

Walton intouch

Local news from
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CONSERVATIVES EXTEND FREE SATURDAY PARKING

The 3-hours free Saturday parking in the Council's three town centre car parks has been extended by the Conservative administration at Elmbridge Borough Council.

The free parking was introduced by the previous Residents' Associations (RA)/LibDem coalition administration. However it was due to end in Walton on 31 December, despite continuing in places like Thames Ditton and Molesey. At a Council meeting on 5 December, a Conservative motion extending Walton's free parking was passed. However, the two Walton Society Councillors and the sole Walton LibDem Councillor voted against this motion.

The free parking - in all parts of the borough - will now continue to June pending a full review of the scheme. The RA/LibDem coalition only introduced free Saturday parking to certain parts of the borough, with places like Weybridge and Cobham missing out.

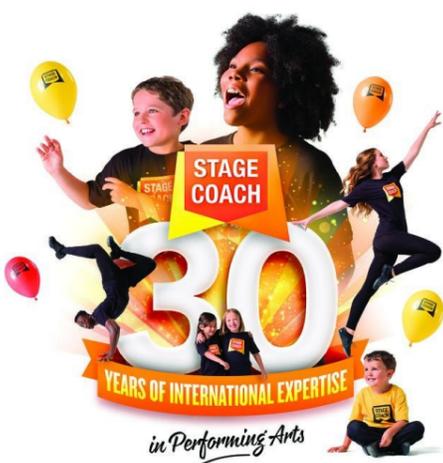
TENNIS TAX SCRAPPED BY CONSERVATIVES

Honouring a manifesto commitment, the Conservative administration at Elmbridge Borough Council has scrapped the so-called tennis tax. The Council's tennis courts, including at Elmgrove Recreation Ground, will now once again be free to use. The charges were introduced by the Residents' Associations (RA)/LibDem coalition administration which ran the borough from 2016 to 2018.



Walton South Councillor and Cabinet Member for Leisure, Malcolm Howard, said entry pad gates and online booking will be retained, in order to track usage and keep vandals out, but fees will be scrapped. RA councillor Janet Turner fumed: "What next, will we give the swimming pools for free?" She said she was "more than a little

disappointed" and predicted that court hires would drop off. Walton North Conservative Cllr Andrew Kelly hit back saying: "Cllr Mrs Turner says the public should not get anything for free. They don't. They pay their council tax." The two Walton Society Councillors and the sole Walton LibDem Councillor voted to keep the tennis tax.



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ELECTIONS 2019

We are pleased to announce Walton resident **Kristopher Neale** as our candidate for Walton Central at the Borough Council elections in May.

Kristopher was born and raised in Elmbridge and studied at Kingston University. Professionally, he is a respected figure within the IT and telecommunications world, based on 15 years' experience working for some of the leading companies in this field. He is currently a technical project manager for the largest global networking company, working with large-scale European telecom operators.

Having lived in this area all his life, Kristopher is passionate about giving back to his local community. He will use his business skills to listen and respond to the needs of local residents and work with the Council to drive through programmes of change that benefit all.



Kristopher with Walton Central's Cllr Christine Richardson

Outside of work, he plays in a local darts team and enjoys spending time with his partner and her eleven year old daughter. He has inherited a passion for music from his mother, who taught piano in local schools for many years. Kristopher enjoys listening to live bands in local venues. He is also an enthusiastic sailor and has taught many children and stroke-victims basic sailing skills. He has a keen interest in British and Polish history and speaks Polish and German.



Long-serving councillors **Rachael Lake** and **Chris Cross** will be standing for re-election in Walton North and Walton South respectively. Chris (left), who has been a Walton borough councillor for 12 years, said "If re-elected, my main focus will remain serving the residents of Walton South, taking up local issues on their behalf and helping wherever I can. Walton Conservatives are a strong, united team and the only party that actively campaigns in all parts of our town. Across the borough we have achieved so much since taking control from the Residents' Associations/LibDem coalition last year."

ILLEGAL TRAVELLER INCURSIONS

Residents demanded action to tackle the spate of unauthorised camps and fly-tipping in the Borough, and Elmbridge's Conservative Council has delivered. At the Administration's direction, officers applied for, and secured, a temporary High Court Injunction in the summer which protected 150 of our local parks, open spaces and car parks. However, with the order set to expire in November, we returned to court to make the case for a three year extension, which was granted.

The Council's injunction prevents any individual from occupying land for residential purposes, including caravans, mobile homes and vehicles or depositing waste. It also means rule breakers can be rapidly moved on, under threat of arrest, fines or seizure of assets, without Elmbridge having to obtain court orders which would usually take several days. The then Leader of the Council, Cllr Tim Oliver said: "I am delighted that the protective injunction has been extended for three years. This will bring relief to our residents and businesses who have been impacted by the disruption throughout the summer." The Council provided evidence to the court of large-scale fly tipping and the cost of clearing it, damage to gates and barriers, lost parking income and the significant impact camps have on communities, resulting in loss of communal facilities.



Cllr Oliver added: "We will review the security of all of our open sites so that our communities can enjoy their surroundings, whilst continuing to closely monitor any illegal activity across the Borough." In the long term Surrey County Council and the boroughs are working together to establish transit sites for travellers. These are likely to be in the East and West of the county and provide places for traveller communities to stay for a short time, hopefully removing a cause of unauthorised camps.

YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATIVES WORKING FOR WALTON

YOUR LOCAL WALTON CONSERVATIVE TEAM



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Councillors' Surgery

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

NEWS IN BRIEF



Local Councillors Rachael Lake and Christine Richardson attended a **Community Safety Day** at Walton Centre, Manor Road on 18 September. The event provided information and advice on a variety of issues. The day also included a defibrillator (left) demonstration to mark the new life-saving piece of equipment being installed at the Centre. The defibrillator was paid for from Rachael's local community fund.

The Walton-on-Thames Trading Alliance (WoTTA) have announced the dates of their **community litter picks** for 2019. The regular litter picks, meeting at the Heart's High Street entrance, will be on 7 July and 29 September. A special Ashley Park clean-up will take place on 10 March and one for Cowey Sale/The Broad on 9 June (meeting at the far end of the Walton Bridge car park). All litter picks start at 10am, meeting at 9.45am, and finish at 11am. To find out more about WoTTA, visit their website www.wotta.co.uk.

Planning permission has been given to demolish the **Birds Eye building** in Station Avenue and replace it with 375 homes. Basement parking will provide 375 parking spaces and two commercial units are also planned. After an unsuccessful appeal by the 20th Century Society to the Government, final approval was given on 21 December.



The long process to replace the **Cecil Hepworth Playhouse** is continuing. The former Residents' Associations/LibDem coalition administration began this process in March 2018. The Playhouse, built as a boiler house for the Hepworth Studios in 1920, has a limited lifespan. The Council is committed to a new community performing arts venue and on 9 January, the Conservative Cabinet asked Council staff to look at potential sites. Cllr Andrew Kelly said at the meeting that he hopes any new playhouse would be in Walton. In the meantime, the Council continues to ensure the Playhouse can function properly in the years to come, including recently allocating money for new tiered seating.

A **Public Spaces Protection Order** (PSPO) came into effect in Walton town centre on 1 March 2018. This was introduced following repeated reports of anti-social behaviour and it allows Elmbridge Borough Council to deal with nuisances or problems that are considered to be detrimental to residents' quality of life. Since the introduction of the PSPO, recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour in Walton Central have reduced significantly. The order is due to come to an end on 28 February. However, the Council has recently proposed extending it for a further two years.

Local Councillors Alan Kopitko and Christine Richardson (pictured right with the Leader of the Council) attended a **'My Elmbridge Day'** event on 24 October at Cowey Sale. There was a variety of stalls and activities. Surrey Police and the Fire Service both came along and there was a demonstration of new water safety equipment installed by the River.



WEYLANDS - INCINERATOR?

Six years ago we joined with residents in a long-term campaign against a proposal for a new industrial site behind the Weylands estate near Hersham station. This would have brought more HGVs to our local roads. Our campaign was successful and the application was refused.

However, unfortunately this has turned out not to be the end of the story. Surrey County Council's new Waste Plan has included Weylands as a future waste processing site. This would include a 'thermal unit' - an incinerator.

Walton Councillor Rachael Lake said "The petition we started in 2013 against the first Weylands proposal ended up with over 2,500 signatures. Nothing has changed since then - this Green Belt site is not the right location for a new waste plant. Our local roads cannot take more HGVs. I urge all residents to send in their comments to the public consultation."



Cllrs Rachael Lake & Andrew Kelly and residents with the petition in 2013

A public consultation on the Waste Plan is running until 10 March. For more information visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/newwasteplan. You can send in comments via the website or by email to wasteplan@surreycc.gov.uk.

TOWN CENTRE NEWS

- Aldi** looks to be returning to Walton. They have submitted a planning application for the conversion of the Carpetright store, including two new lifts directly from the shop floor to the Drewitts Court car park above.
- A proposal has been submitted to Elmbridge Borough Council to knock down 12-16 High Street (formerly **Burton's and Dorothy Perkins**). The plans would see it replaced by a building up to seven storeys high with retail on the ground floor and 32 flats above. The flats would all be 'affordable homes' and owned by Paragon Housing Trust. There would be 10 parking spaces for residents of the flats. The Art Deco façade of the existing building would be retained.
- Planning permission has been given for a 72-bedroom **hotel above Marks & Spencer**. The plans include an extension to the second floor. 18 parking spaces, currently for M&S customers, will be for hotel use.

FORT HOUSE MOVE REFUSED

An application by the local NHS to move the Fort House Surgery from Hersham Road to an unused ward at Walton Hospital in Rodney Road has been refused by Councillors on the local Planning Sub-Committee.

The Council received over 600 objections to the proposal and nearly 300 letters of support. The main concern of objectors, including GPs at the Red and White practices at the Health Centre opposite the Hospital, was the parking impact of another GP Surgery in Rodney Road. Surrey County Council had recommended a cap on the number of patients due to these concerns.



Walton Councillors met and discussed the proposal with the local NHS last year. With the application refused, Councillors, and the Council itself, will offer to work with the NHS to find a way forward.

YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATIVES WORKING FOR WALTON