spoke directly to the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, and sought further measures.

Ruth tells the *Hersham News*, "I



did not mince words in describing the problems this caused in Hersham. The Home Secretary was well aware of these issues and extremely sympathetic. She

said that she was currently having discussions with the police over the existing legal powers they have and what additional powers they might need in order to resolve these problems.

"We also discussed the usefulness of traveller transit sites. Opportunities for a one to one with a senior Cabinet member are rare so it was splendid to be able to promote some of Hersham's residents' concerns".

Elmbridge Council is to review its existing legal powers for dealing with such incursions and also to conduct an investigation into possible traveller transit sites. We shall continue pushing for action.

Hersham trader's fond farewell



REMEMBER Maureen? Of course, you do, presiding daily in Martins Supermart, right in the middle of Hersham, passed by everybody.

Born and brought up in Molesey Road, Maureen owned and managed the shop for over 35 years, and was known by hundreds, if not thousands of people!

It was a very sad Saturday when the shop finally closed.

Maureen had been a strong sup-

porter of Hersham in Bloom - she loves all kinds of flowers and is well-known in Chertsey, where she lives, for the stupendous displays in her large garden.

On Saturday 6th January, her last day in the shop, members of Hersham in Bloom presented her with flowers beautifully arranged by Petals, a Hersham family-run florist. Tears flowed, but they didn't stop Maureen trading, right up to the final moment of closure!

Getting there Lidl by Lidl



AT LAST the work has started on the new Hersham Lidl. Builders Crest Nicholson will take forward development of the food store and 38 apartments - the groundworks, foundations, sub structure and boundary treatments are underway, and should be completed by end February.

Cllr Mary Sheldon has been seeking regular information to keep residents informed on progress. Crest confirm that the build is expected to take 20 months with completion in Summer 2019.

A construction newsletter update was distributed to approximately 200 local residents and businesses in December, and the company will continue to keep the community informed throughout construction and the next update is currently being prepared. Mary is on the distribution and will share this information more widely with Hersham residents.

Last November saw some teething problems on the Mole Road side, in particular the unplanned installation of an entrance gate contrary to the agreed access from Molesey Road. Residents were understandably concerned by the proximity of large site offices and Mary raised the matter with Elmbridge Borough Council's planning team, who judged that temporary offices could be put anywhere on the site, so long as environmental issues were addressed - generator noise, unsocial hours of work etc. These are being monitored by Elmbridge Borough Council.

Speed check



POTENTIALLY good news on the horizon.

A bid for £20,000 has been submitted to the local Hersham Spending Board (which consists of the Hersham Village and Esher councillors) for the installation of 4 or 5 VASs that have long been requested by local residents to help reduce speeding along the straight stretch of Burwood Road before the Green.



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