



**DOMINIC RAAB MP** will discuss local issues and take your questions at a public meeting on Thursday 15 March, 7.30pm at St. Lawrence School, Church Rd, East Molesey, KT8 9DR. All welcome.

Got a question? Email me: [MoleseySteve@gmail.com](mailto:MoleseySteve@gmail.com) | Website: [www.facebook.com/MoleseyNews](http://www.facebook.com/MoleseyNews) | Twitter: @MoleseySteve

**H**ello and welcome to the first Molesey News of the year. I am former Molesey councillor Steve Bax and I produce this newsletter on behalf of the Local Conservatives to keep you updated about issues concerning our community.

It's a busy time for our team. We have been reporting potholes to Surrey County Council, meeting residents affected by planning issues and by the illegally moored boats at West Molesey. I took Elmbridge Council to task on behalf of a local mum over the poor state of the play equipment at Molesey Rec and was successful in getting this fixed.

Earlier this year, I was able to discuss the worrying spate of burglaries in Molesey with the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, during her

visit to the borough (pictured).

We've also been speaking to Insp Greg Turner of the local police about what is being done. More on that in this edition.

Housing is a huge issue for the Council at the moment, with the government applying pressure to build more homes and bring down the cost, particularly for key workers and first time buyers.

You can read more about that and what it means for our area in our lead article below and can question MP Dominic Raab, the new Housing Minister, directly about this and any other local and national matters when he joins us for a public meeting at St Lawrence School, 7.30pm on 15 March.

Important local elections on 3 May will decide who runs the council. I am standing as our

candidate for the enlarged East Molesey ward and Paul Wood is our excellent candidate in West Molesey. We have been busy campaigning and speaking to residents about their concerns.

I have been distributing a survey and have had nearly 150 back. The results so far show that residents' top three priorities are safeguarding Molesey's open spaces and environment, the state of the roads and local health care.

Keeping council tax low, tackling parking and congestion and helping local shops were also prominent issues for residents. A majority said the most important attribute for a local councillor is that they 'champion local issues' and are 'responsive to residents' concerns' which is what Local Conservatives are doing and will

continue to do.

Some of the suggestions Molesey voters have for improving our community include: a crossing by Topps Tiles, a speed camera on Hurst Road, and addressing the lack of affordable homes - 'I have been renting for six years and cannot afford to buy' a resident said.

Coordinating buses and trains at Hampton Court, tackling all-day commuter parking at Graburn Way and addressing the lack of an NHS dentist, bank, central post office and secondary school in Molesey.

I thank residents for taking the time to fill out and return the surveys. They will help keep us



focused on what you want us to deliver.

The elections are on 3 May and are a chance to get the change we need in Molesey and at Elmbridge.

Paul and I look forward to meeting you on the doorstep and hearing your views. Please get in touch if you have any questions, or if we can help in any way.

## Heathrow public consultation



**WE WERE** pleased that Heathrow Airport took up our suggestion to hold one of its consultation events in Molesey.

Held at Imber Court in early February, it enabled residents to raise concerns about aircraft noise and comment on plans for a third runway.

Molesey Conservatives attended with Dominic Raab MP. We discussed noise levels over Molesey and air quality - the need for clear limits and independent monitoring.

Aircraft are switching to a system of precision navigation and decisions must be made on whether to concentrate or spread out the routes. These changes will happen irrespective of the airport expansion.

Needless to say the Molesey Conservative position is that the noise burden must be shared, not concentrated over our area.

Have your say at [www.heathrowconsultation.com](http://www.heathrowconsultation.com)

# Where will the homes go?

■ Council must build hundreds of new homes over next decade

**E**LMBRIDGE Council has been given a target of enabling 600 new homes to be built in the borough every year for the next decade.

It's part of the government's determination to tackle the shortage of homes nationally, which has pushed up house prices to an average £600,000 in Elmbridge - out of reach of many young families and key workers which our community needs

The response from the Residents Association political parties and the Liberal Democrats running the Council, to this housing challenge has been shambolic. Rather than do the hard work of planning where new homes could go with the least impact, they proposed a quick fix of building more than 5,000 homes on three large tracts of our greenbelt (at Long Ditton, Cobham and Oxshott).

Not surprisingly there was a huge outcry from 3,760 residents which sent RA/Lib Dem Coalition councillors into full retreat. We are still waiting for an alternative plan some 12 months later.

The lack of a Local Plan runs the risk of one being imposed centrally by Whitehall civil servants.



Steve Bax explains: "It is essential that planning decisions in Molesey and Elmbridge are taken by our locally elected representatives who know our communities best - the Coalition needs to get its act together quickly or make way for a Local Conservative administration, which will get the job done properly."

A Local Plan is vital to set out where building is considered to be acceptable. Without one, developers who are refused planning permission for any scheme will stand a much better chance of winning an appeal. We got a taste of this recently when an appeal gave a green light for the land adjacent to the Pavilion in Hurst Lane to be developed, bypassing local wishes.

The RA/Lib Dem's failure to identify a five-year supply of land in the Borough was cited as a reason for the decision to side with the developers!

Councillor James Browne (pictured) is the housing spokesman for the Elmbridge Conservative group. He accuses the The RA/Lib Dems of wasting time by pressing on with a plan to build over

our greenbelt. The Conservative group had opposed the plans.

"Just imagine what would be in their literature now if the Conservatives had proposed building thousands of homes on the greenbelt," said Cllr Browne.

"If a Conservative Administration is elected in May we will take a more sensible approach to meeting this difficult housing challenge. We will look at releasing public land, building on brownfield sites and building upwards where appropriate, such as three-storey terraces."

Developers will be put on notice that the Borough will prioritise starter homes and affordable homes, said Cllr Browne.

He continued: "If we want to provide homes for our children and for key workers our community needs, then we need to build and put in the infrastructure - but we can do it without sacrificing our open spaces or greenbelt.

"The lesson is clear - if you want to safeguard the greenbelt and want a competent and fair approach to tackling the housing need, then you need to vote Conservative in May so that we can regain control of the Council."



## Hurst Lane site to be developed

**LANGHAM** Homes has been given the go-ahead to build 40 houses on the land next to the Pavilion club in Hurst Lane.

The developer was initially refused planning permission by Elmbridge last year on the reasonable grounds that the site is subject to a covenant which reserves it for community sports and leisure.

Langham's appeal was heard by a planning inspector at the Civic Centre, Esher, in December and it was announced in January that planning permission had been granted.

Steve shared the news with residents via the well-used East & West Molesey Facebook page. Some welcomed the prospect of new homes (including the 20 at 'affordable' reduced rates that are part of the scheme). Others were furious that the inspector had overridden local wishes.

The development is offering a mini-soccer pitch, outdoor gym and children's play area to keep spirit with the leisure covenant.

The land was reserved for the community in the early 1980s as part of the agreement which gave rise to the Kings Chase estate. In recent years it has been fenced off by private owners.

The inspector agreed that the site had not been used for recreation for years and said the 50% affordable homes was needed due to high house prices in Molesey.



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Never forget, your Molesey Conservative Team of Peter, Steve and Paul is always here for you. Please contact us if you have any problems or concerns relating to East and West Molesey, particularly regarding Elmbridge Borough and Surrey County Councils - we'll do our best to help.

**CONTACT US:** Cty Cllr Peter Szanto, 07712 587831; Steve Bax (East Molesey candidate), 0797 7171138; Paul Wood (West Molesey candidate), 07753 980357  
Email: moleseypete@gmail.com, moleseysteve@gmail.com or moleseypaul@gmail.com

## Spending a pretty penny on toilets



**HOW much does it cost to 'spend a penny' in Elmbridge? Believe it or not, under our RA/Lib Dem Council, it's a whopping £164 a day or £60,000 a year - just for running five Automated Public Conveniences (APCs).**

In February, Molesey Residents Association councillors and their coalition allies committed us to spend £35,000 in buying five 'Tetragonal Classic' toilets (pictured) from Swedish supplier, DANFO. We will spend the extra £60,000 on maintenance.

The new toilets will be at Thames Ditton, Hersham, Brooklands and in Molesey at Sadlers Ride and The Wilderness. Surrey Police 'strongly advised' against a toilet at Wilderness amid concerns about anti-social behaviour.

Conservative councillors called for a proper study into the locations before committing the money, but were outvoted.

Molesey RA councillors also asked officers to refurbish the APC at Molesey Lock, even though Elmbridge doesn't own it! It is mainly used by boats to empty their tanks and cleaning would cost a 'large premium'.

*Talk about flushing taxpayer money away!*

## Burglary gangs targeting Elmbridge

**MOLESEY Conservatives have met with Inspector Greg Turner of the Elmbridge Neighbourhood team to discuss the recent increase in burglaries locally.**

He gave us an overview of activities the police have underway to address the spike. They have launched Operation Spearhead, deploying extra overt and covert resources and have made a number of arrests so far this year.

Insp Turner said burglary gangs from outside the area have been targeting Elmbridge. The crimes are typically opportunistic, non-violent, 'quick in and out' seeking items such as cash, watches and jewellery. They tend to occur between 4pm and 10pm.



As part of the fight back, police are offering residents the services of Mike Bessent, a specialist 'Design Out Crime Officer'. He will visit and suggest ways to beef-up your home security.

To arrange this go to: <https://www.surrey.police.uk/elmbridge/>

*esher-claygate*

Residents should consider precautions such as: window and door locks; remote monitored burglar alarms; security cameras, security doorbells; access, particularly from the rear of properties where ladders, garden furniture and single-story extensions have all been used to gain entry.

Steve Bax, on behalf of the Local Conservative team, adds: "It's not only the Police who prevent crime. There is nothing better than a community that is engaged, with vigilant residents who look out for each other.

"I would urge you to report anything suspicious to 101 or, for genuine emergencies call 999."

## Surrey's funding challenges

**PETER SZANTO, who represents East Molesey and Esher on Surrey County Council, updates readers on potholes and the financial challenges facing Surrey.**

**R**esidents are understandably angry at the state of our roads and I share their indignation.

Surrey is in financial straits, despite huge efficiency savings. This is largely the result of massive increases in demand for adult social care and children's services and reductions in government funding.

The Council still must act to improve our roads. It's a service that is critical to our residents and businesses. I can 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, I will keep on fighting!

■ Surrey's Council tax bills will rise by 5.99% in April, adding £1.53 per week to the average household's bill. Over half of the increase is ring-fenced for adult social care where demand for our services has been rising steeply.

It may be helpful to share a few facts and figures. Surrey receives the lowest per head Central Government grant in England - just £13 per resident, compared to the national average of £57 per head.

Our taxpayers fund nearly 90% of Surrey County Council's spending, compared to the national average of 60%. Around 80% of Surrey's budget covers schools, adult social care and children's services. The remaining 20% covers everything from the fire and rescue service, to waste and recycling centres, registrar and coroner services and our roads get 3% of Surrey's spend.

Conservative-run SCC has made efficiency savings worth £540m since 2010/11, nearly all of it opposed by Lib Dem and RA councillors who proposed no alternatives.

We are lobbying MPs to address the unfair funding formula and



have been successful in getting Surrey included in a pilot business rate retention scheme (worth around £20m in 2018/19).

Unfortunately, with demand for services rising and funding falling, SCC is caught between a rock and a hard place and must continue to make tough decisions.

■ I have followed up on the issue of commuter parking in roads near Hampton Court Station with two meetings with Surrey's Parking Officers. Discussions on options are ongoing.

■ Each county councillor has a £6,000 Members' Allocation to help residents, voluntary and community organisations. I have used mine this year to support eight worthy community projects.

These include Magical Molesey, the 2nd Molesey Scout Group, Hampton Court Village Association and the Refresh Church Trust. Also Home Start Elmbridge and Elmbridge Youth Social Action.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

FIFTY flats have been proposed in Grange Close and part of Molesey Football Club.

Planning permission is being sought by the club as a means of clearing its "financial burden", and in partnership with Rushmon Homes PA Housing.

Existing flats in Grange Close would be knocked down to make way for 26 'affordable' apartments and 24 private.

A new nursery will be built at Molesey FC as part of the plans. West Molesey Conservative candidate Paul Wood has met with a resident concerned about the size and proximity of the structure and would like to see a more sympathetic scheme.

**TWO teenagers threw a firework into the Lord Hotham pub in Walton Road which exploded, causing burns to a customer. The incident, at 11.15pm on 31 January, was caught on CCTV and police have appealed for anyone with information to call them on 101 quoting ref 45180011882.**

MOLESEY churches are joining forces in the run-up to Easter for a project called #LoveMolesey.

They will gather volunteers to help the community in a variety of ways, from tea parties for elderly people, to litter picking, painting fences and washing cars. St Peter's Church Curate, Alex Munro, said: "It's anything we can find to do which requires elbow grease." For more information or to suggest a project go to [www.LoveMolesey.org](http://www.LoveMolesey.org)

**THIS year's Molesey Amateur Regatta takes place on 21-22 July along the banks of the Thames at Hurst Park. Along with the racing there will be fun for all. Attractions will include a craft Beer Festival, traditional fair rides, games, tea and cakes, a barbecue and live music - all capped off with fireworks at 10.30pm on Saturday. Entry is free!**

THE closure of the Walton Road post office is 'temporary' according to bosses.

At Steve Bax's request, MP Dominic Raab wrote to the Post Office before Christmas to ask for information.

They responded with an apology to residents, adding that "this closure is deemed as temporary and we are working to restore an interim counter". The circumstances behind the closure or a date for reopening remain a mystery.

**TALENTED local artists will display their creations at the Molesey Art Society Spring Exhibition, which will again be held at St Alban's Primary School, Beauchamp Road. The exhibition is open 3-8 April 11-5pm, or 2-6pm on the Tuesday and Thursday. A range of original art works will be sold at affordable prices. See [www.moleseyartsociety.co.uk](http://www.moleseyartsociety.co.uk)**

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## The smart way to sell your home

Springtime is when things start buzzing in our conveyancing department. The enquiries gradually build as people set their hearts on moving home over the summer and before the start of the school year in September.

Usually, we're brought into the picture at a fairly late stage, once the estate agents have done their job of finding a buyer and colour schemes have been chosen for the new bedrooms!

But there is a smarter way of arranging the legal side of a property move, and that is to contact us at the earliest possible opportunity once you have decided to sell.

We can be beavering away in the background, preparing all the information that a buyer is likely to need and giving us plenty of

time to work through any issues that might crop up. We call it our 'Contract Ready' service - and it comes at no extra cost to you.

Having all the legal matters tidied up on the sale side can not only save you time when it comes to the move but it could actually make your property more attractive for a buyer.

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