



The Molesey News

Hello and welcome

HI I'M STEVE BAX your local councillor and Editor of *The Molesey News*. I publish this newsletter 3-4 times a year, at no cost to the taxpayer, to keep you informed of what's going on news at the Elmbridge and Surrey councils and in our community. Please get in touch with any feedback or if I can help with any local issues or concerns. I will be knocking on doors in the run up to the May elections so I very much look forward to meeting you and hearing your views.

Seeking your vote



AGNES Fuchs (above left), who lives on Walton Road, is your Conservative candidate for West Molesey.

The mum-of-two thinks West Molesey is being poorly served by its current Molesey RA councillors who have allowed local roads and the play parks at Grovelands and Molesey Recs to get into a poor state. She is also campaigning for Molesey Hospital to be upgraded. Molesey residents in the Thames Ditton ward can vote for Corinne Sterry (above right). She runs two businesses in Elmbridge and has raised over a million pounds over 20 years for cancer charities. Corinne is campaigning against overdevelopment, safer roads and for action against illegal moorings.

Coalition blunders



THE Elmbridge Conservative group under Cllr John Cope (pictured) have been keeping the Lib Dem and RA coalition who run the Council honest.

The Tory Opposition forced a U-turn over the closure of the Walton Playhouse and prevented a big hike in taxi drivers' licenses. They are also keeping the pressure on to fully reinstate the garden waste collections.

At the Budget in February, we supported RA Cllr Nigel Haig-Brown who implored his own side to stop dwindling away the reserves and confront the Council's financial challenges. His motion calling on the Coalition to present a plan was defeated.

The May elections will be an opportunity for change.

Steve Bax launches campaign for re-election to Elmbridge Council with three key priorities:

Roads, riverside and health

SINCE you elected me to Elmbridge Borough Council nearly four years ago I have played a full part in Molesey's political life.

I fought a successful campaign to save Vine Hall from being closed by the Council and I led the objections to the Jolly Boatman scheme at the Planning Committee. I have also secured funding to replace and upgrade Mole Bridge.

During the pandemic I regularly delivered for the Molesey Foodbank and led litter picks at Hurst Park. I also helped prevent a 40-year-old family business in Molesey from going to the wall during the lockdown by obtaining a grant.

It has been a privilege to be able to speak for Molesey at the Council and to help residents with an array of issues big and small.

There are three big challenges that I will focus on if you entrust me with your vote on Thursday 5 May: that's our roads, riverside and local healthcare.

Roads, because our local highways and pavements need invest-



Steve at the Hurst Park riverside

ment for repairs and resurfacing, and I can secure these as a Surrey County Councillor, providing a joined up service for residents.

I am progressing a crossing at St Lawrence School and have secured a £3 million investment in Molesey to replace the ageing Mole Bridge.

If this had failed it would have taken years to replace, so I was

keen to press Surrey to act.

Riverside is a priority, because we can all see and appreciate the treasure on our doorstep that is Hurst Park. Yet our water's edge continues to be blighted by unconsented mooring. I will hold the Environment Agency to account for its failure to enforce and will work with riverside groups to find alter-

native solutions, such as Elmbridge Council following the example of Kingston by taking over the ownership of the riverbank.

On healthcare, I will press our local NHS (Surrey Heartlands) to deliver the long overdue Molesey Hospital upgrade we have been promised, and to work with our MP and others to put the pressure on Glenlyn Medical Centre to improve – it was rated the worst in Surrey for patient satisfaction and I demand better for my residents.

On these priorities and more I will be as active on your behalf as ever, and I gratefully ask for your support on 5 May.

UKRAINE: Could you sponsor refugees from the war in Ukraine by providing a room in your home? If so please sign up at the Government's website: <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk>. If you wish to donate to help the Ukrainian people in their time of crisis you can do so through the British Red Cross at donate.redcross.org.uk/



Hampton Court Bridge is being fitted with protective bollards and raised kerbs

Bridge roadworks uncover erosion

READERS will be aware of the lane closure at Hampton Court Bridge and the roadworks which began in January and are due to conclude in late April.

Surrey County Council, at the request of counter terrorism police, is installing raised kerbs and 150 bollards to prevent a vehicle being driven at pedestrians (about a million Palace tourists are estimated to cross the bridge on foot each year).

Cllr Steve Bax comments, "This is such a busy bridge for traffic that any roadworks here or on Hampton Court Way will inevitably be disruptive, so while we need to keep pedestrians safe I absolutely understand the need to complete this work as quickly as possible."

"I am in regular contact with the team on the ground and am keeping the pressure to speed things along."

Once the paving and tarmac was removed Molesey-to-Richmond side, the bridge was found to have

suffered water and grit corrosion which would have ultimately seeped into the steel structure.

Thankfully this is being treated, but has set back the work by three weeks until a specialist waterproofing team was able to attend.

Work is now progressing at full speed to catch up and the team hope to reopen the pedestrian access sooner than planned in order to be able to work simultaneously on the other side. This is also expected to require waterproofing.

The bollards are taking longer to install due to the presence of underground utilities adding complexity.

At Steve's request a page has been set up on Surrey's website to keep bridge users updated on the progress of the repairs and upgrade.

It's at: www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks-and-maintenance/roadworks/hampton-court-bridge

Supporting local good causes

STEVE Bax has secured grants for 10 local good causes in the past year, as part of his role as Surrey County Councillor for East Molesey and Esher.

This includes £486 to the Vine Hall Community Group (pictured) for essential maintenance, and £500 to the We Love Walton Road project for tree planting and other town centre enhancements.

Steve gave funds to the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Thames Landscape Strategy (for cutting back vegetation along the tow-path) (£500 each). And the same



to the Elmbridge Fishing Academy and Molesey Youth Centre.

His biggest grant was £750 to Men in Sheds for materials to replace the much-loved Moley and Ratty boats at Hurst Park.

As a member of Surrey's Corporate Parenting, Steve also gave £250 towards Christmas presents for children in care.

Looking at funding options in retirement?

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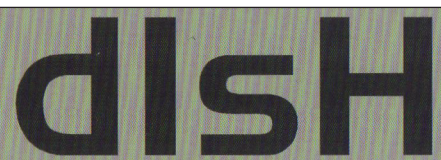
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Better news at last on the bins



ELMBRIDGE Council has partially started some garden waste collections, but a full bin service is not in sight.

The £48-a-year subscription service was put on hold last September by the Liberal Democrat and Residents groups who run the council as a seven party coalition, claiming a severe shortage of HGV drivers. The crisis has made for some uncomfortable Full Council meetings for the Administration parties as the Conservative Opposition continued to ask about the suspended service and why they were not doing more to fix the problem.

The Coalition blamed the national HGV shortage and the Government, even though our neighbouring Conservative council Runnymede continued to run its garden waste services without interruption.

Cllr Steve Bax said, "Our residents have suffered for long enough. Many who are elderly cannot easily get to the Tip and have really felt the loss of this service. A Conservative council will get our green waste bins collected every fortnight and run the service properly so it doesn't happen again."

Molesey set for homes influx

MOLESEY would be asked to accommodate 810 new homes over 15 years under the new 'Local Plan' approved by Elmbridge's Resident Association and Liberal Democrat Cabinet.

The document and supporting policies have taken an incredible six years to produce, was due to be put to the Full Council as The Molesey News went to print.

It sets out on paper the Borough's assessment of our local housing need until 2037, and where 465 additional homes per year across the borough could theoretically go.

The approach taken by the Plan is the one set out by the former Conservative administration in 2018: no release of Green Belt land for housing and limiting the amount of development in our town centres.

The expectation is that Molesey would take 12% of the burden for new houses, the same as Cobham and Oxshott, with Esher taking 14% (990 units), Weybridge 17% (1,195 units) and Walton-on-Thames the highest with 28% of the total (1,955 units).

However, the list of potential sites is also likely to raise eyebrows, including the East Molesey car park (23 units), land at Hampton Court Station including the Jolly Boatman (97 units), Sundial House off



Joseph Palmer Centre, which has potential for redevelopment

Orchard Lane (61 units), Henrietta Parker Centre (13 units), the Joseph Palmer Centre (60 care home units), Molesey Clinic and Library (10 units) and even the Molesey Hospital (70 units).

Molesey councillor Steve Bax says residents should not be too alarmed by the list.

He explains, "Just because a site is mentioned in the plan does not mean it will be built on. The point of the list is to demonstrate to the planning inspectorate (who sign off the Plan) that there is sufficient land to support our housing demand.

"Any sites that come forward in future, for example if Molesey Clinic moved into the new hospital, would still be subject to the usual planning process and resident consultation, so I hope people are reassured by that.

"Overall, the Local Plan should be positive for Molesey and the Borough as it protects our green spaces, sets a more realistic housing target, and allows us to grow our communities in a planned way – it also gives us something to fall back on when planning applications are refused by the Council and we are taken to appeal."

20mph bid stopped

THE Conservative majority at Surrey County Council voted down a Liberal Democrat bid to implement for a blanket 20mph speed limit in Surrey.

We felt this was likely to result in motorists ignoring the limits and placing an unreasonable burden on the police.

Cllr Matt Furniss, the Cabinet Member for Transport, said local specific speed reductions can already be requested where appropriate. He announced a £1million fund for 20mph zones outside schools and residential streets.

Royal Mail delivers boundary snub

ROYAL Mail is refusing to alter the East / West Molesey postal boundary despite a petition of more than 400 signature petition raised by Cllr Steve Bax.

Prior to 1992, West Molesey was not a postal area in its own right so we had the farcical situation where letters were having to be addressed as 'West Molesey, East Molesey'.

This caused much frustration and campaign was launched, supported by the MP of the day, which persuaded Royal Mail to recognise West Molesey as a postal district in its own right.

The trouble was that it set the boundary in line with the then council wards. In practical terms, this meant that anyone west of Dennis Road was now West Molesey according to the post office.

This is also thought to be having a continuing impact on house prices in Molesey.



Steve's petition called on Royal Mail look at resetting the postal boundary using our historic boundary stone by the library as the proper reference point.

Dominic Raab MP wrote to the Royal Mail on petitioners' behalf. However, they replied stating that changes to postal areas that have a significant financial and logistical impact on their network can only be done for operational reasons.

They added, bizarrely, that postal districts do not need to be geographically accurate!

So the campaign has stalled for now, but Steve is interested to hear from residents who have views on what else can be tried.

Cost of Living help

HOUSEHOLDS in Bands A-D are likely to qualify for a £150 Council Tax rebate from the Government to help with the 'cost of living crisis'. To check if you are eligible, go to: www.elmbridge.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-rebate



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Protecting assets for loved ones

At KWW, we're seeing more and more interest in a feature of Will-making known as life interest trusts.

This is a way of providing for one beneficiary during their lifetime but once that person dies, your assets can be transferred to someone of your choosing rather than theirs.

Life interest trust Wills are popular with couples who have children from previous relationships, such as those in second or even third marriages. One reason is that if you have children from an earlier relationship and a property you purchased before meeting your current partner, you can ensure your children ultimately benefit from your home while being happy for your partner to receive the rest of your estate.

Life interest trusts can also be useful to couples who have married later in life, having already established independent lifestyles, and those with dependent siblings or elderly parents. The reasoning always comes down to protecting assets for loved ones.

Another advantage is that they can be a useful tool in protecting your assets from the bankruptcy or divorce of beneficiaries.

This article is for general information only and shouldn't be taken as legal advice. For more information about Wills or Lasting Powers of Attorney, contact either of our specialists Karen Starkey and Jack Haskew.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

THE owner of the Jolly Boatman site in Molesey is appealing against Elmbridge Council's refusal to grant planning permission for its scheme of 97 flats and retail. An inspector will preside over a hearing in the Autumn. Our MP, Dominic Raab, has written in support of the refusal.

MOLESEY History Society is celebrating its 15th anniversary with an exhibition of photos including from the 1968 flood. It's at Refresh Centre, 129 Walton Road, on 25 March, 1-6 pm, and 26 March, 10am-4pm. Go to www.moleseyhistorysociety.org for details of upcoming events.

BENCHES in our town centre are to be painted marine blue courtesy of the local group We Love Walton Road with help from Elmbridge Council staff. The group met with Cllr Steve Bax recently to discuss ways to improve the High Street.

THE Wilderness in East Molesey has been chosen as a site for some of the 3,710 saplings and hedges that are being planted in Elmbridge as part of the Green Canopy initiative to mark The Queen's Jubilee. The Council will also support residents to organise street parties.

RESIDENTS who were refused planning permission for bin and bike sheds at Westlands Court, off Wolvey Road, took Elmbridge Council to appeal and won. A planning inspector decided that the timber sheds would be well-screened and would not negatively impact the Conservation Area.

TREES and vegetation were cleared at Molesey Heath in February, sparking concern about the severity of the work. Elmbridge's Countryside Manager confirmed that the pruned willows will grow back, and the clearance is to allow access to the river for removing Floating Pennywort.

CHANNEL 5 show Nick Knowles' Big House Clearout was given approval by ward councillors to film at Molesey Hurst Recreation Ground on 14 March with a local family who are taking part in the show.

ELMBRIDGE is accepting bids for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding until 3 April. Projects supported last year included £25k to resurface Sadler's Ride and £50k for towpath improvements at Hurst Park which are coming up. The 2nd and 3rd Molesey scouts and Molesey Juniors FC also received grants.

FREE parking on Sundays has been scrapped in Walton and Weybridge by Elmbridge's RA/Lib Administration and charges have gone up 8%. Conservative councillors argued the rises will harm the recovery of the High Street. Council data shows that the number of people visiting the local high streets is down by 13%.

ELMBRIDGE is carrying out hedge maintenance until the end of March. They avoid bird nesting season (March to August) and leave some hedges untrimmed until late summer if there is evidence of birds nesting.