



The Molesey News

Issue 27

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HELLO and welcome to the summer edition of the Molesey News. Your community news-letter is written, delivered and funded by the Molesey Conservatives, and edited by myself, former councillor Steve Bax.



It's certainly been an eventful few months with not one but two elections. The general election result was disappointing for the national party, but locally Dominic Raab was re-elected as MP with 59% of the votes.

In May's Surrey County Council elections local Conservatives fought a strong campaign to win seven of the nine Elmbridge seats.

Peter Szanto did exceptionally well in East Molesey and Esher, winning a 946 majority over the Molesey Residents Association (MRA) political party, which had held the seat for the last eight years. Peter has made a great start, and there's a report from him in this edition.

I thoroughly enjoyed my own 'underdog' campaign in West Molesey against the incumbent MRA county councillor Ernest Mallett. Though it's traditionally a safe RA seat, I was delighted to achieve a 24% swing, cutting Mr Mallett's majority from 1,594 to 562.

This is good progress for the Molesey Conservatives and healthy for local democracy, as it means more choice for voters at election time. The MRA political party, who have had a monopoly of Molesey seats, may wish to reflect on its falling support however.

Our thanks to all who voted..

Can you help?

We hope you enjoy reading the Molesey News and welcome your feedback. We are in need of more deliverers. If you could deliver to your road, or another in Molesey, we'd love to hear from you. Please email moleseysteve@gmail.com

Enjoy the edition and see you again in the Autumn.

BINS CRISIS: Thousands complain of missed collections but Environment cabinet member in the Elmbridge RA/Lib Dem coalition insists: 'I'm not accountable'. We say:

What a load of rubbish!

THE Elmbridge cabinet member who has presided over months of shambolic missed bin collections is refusing to resign or even take responsibility for the fiasco.

Liberal Democrat, Cllr Barry Fairbank, is the Portfolio Holder for the Environment in the chaotic eight-party coalition which runs the council, led by Stuart Selleck of the Molesey Residents Association.

At July's Full Council meeting he was challenged by the Conservative opposition group to explain why the refuse collection service has been so dismal since a new contractor, Amey, took over in early June.

Despite having a year to check the contractor was putting resources in place, Cllr Fairbank tried to duck responsibility. He pointed out that, as the contract is administered via a third party called Joint Waste Solutions it is they who are responsible for the mess, along with the contractor, but not him!

Huge numbers of residents from Molesey and the rest of the borough have flooded the council's switchboards with complaints about missed food bin, refuse, recycling and garden waste collections - made all the worse by the July heat wave.

Cllr Fairbank, who denies going to ground, was forced to admit that he



had not even met with the contractor in six weeks!

Conservative Environment spokesman, Cllr Glenn Dearlove, asked whether Cllr Fairbank accepted that, as Portfolio Holder, he owed residents "an unreserved apology".

Another Tory, Cllr Simon Foale said: "All I hear is washing of hands." And Cllr Alan Kopitko added: "I'm shocked that he dismisses any responsibility and passes it to Amey. I always thought it was down to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment to run the waste collection service."

Even one of Cllr Fairbank's Residents Association colleagues was

highly critical, saying: "He seems to walk away from his responsibilities as Portfolio Holder."

Conservative deputy leader, Cllr James Browne, called for Mr Fairbank to resign from the Cabinet. He said: "Our residents pay their council tax in the expectation that they will receive the highest quality service. But the service they have received from Amey and those running this contract has been abysmal. I have heard nothing other than 'it is someone else's fault'."

Cllr Fairbank replied: "I won't accept responsibility for this. I've already explained why not. I'm sorry I won't resign."

Elmbridge and three other boroughs - Woking, Surrey Heath and Mole Valley - have entered into a 10-year joint contract with Amey that should save a combined £2.5m a year. So far Amey has only been emptying the bins in Elmbridge with the pressure of serving the other boroughs still to come.

Council leader Stuart Selleck is on record saying the new waste service has been "hugely embarrassing and disappointing". He must now act to get a grip of the situation, starting with replacing his discredited Environment Portfolio Holder.

Residents can report missed collections via the council's website.

SURREY County Council is consulting on proposals to save up to £2m-a-year from community recycling centres (CRCs).

It is seeking views on whether to close centres on two quieter weekdays, or shut four smaller, less efficient CRCs altogether, as well as ending the free daily allowance of construction waste.

Surrey has apologised for the proposed cuts but has to find over £100m savings this year due to reduced government funding and rising social care costs.

Have your say by 7 August, at <https://tinyurl.com/yys8ueu5>

Murray's mum blasts 'tennis tax'



ELMBRIDGE Council's decision to charge residents for using the public tennis courts has been criticised by the mum of two-times Wimbledon champion Sir Andy Murray.

Judy Murray tweeted her support for a petition which called for the charges to be scrapped. She wrote: "Public tennis courts should be free to access. We don't pay to use swings or feed ducks or picnic on the grass. Don't tax tennis."

A dozen courts - including at Grovelands Rec and Hurst Park in Molesey - have been fitted with a keypad entry system. Players must now register online and pay £5 per hour or £36 for a season ticket.

The Residents Association politi-

cal parties and Lib Dem administration has received £25k from the Lawn Tennis Association to help pay for the keypad system, and defend the scheme on the grounds that it will raise around £26k per year for the upkeep of the courts.

It is interesting to note that this is close to the £30k that the RA/Lib Dems added to the annual council bill when they put up by their own allowances by 12.4% last year.

Charging started, despite a council survey which had found that 68% of respondents would not play tennis if the courts were not free. Now they are mostly deserted. This is yet another policy disaster by this administration and Conservatives have called for a rethink.

Parking petition to be reconsidered

PROPOSALS to address commuter parking and displacement in residential streets near Hampton Court Station are to be reconsidered by Surrey.

East Molesey's new Conservative councillor, Peter Szanto, persuaded the County Council to look again at the merits of a one-hour period of residents-only parking in several key streets.

This would generate more short-term parking spaces for people shopping in Bridge Road and visitors to the area, on week days. Currently Wolsey Road, Palace Road and other streets are occupied by all-day commuter parking while the station car park is usually two thirds empty.

Proposals to address this at the last parking review were overwhelmingly supported by 356 households (82%) and 52 retailers (88%), but was dismissed by the parking review involving only Molesey Residents Association political party councillors without consulting road leads.

Cllr Szanto said: "Residents have voted in large numbers for a change and I am delighted that Surrey will look at this again."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

MOLESEY Local History Society (MLHS) has marked its 10th anniversary by publishing its first book.

'Molesey Then and Now' is a collection of old and current photos, written by members to tell the story of how our town has evolved over the decades.

The book evolved out of a successful exhibition by MLHS and is described as a "fascinating record of continuity and change". It costs £15 and can be ordered via Doreen Freeman on 020 8979 0059, or at www.moleseyhistorysociety.org

LANGHAM Homes is trying again to develop next to the Pavilion club in Hurst Lane, East Molesey, despite the 1.99ha site being protected by a Section 106 restriction specifying it is to be used for leisure only.

The developer was refused permission for 42 homes in January and is appealing Elmbridge Council's decision. It has now submitted a fresh application for 40 units and a mini-football pitch with space for 76 cars.

Residents have until 9 August to comment via the Council's website.

BAD news for youngsters who enjoy the play park at Neilsons Field: the zip wire is due to be removed amid "safety concerns". Elmbridge Council confirmed parts of the play area will be closed from early August until a contractor can dismantle the equipment.

THE 2nd Molesey Scout Group is looking for extra leaders, assistants and regular helpers. No experience is necessary, only energy and enthusiasm, and in return you'll gain skills and confidence. Email contact2ndmoleseyscouts@gmail.com if you can help. The group has a hut behind Vine Hall and has been providing fun experiences for boys and more recently girls for 90 years.

A DISNEY film about a pug will include scenes that were filmed at Molesey Boat Club in early May. 'Patrick' stars comedian Jennifer Saunders, her real life daughter Beattie Edmondson, and former Doctor Who Peter Davison. It is due out next year.

MOLESEY Football Club held a public exhibition in July to display its plans, with developer Rushmon Homes, for a replacement clubhouse and day nursery, with 22 private apartments and 26 shared ownership apartments also at the site. At the time of writing a planning application has yet to be submitted.

BRIDGE Road-based estate agent Miles & Bird won the Best Dressed Window award at this year's Hampton Court Palace Flower Show in July, beating 16 other businesses.

A SEAL caused a flurry of excitement on social media when it was filmed sunning itself beside the River Ember, East Molesey, in early July. The Environment Agency said seals are not uncommon in the Thames up as far as Molesey Lock, where they come in search of fish.

Molesey's new champion at County Hall

PETER SZANTO was elected in May as the county councillor for East Molesey and Esher - the first Conservative to hold the post in eight years. He reports here for the Molesey News on some of the issues he has been tackling.

LET me start by saying a huge thank you to everyone who voted for me. It is a great honour to represent East Molesey and Esher and I will do my very best for all residents over the next four years.

Since I am not a career politician, I have had a lot to learn about the workings of the Council and I have been impressed by the comprehensive training so far.

Many residents contacted me before and after the election to express concerns about Glenlyn surgery in Molesey, and the difficulty in getting appointments. One of my first acts was to meet with Heather Chatwin, administration manager for the practice, and David Roskams the new general manager.

They agreed that wait times for routine appointments and non-urgent pre-bookable appointments are too long and they promised significant improvements. They are taking on staff and want residents to



■ Peter signs the Declaration of Acceptance as a new county councillor in May, with Surrey's legal, democratic and cultural director Ann Charlton.

give useful feedback by joining the Patient Participation Group. To get involved, register at www.glenlynmedicalcentre.co.uk/ppg.aspx

At the Elmbridge Local Committee meeting in June, where I was appointed Deputy Chairman, I was successful in getting the Council to agree to reassess a proposal for tackling parking displacement near Hampton Court Station (*see the report elsewhere in this edition*).

Over the next four years I want to see improved roads, more outstanding school places, better care for the vulnerable in our community and

a vibrant business and commercial sector. Above all, taxpayer money must be carefully managed and spent wisely.

Of Surrey's £1,672m total spend this fiscal year, more than 80% is in three key areas: £641m on schools and learning, £626m on Social Care and Health and £75m on transport.

Central Government funding has declined by £110m since 2010, and our efficiencies and savings of £567m have been almost entirely offset by increased demand for services. We need to save another £104m this year, so every opportu-

nity to save money will need to be vigorously pursued.

I have been struck by the unfairness of the funding formula, where Surrey gets only 13% of its funds from Central Government compared to 44% in London and Metropolitan Areas.

As a simple example, funding for road and highway repairs is allocated purely on the miles of road in our county and does not consider traffic density.

Since Surrey's roads have the highest traffic density outside London and the requirement for road repairs is related to traffic, Surrey's highways funding is insufficient to meet the needs of our residents.

I have added my voice to those of the Conservative administration fighting for fairer funding from central government and better outcomes for our residents.

If you have an issue with Surrey County Council's services in East Molesey and Esher, please email me at peter.szanto@surreycc.gov.uk

■ Peter has a £6,000 good causes fund for projects that promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of East Molesey and Esher. Please email him to suggest a worthy cause.

St Peter's welcomes new curate

ST PETER'S Church in West Molesey has welcomed a fresh-faced new curate - Alex Munro (pictured here with his wife Helen) - who has ambitious plans to strengthen the community.

The 38-year-old gave up his career as a criminal barrister to follow his religious calling. He knows Molesey well, having lived in Challoners Close and Faraday Place before the vicarage.

Alex said: "There is deprivation in parts of Molesey but also people who are suffering from ill-health or are isolated. It will be our mission to reach out to them."

The Munros will engage local schools and provide a safe space for young people to hang out, and



provide advice on relationships, debt counselling and parenting to young and older residents.

Alex also hopes to hold some church services externally, such as in schools, as part of reaching out.

Rev. Richard Lloyd, of St Mary's East Molesey, will mentor the couple. He said: "I am very excited about the start of Alex and Helen's ministry in Molesey."

Answers at last on Memorial

THE names of brave Molesey residents who fell in World War Two have still to be honoured on a memorial in our town, 72 years after the conflict ended.

This is despite the forming of a committee in 2004, under Cllr Ernest Mallett of the Molesey Residents Association political party, to establish such a memorial, and donations from residents and Surrey and Elmbridge councils.

Thirteen years have passed with nothing delivered, yet Mr Mallett lists his chairmanship of Molesey Second World War Memorial Association (MSWWMA) as a selling point at election time.

Steve Bax, pictured, who challenged him in May, flagged up the lack of progress in an election-special *Molesey News*, and recently tabled a public question at the Elmbridge Local Committee requesting an update on the memorial.

Mr Mallett, in his reply, disputed our description of this as a 'live issue' in Molesey saying "interest in updating War Memorials does not seem high on any general public agenda"! He said he is responsible for the design, fund raising and the contract, and others over the years



have attempted to gather the names of the fallen, which number 259, and are now complete.

A masonry company will engrave two granite blocks to be positioned at the existing West Molesey memorial by November, he added.

Steve said: "This is a worthy project but long overdue. I can understand why residents and donors are frustrated but hopefully the added scrutiny we can bring will help move things along."

Action needed on 'shanty boats'

THE Environment Agency (EA) tells us it is taking legal action to remove 'shanty boats' moored by the towpath in West Molesey.

Residents in Cherry Orchard Road and Gardens, and Garrick Close, contacted the Molesey Conservatives with concerns about a number of tatty and partially submerged vessels that have sprung up.

Elmbridge Council has deployed two wheelie bins to try to avoid the mess on the towpath.

Steve Bax has been in contact with the council and EA on residents' behalf. The EA advised there is "no evidence" of human waste being dumped in the river, as many have feared. But if anyone witnesses pollution it should be reported im-



mediately to a 24 hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

The EA told Steve: "Land in the riverside area of Molesey is owned by a number of different parties, including the EA. We are taking legal action and advising other landowners on the best course of action. Due process must be followed of course, and this does take time. But it will deliver the desired results."

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We are a Platinum sponsor of East Molesey Cricket Club and love spending time down at the ground watching the Moles. We're especially pleased to support the development of the girls section of the club.

Bowls is another of our favourite sports, and we support both the Ember and Imber Court clubs as well as the Kingston & District Mixed Bowls Association.

On the football front, we are associated with Molesey Juniors, and although it's only once a year, our sponsorship of a couple of races at Molesey Regatta is important to us.

"We find sport is a great way to connect with our local audience," said managing partner David Anstee.



KWW is always pleased to see or hear from Molesey folk who need help with Wills, probate, powers of attorney or buying and/or selling property. We also handle family and commercial matters plus employment or general disputes.

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