

The Molesey News

In support of **STEVE BAX** your Molesey Conservative candidate for West Molesey ward

A fresh start for Molesey

HELLO and a warm welcome to this special edition of *The Molesey News* from me, Steve Bax. I am standing for election on Thursday 4th May to represent West Molesey on Surrey County Council. I hope to give you a sense of my priorities here, and overleaf you can read why I believe we need to change the tired status quo.

Whilst it can seem remote, Surrey County Council matters. It is responsible for our roads, schools, libraries, recycling centres, social care and much more, and Surrey makes up 75% your annual council tax bill. These elections are your once-in-every-four-years opportunity to elect a representative to fight your corner at the County Council.

I am not a career politician. I was a local newspaper reporter and editor for 15 years and now work in communications on behalf of the police service.

My enthusiasm for community issues led me to get more closely involved, and a few years ago I decided to stand for council in Molesey. I revived the Molesey Conservatives as a fighting force to provide voters with democratic choice and provide some healthy competition to the Residents Association political party, which holds all of Molesey's seats and whose councillors are barely heard from, apart from at election time.

One of my proudest achievements was being elected to Elmbridge Borough



I WAS delighted to gather with residents recently and pledge my support for their efforts to secure 'Local Green Space' status and protection for Hurst Park.

We are incredibly lucky to have these 80 acres of open space by the Thames. It is the jewel in Molesey's crown.

Council for East Molesey from 2014-16 and having opportunity to serve on eight committees, including chairman of the Heathrow Task Group looking into noise, and assisting residents on a wide range of local matters, big and small.

This year I am particularly delighted to have the opportunity to be a candidate in West Molesey. My wife, who grew up in West Molesey, and I, lived on Bishop Fox

I am aware that a Molesey scout group wished to build a Water Activity Centre at Hurst Park. This encountered opposition, including from the Environment Agency and was withdrawn. I will work with residents and the scouts to find a site the community can support.

estate for a nearly a decade and raised our young family here. I know the area very well and continue to be involved.

I am vice chairman of the Friends of Molesey Library - a community group which exists to ensure the library flourishes and is never again threatened with closure. I am a trustee of a St Peter's Church associated charity and was for many years the treasurer of a children's

nursery in West Molesey.

These are very challenging times for Surrey County Council. We have an aging population and the cost of providing adult social care (a statutory requirement) is rising by £12m each year while funding from the government continues to fall.

The Conservative administration at County Hall has shown it is not afraid to stand up to its own party in government to demand fairer funding for Surrey, and has won key assurances.

However money remains in short supply and having an independently minded Conservative councillor for West Molesey increases the chances of securing the investment that our area needs.

If elected my local priorities are:

- A secondary school for Molesey.
- Getting potholes repaired and roads resurfaced - many are sorely neglected.
- Working with Molesey Business Association to support shops and encourage more local jobs.
- Better policing, CCTV and neighbourhood watch.
- Securing investment in Molesey Hospital and putting pressure on Glenlyn Medical Centre to improve.
- Opposing waste, inefficiency and 'fatcat' salaries for council bosses - I will not support an increase in councillor allowances, like the disgraceful 12.4% rise RA councillors awarded themselves at Elmbridge recently.
- Assisting the administration's efforts to secure fairer funding.

First and foremost my loyalty will be to residents and what's good for West Molesey, ahead of party.

I hope you will consider voting for me on 4th May and I will work tirelessly to justify your trust.



Parking shortage damaging verges

MOST families have more than one car these days, so it's perhaps not surprising that there is a shortage of space for on-street parking in West Molesey.

In Molesham Way and side streets I recently observed that grass verges were becoming eroded as residents have little option but to park on them.

On possible solution is Grasscrete (pictured below), which is a concrete frame with circles for the grass to grow. This may be appropriate in some roads, only where supported by residents.

It could create additional parking capacity without the churning. I welcome residents thoughts on this or any other parking issues.



Time Molesey children had a secondary school

THE Conservative government has given the go ahead for a new secondary free school in the north of Elmbridge, serving children from Molesey and north Walton.

As a parent of children at primary school age, as well as a prospective Molesey councillor, I very much welcome the decision to open a new secondary school in our locality. It is long overdue.

It has always seemed odd that a community of 15,000 residents such as Molesey, should be without a local secondary school of its own, having to send children several miles by bus or car adding to the traffic on the roads at peak times.

This has been the situation for 33 years since the old Bishop Fox School in West Molesey closed.

A group called 'Elmway Learning Trust' has secured funds from the Department for

Education to open the new school for 11 to 16 year-olds in Molesey or just over the border in Walton.

It currently operates Heathside School in Weybridge, which has been rated Good and Outstanding by Ofsted inspectors.

I have been monitoring developments and recently had a lengthy discussion with Richard Wilson, chair of the Heathside School governors.

He tells me the school will be built by autumn 2018 and should take a year to fit out - opening in September 2019.

A number of potential sites are being considered and once this has been finalised, a planning application will be submitted.

Parents can register their interest at elmbridgefreeschool.co.uk.

The school is presently referred to as 'Heathside Walton'. If a Molesey site is chosen, I will of course lobby for a name change.

THIS year is the Molesey Carnival's 40th anniversary and once again promises to be huge fun for the family. To avoid clashing with school holidays the Carnival is being held later than usual, on **Saturday 10 June**. Anyone can enter a float - clubs, schools, companies and even streets. New attractions for this year are "Zorb racing" giant inflatable balls and a dog and duck show, as well as all the usual favourites.

Thieves steal lead from church tower



THIEVES stole lead from the tower roof at St Peter's Church in West Molesey on 2 April.

They struck at 4am, taking advantage of scaffolding around the 15th Century tower - which is Molesey's oldest building - and began ferrying the lead to their vehicle parked by the cemetery.

Although the police were alerted and had an opportunity to catch the culprits in the act, due to a mix-up nobody attended! The incident provoked a number of angry comments on the Molesey Facebook page and criticism of Surrey Police.

In my election manifesto, I raised concerns about police non attendance, which can only encourage criminals, and I will discuss resources with our neigh-

bourhood police and the council, should I be elected.

Sergeant Greg Turner confirmed that a call was received from a witness reporting possible suspicious activity.

However he added: "At the time it was thought no persons still remained on the site. Having reviewed the call, further questions could have been asked which may have changed the grading of our response. This has been raised with senior call centre managers for future learning."

NET Coverage Solutions, the telecoms company who erected the scaffolding, have apologised to the church and offered to cover the damage. If you have information call 101 quoting crime reference 45170033650.

A memorial for Molesey's WW2 heroes has still to materialise despite public money and 13 YEARS of promises from our sitting Surrey County Councillor. No wonder everyone is demanding to know:

Where's the memorial, Mr Mallett?

SEVENTY two years have passed since the end of World War Two but the names of the Molesey fallen from the 1939-1945 conflict have yet to be recorded on a local memorial - a travesty.

In 2004 the Residents Association county councillor, Ernest Mallett, was appointed chairman of the Molesey Second World War Memorial Association (MSWWMA), a charity which formed to raise money for a new memorial in Molesey.

However, some 13 years later this worthy and long overdue project has yet to deliver. What exactly has the committee under Mr Mallett been doing all of this time?

It has received substantial donations from Elmbridge and Surrey councils over the years - money which was given, then withdrawn due to the lack of progress, and - in the case of a £5,234.81 donation from Surrey - given again.

Challenged

A year ago Mr Mallett was challenged by the Surrey Advertiser over the lack of progress. The paper quoted a 90-year-old veteran from Molesey of the D-Day landings who feared he would go to his grave without seeing the names of his fallen comrades honoured on a memorial in their town.

I have also corresponded with a lady whose father died in the war and mother donated to the memorial project in her will. She is not the only one who is concerned.

Mr Mallett reassured the paper that "the money is all secure and we know exactly what we're doing". He promised that granite slabs with names would be ready by summer 2016 and in place at the West Molesey Memorial "in enough time for Remembrance Day".

When nothing materialised I emailed Mr Mallett in November to ask for an update on the memorial, but he declined to reply.

This lack of progress and failure to be accountable has sadly been a hallmark of the project - and it isn't good enough.



Incredibly, despite the excessive delays to the project and lack of explanation, Mr Mallett lists his chairmanship of the memorial committee as a **selling point** in his latest election leaflet!

I do not doubt Mr Mallett when he says the donations are safe but I do take issue with the extraordinarily long time the project is taking and the lack of communication.

Perhaps it's time for a cross-party committee of RAs, Conservatives and residents to take the reigns and deliver the memorial that Molesey's fallen heroes richly deserve?

■ My opponent's election leaflet sums up why we need a change in West Molesey. In it Mr Mallett lists a number of historical achievements relating to his activities as a Molesey politician for four decades

- everything from 'leading' a school campaign in the 1970s to introducing computers to Elmbridge Council. How long ago was that? In today's modern world of smartphones it hardly seems relevant.

Whilst I do not wish to dispute his historical contributions, I believe that elections are not about events that happened decades ago - even before some current electors were born - they are about

'Lack of progress has sadly been a hallmark of this project'

It's a sign of the times!

THE West Molesey welcome sign is the first thing people see when they drive into our town via the Hurst Road.

It has been in an state of disrepair for a number of years. Broken and neglected, it gives a poor impression of Molesey.

What does this say about our county councillor who, at any point, could have picked up the phone to Surrey Highways and asked for it to be repaired?

If elected this will be on my to-do list.



the here and now and the future.

What is sorely lacking from the Residents Association candidate's literature is anything about what he would do on your behalf, were you to entrust him with another **four years** at Surrey County Council. What is his plan, does he have one?

Also conspicuously absent is any analysis from him of current issues in Molesey. Where for example does he stand on the need for a secondary school? What are his views on the proposals for the future of Molesey Hospital? What will he do about the current, unacceptable situation at Glenlyn Medical Centre where patients are waiting over a month to see a GP? I have met three times with practice leaders, and the MP, to raise concerns and regularly flag the issue in *The Molesey News*.

Why haven't we heard anything from Mr Mallett, for all of his political experience - is the issue even on his radar screen?

Molesey Residents Association political party (MRA) currently holds all six of our borough council seats and both county seats. Yet we hear very little from them. What are they all doing? It's hard to see that they are delivering for residents.

■ What we do know is that in the last year Mr Mallett casually dismissed the views of over 80% of residents and retailers in East Molesey who submitted petitions calling for parking controls, which he disagreed with. He said their's was a "petty" request.

Recently he has clashed with Hurst Park Residents Association, the MRA's long standing partner association, prompting it to vote to suspend its affiliation and issue a public statement saying the MRA has "not been representing the interests of Molesey people".

Allowances

And in a final insult, MRA councillors at Elmbridge awarded themselves an unbelievable 12.4% increase in their personal allowances, and said not a word about it in their newsletter to residents!

Mr Mallett is sitting on a large majority and no doubt thinks he can say and do what he likes and he will still be comfortably re-elected.

I ask you to exercise your vote on Thursday 4th May to give him a reality check and show him that he can no longer take the voters of West Molesey for granted.

The old cliche has never been more apt: it's time for a change.

It's time for a change. On Thursday 4th May cast your vote for:

- **A strong voice for West Molesey**
- **Support for our schools and hospital**
- **Investment to repair our roads**
- **A councillor who listens and takes action**



**STEVE
BAX**

