

# Walton Central intouch



News from your Walton Central Conservative team

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## WALTON SOCIETY BREAK SATURDAY FREE PARKING PLEDGE ... AND GIVE THEMSELVES A 12% PAY RISE

Last May the Walton Society pledged in their election manifesto to introduce "free parking on Saturdays" and to review "the level of car park charges and the times when charges apply". As part of the Residents' Associations (RA)/LibDems Coalition formed last May, the Walton Society have broken this pledge. However, they have found the money to give themselves a 12.4% pay rise.

At the Full Council meeting in December, the RA (including the Walton Society)/LibDem Coalition voted to introduce **free Saturday parking** for the town/village centre car parks in Molesey, Thames Ditton, Long Ditton and Hersham - but not Walton. So while other parts of the borough will enjoy free parking from next month, **Walton residents won't**. But we'll still have to pay the increased charges which came into effect in January. Local Conservative Councillor Andrew Kelly said "Walton residents are not second-class citizens, we pay the same Council Tax as everyone else in the borough. Yet the Walton Society are making Walton residents pay for Thames Ditton to get free parking and break their key election commitment." Walton County Councillor Rachael Lake added "The administration are introducing free parking on Saturdays to help local businesses. So what do the Walton Society and the RAs have against businesses in Walton?"



The same meeting saw the RA/LibDem Coalition vote to give **borough councillors a 12.4% pay rise** at your expense. This will cost taxpayers £26,200 a year. Cllr Andrew Kelly proposed to reduce the increase to just 2%, the same increase the Council's staff are getting - this was turned down by the RA/LibDems. Your three Walton Society Councillors Chris Sadler, Alan Palmer and Graham Woolgar all voted to give themselves this huge pay rise at your expense. No Conservative Councillor voted for the increase. Andrew said "There is simply no argument in favour of giving councillors such a huge pay rise. Cllr Sadler spoke at length about why councillors deserved the increase but never once mentioned how it comes from the taxpayers or the difficult financial times the Council is going through, nor did he seek to explain why councillors deserve so much more than the Council's own staff. In the eight years of Conservative majority control, allowances went up just 3.5%. After just months in office, the Walton Society are getting their snouts in the trough."

Also at the December meeting, the RA/LibDem administration voted for above-inflation **increases that will hit Elmbridge's elderly and vulnerable residents.**



## Walton Parking Review - Have Your Say Now

Surrey County Council is undertaking started an on-street parking review for Walton. This will look at all parking restrictions (such as yellow lines and on-street parking bays) in our town and consider possible new restrictions.

The first stage of this review is a public consultation which started on 27 February and closes on 10 April. It's important you comment on any new restrictions you think may be necessary, for example to stop dangerous or anti-social parking. You can also comment on any current restrictions that you think should be reviewed. For more information and to respond to the consultation go to [www.surreysays.co.uk/e-i-highways-and-transport-parking-project-team/parking-consultation-walton-on-thames](http://www.surreysays.co.uk/e-i-highways-and-transport-parking-project-team/parking-consultation-walton-on-thames). You can also email [highways@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:highways@surreycc.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 200 1003.



Your local County Councillor Rachael Lake has been working on this review for some months. She says "I have already fed in the views of many residents on what they would like to see in their road, and have met with residents in many roads to talk about their concerns and see the problems they face. Parking is a big issue in Walton, particularly near the town centre where space is at a premium on many roads. Please do respond to the consultation and suggest any changes you think are needed."

The next stage of the review will take place after the May elections and, if re-elected as your County Councillor, going through the responses by all Walton residents will be one of my top priorities. I can't promise that the County Council will be able to implement all suggestions received, but I can promise I will consider every one."

## DRAKE PARK APPLICATION REFUSED

In our Autumn 2016 *In Touch* we reported on the 'Drake Park' planning application for 1,024 homes on 147 acres of land on the Walton Green Belt between Fieldcommon Lane, Molesey Road and the River Mole. Half of the homes were designated for 'affordable housing'. The plans also included a primary school, doctor's surgery, shop, pub, restaurant, recreation area and public open space. This was the second such application - the near identical first application was withdrawn by the applicants in late 2015.

Elmbridge Borough Councillors considered the proposal at a Special Planning Sub-Committee meeting on 21 November. On the advice of the Council's planning officers, Councillors unanimously refused the application on four grounds:

- 1) inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- 2) not demonstrated that the transport impact could be sufficiently mitigated
- 3) close proximity to the Weylands allocated waste site
- 4) insufficient information about biodiversity issues

The applicants, Bonnar Allen, have six months to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, an independent Government body. As we go to print they have yet to do so.

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**YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATIVES WORKING FOR WALTON CENTRAL**

## YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATIVE TEAM FOR WALTON CENTRAL

Walton's Conservative Councillors hold a surgery on the first Saturday of each month (Farmers Market Day) at Walton Library from 10am to 12 noon. There is no need to book, so please just turn up on the day.



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## WATERSIDE DRIVE UPDATE

The decontamination of the Waterside Drive site and construction of the new Sports Hub is continuing with completion still on target for September 2017. It will be a home for Walton & Hersham FC, Walton Casuals FC and Walton Athletics Club. Regular updates can be found at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/sports-and-health/elmbridge-sports-hub](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/sports-and-health/elmbridge-sports-hub).

The High Court quashed the original planning application for the Hub declaring that the Council had not correctly considered the Green Belt status of the site. Elmbridge's Planning Committee approved a new planning application for the Sports Hub on 17 January. The new application has two fewer spectator stands, removes the external storage areas and changes the floodlighting. At the meeting Rachael and Andrew insisted that noise, lighting and opening hours strategies be brought to the Committee at a later date. We are keen to ensure the future use of the Hub causes as little disturbance to nearby residents as possible.

Also in January Elmbridge's planning department received an application for 54 homes and a day nursery to replace the current Stompond Lane sports stadium. This is due to be decided in the next few months.

## NEW CHARGE TO PLAY TENNIS

In January the Residents' Association (RA)/LibDem administration (which includes the Walton Society) at Elmbridge Borough Council decided to introduce a branch new charge to use the Council's tennis courts.

From May this year you will no longer be able to use Elmgrove tennis courts without first booking a court and paying a fee.

The new charges are estimated to raise just under £27,000 a year for the Council. This comes just a month after the administration forced through a 12% pay rise for councillors, costing taxpayers over £22,000.



Elmgrove Recreation Ground

## NEWS IN BRIEF

- Exhibitions were held late last year for proposals for the **Birdseye site** in Station Avenue. The developers are proposing to knock down the listed building and build about 350 homes (mainly flats) and retail units in its place. We understand further exhibitions will take place this year but we are awaiting details.
- A planning application for new signage for a Marks & Spencer Food Hall at the **Aldi site** in Church Street has been permitted by Elmbridge Borough Council. It also looks like the vacant restaurant unit on New Zealand Avenue is to become an Argentinian steakhouse.
- Abellio decided to resign from various **bus contracts** with effect from 31 December. Surrey County Council worked hard to arrange replacement services. These are in place pending a further review this year. New timetables are available at Walton Library and at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/buses](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/buses).
- The **Council Tax** we all pay goes to three different authorities – Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and Elmbridge Borough Council. For the new financial year starting on 1 April, each authority has increased their portion. The County Council by 4.99% (1.99% a general increase and 3% for social care), the Police by 1.99% and Elmbridge Council by 1.93%.
- The Walton-on-Thames Trading Alliance (WoTTA) organise regular one-hour **community litter picks** to clean up our town. The next one is on Sunday 2 April at 10am (the location is to be confirmed). Visit [www.wotta.co.uk](http://www.wotta.co.uk) to sign up.
- WoTTA have received £9,292 from Surrey County Council's Local Centre fund for new signs, planters and column banners to improve **Walton town centre**. Using her local county allocation, Rachael Lake helped to fund last year's Heritage Day and Christmas Festival of Light. She intends to support these popular events again this year.
- A planning application has been received to build an additional storey on the old **Wellington pub** on the corner of the High Street and New Zealand Avenue. There would be twelve 1-bed flats across three floors. The applicants also want to allow the ground floor to be a retail unit - currently it has permission for a pub/restaurant.
- All 81 seats on Surrey County Council are up for election on 4 May. If you want to register for a **postal vote** visit [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/elections/voting-by-post](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/elections/voting-by-post).

## ELMBRIDGE GREEN BELT UNDER THREAT?

The Residents' Associations (RA)/LibDem administration at Elmbridge Borough Council is in the process of drawing up a new Local Plan for our borough. This plan will set out a strategy that will aim to meet the need for new homes, jobs, community facilities and transport infrastructure. It has been stated that Elmbridge will need an additional 9,480 homes by 2035.

This process includes a review of our precious Green Belt. The initial proposals from the RA/LibDem-run Council have suggested three areas of Green Belt should be allocated for development – two areas in Cobham and one in Long Ditton – claiming they are “no longer meeting the purposes” of Green Belt.

The Council's initial public consultation, which ran from 16 December 2016 to 24 February 2017, aimed to get views on the general approach of the development strategy and identify key issues the Plan should address. Local Walton Councillors Rachael Lake and Andrew attended a public exhibition (pictured right) at the Playhouse on 23 January.



Rachael said “It's vital the Local Plan addresses the additional infrastructure – schools, roads, public transport and GP surgeries – that Elmbridge will need as more housing is built.” Andrew added “This important process will affect all of us who live here in the years to come. The Conservative administration, which was in power at Elmbridge until last May, was committed to protecting our Green Belt. We are steadfast in that commitment and will always fight to protect our Green Belt.”

For more information and ongoing updates, visit [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/news/local-plan](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/news/local-plan). A second consultation, on detailed policies and specific sites, is due to be held in the summer. We will keep you updated on this review in future newsletters.

## STREET LIGHTS TURN-OFF

In early February, as part of a Surrey-wide scheme, many street lights across Walton were turned off from midnight to 5am. Larger roads (such as Terrace Road and Sidney Road) and the town centre will not have their lights turned off.

An initial list of roads that would have the lights turned off was published in December. Rachael then lobbied Surrey County Council about roads where she had particular concerns. As a direct result of Rachael's representations 25 roads in Walton were removed from the list and their lights will be kept on.

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TRADITIONAL FAMILY BUTCHERS

## YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATIVES WORKING FOR WALTON CENTRAL