

The Weybridge News

Spring 2020

Local issues, local action, local Conservatives | www.runnymedeweybridgeconservatives.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

DRIVING around Weybridge has become a little more comfortable following extensive resurfacing of Seven Hills Rd, Queens Road, Haynes Bridge and (finally!) the top half of St George's Avenue. Spencer Avenue has also seen improvements as well as the rebuilding of the wall on Julian Hill. Don't forget you can report potholes on the Surrey County Council website.



ELMBRIDGE Council's Community Lottery launches on 28 February, raising cash for local schools, scouts and other non-profit organisations. The initiative, approved by the Borough's last Conservative Cabinet, will allow players to win a jackpot of up to £25,000 if they buy a £1 ticket from www.elmbridgelottery.co.uk. 60p from every sale goes to local good causes.

SURREY County Council is to plant 1.2 million trees by 2030, which is one for every resident. Weybridge County Cllr Tim Oliver helped plant the first batch in Surrey Hills Wood, Cranleigh in October, with other areas to get them in due course. These will purify air, filter water and provide a home for wildlife, as part of Surrey's 'greener future' plan.

WORK has started to link up Brooklands business Park with the railway station and then onto the town centre. This extensive scheme delivered in partnership between Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Borough Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership will provide both a good quality walk way for pedestrians as well as a cycle path. The scheme will see also some improvements around the entrance to the railway station as well as provide safer crossings for pedestrians accessing Brooklands College.



EVERY year each County Councillor is allocated £5,000 to support local projects and groups. Of course, this is your money and must be spent within strict guidelines. For 2019-20, Hershams County Councillor, John O'Reilly provided almost £4,000 to pay for three lifesaving community defibrillators around the public areas in Whiteley Village. John is pictured (above centre) at their launch.

Town centre transformation

WEYBRIDGE'S County Councillor Tim Oliver is leading an exciting project to transform your town centre with a new medical facility and 'community hub'.

Tim, who is also the Leader of Surrey County Council, is heading efforts to secure a replacement medical facility in the High Street and a multi-purpose hub housing the library, youth facilities, potentially also a replacement community centre and much needed space for community groups.

He said: "There's been a great deal of work to do to bring together all of the key stakeholders who have worked hard over the past couple of years to secure funding for these new facilities."

The Weybridge Society have been a key partner in drawing together views across Weybridge under the auspices of their Weybridge Re-build and Advance Project (WRAP) and have worked closely with Tim.

Residents are likely to be consulted in the spring on preferred options for the redevelopment of both the old walk-in site and the current library site.



"This is a once in a generation opportunity to create something very special as a centre of the community including open public space and easy access to a whole range of different facilities," Tim added.

Funding is in place so we just need to agree on what to build. You will have an opportunity

to have your say as we go out to public consultation in the coming months. We are fully expecting the building Works to commence at the beginning of 2021.

■ Pictured left to right: Cllr Charu Sood, candidates Manjit Gill and David Harvey, and County Cllr Tim Oliver.

Car park changes 'blow hole' in budget

COUNCILLORS clashed at their meeting in December over car park changes which will make Elmbridge's finances even worse.

Weybridge Liberal Democrat, Cllr Andrew Davis, put forward changes on behalf of the eight-party coalition which runs Elmbridge Borough Council, in which he serves as Cabinet Member for Transport.

He scrapped modest ticket increases for 2020/21 that had been agreed by the last Conservative administration. In doing so, Cllr Davis and colleagues opened up a £126,000 hole in the budget, in addition to an existing £1.2 million shortfall that needed to be tackled.

It seems inevitable that the Liberal Democrats and their Residents Association allies will be forced to draw down the council's reserves further to plug the gap.

As any householder knows, using your savings to pay the bills is not sustainable in the longer term.

Conservatives raised concerns about the new policy of linking



ticket prices to occupancy levels, which means the cost automatically rises when a Borough car park is 80% full. This could lead to confusion, or residents receiving fines if they buy a ticket and the price changes.

Electric car users will be given free parking to encourage their use.

However, in a scheme being piloted in Cobham, they'll also get free electric charging too. Given the high cost of electric vehicles (with some retailing at well over £60k) the policy inevitably means council taxpayers who can't afford an electric vehicle are subsidising the better off who can.

At the same meeting, Lib Dem and RA Councillors refused to back a Conservative motion to honour the result of the Council's Local Plan consultation where 85% of residents said they did not want new housing on Green Belt.

The Coalition argued our motion would 'unlawfully predetermine' the Council's position, despite a senior legal officer saying otherwise. They introduced their own watered-down motion instead.

Elmbridge Conservative Leader, Cllr James Browne said: "The message is clear. The present administration are not serious about fiscal responsibility or about protecting our Green Belt."



Lamp post repaired

COUNCILLORS Charu Sood and Tim Oliver arranged for the street light in the alley next to Weybridge Library to be repaired.

On investigation, it was found that there was no electric supply to the lamp post. Finally, a new wiring was laid by creating a trench to get power from the library and now the alley is well illuminated (and safer) once again!

Weybridge Hall cinema delay

NEGOTIATIONS are continuing between Elmbridge Council and a cinema operator to give a new lease of life to Weybridge Hall.

Curzons hope to operate a cinema from the building, with upper floors transformed into affordable homes or temporary housing.

However, *The Weybridge News* understands there are challenges to be overcome around the acoustics and design which are hold-



ing things up. So it is likely that the Council will progress the residential element separately, with work starting in June and taking up to a year to complete. The cinema would be fitted out as part of a second phase of the project.

We will keep readers posted on developments in future editions.



HELLO, I am Charu Sood, a councillor for St George's Hill and I would like to welcome you to The Weybridge News - a community newsletter, written and delivered by the Weybridge Conservatives to keep you informed of local matters.

We have updates this edition from our newly-elected MP, Dr Ben Spencer, as well as from Weybridge's Surrey County Cllr Tim Oliver, who leads Surrey County Council. With Elmbridge Council elections due in May, our Conservative candidates are taking the opportunity to introduce themselves. See overleaf.

In terms of what I have been doing on your behalf at Elmbridge Council, we have declared a climate emergency and I have been helping efforts to reduce single use plastics in the borough by encouraging Weybridge businesses to join the Refill campaign.

This is a national initiative that allows people to access free tap water from participating outlets, to avoid the need for them to purchase bottled water. I have been promoting the initiative far and wide - in schools and on Brooklands Radio - and have signed-up 57 businesses so far.

Look out for the bright blue sticker in the windows of participating outlets, or download the refill App to find the locations. See www.refill.org.uk for more.



Have you noticed the revamp of Memorial roundabout? I worked with the Council's Green Spaces team to get it tidied up ahead of last year's Remembrance service. The new turf has been laid and all the electricals have been neatly tucked in a box.

I've been hearing constant complaints about littering in Brooklands, Staniland Drive, so I got a new bin installed and residents have said there has been a difference.

I am here to serve you, so if you have any issues please feel free to email me at csood@elmbridge.gov.uk

Dr Ben Spencer MP for Runnymede & Weybridge

SINCE you elected me as your MP in December, I have been working closely with your councillors to deliver on your priorities.

In January I visited St Peter's Hospital and met with staff and senior management. They have ambitious plans for enhancing the services they provide locally, and I look forward to supporting them with improving patient care.

The future for the Weybridge Health Centre is a priority for everyone. I, and your councillors, will be working with residents and the NHS as part of the consultation around its future to ensure the best outcome for all.

One of the first issues raised with me was the need for better infrastructure. Transport is crucial to everyone's lives. From the daily commute, to being able to get around into town, or running a business. That's why improving our local infrastructure is one of my key priorities.

I have already raised in Parliament the need for accessible public transport (citing lifts at Weybridge station as the example), and the need for investment to improve our roads (you can see my questions at www.drben Spencer.org.uk).

Public transport needs to be sustainable, affordable, and reliable. So, I have also joined with fellow parliamentarians to work on improving the service provided by South Western Railway across the network.

Your local Conservative councillors are working hard to highlight local issues and engage with me on your behalf - from the issues outlined above to monitoring river levels during the recent flood warning.

If you would like to get in touch with me, please email ben.spencer.mp@parliament.uk, or call 02072196783, or write to me at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.



Meet your candidates

RESIDENTS will go to the polls on Thursday 7 May to elect their next Elmbridge Borough Councillors for Weybridge Riverside and St George's Hill wards.

Conservatives have two exceptional candidates this year in Manjit Gill and David Harvey, pictured.

Both hope to meet you in the coming weeks to hear your views. Manjit said: "I am proud to have been selected as a candidate in my home ward, Weybridge Riverside."

"I've lived in Weybridge for 13 years, having grown up in London. My husband and I wanted a safe place to raise our family and are lucky to call this picturesque town with great amenities and a sense of



community, our home."

Manjit's background is in international business development and five years ago she founded a charity advocating female dignity.

She adds: "I mentor young people with mental health issues and entrepreneurs to fulfil their vision. I am an ambassador for two foundations dedicated to empowering the next generation globally."

"I believe in traditional values,



selfless service and thinking outside the box. If I am fortunate enough to be elected I will work hard and hold the Council to account, preserving and enhancing our area as part of a locally-focused Conservative team."

David Harvey, who is standing in St George's Hill has lived in Weybridge for more than 12 years. He was raised in Cobham, giving him an instinctive understanding of our

Elmbridge borough.

David said: "I am passionate about Weybridge and feel very fortunate to live here. I am a regular visitor to Brooklands Community Park and I am keen to play an active role in the community as your local Councillor."

"I have 20 years experience in the Service and Property sectors and I want to bring clear thinking, energy and problem solving to the Council to improve and maintain our quality of life here."

"In particular, I attach a special importance to the local environment and promoting leisure."

David is supportive of Conservative plans to regenerate the High Street and Queens Road, and sees the future of Weybridge Health centre as a key issue for residents.

David enjoys the committed support of his wife El, and their sons.



More police on our streets

CHARLIE Chirico is our Conservative candidate to be Surrey's next Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

She is an experienced criminal lawyer who has managed teams of solicitors, including at Kingston Crown Court.

Her top priority, if elected in May, will be to secure Surrey's share of the 20,000 extra police that Boris Johnson has promised.

Charlie said: "People tell me on the doorsteps that they rarely see a police officer. That has to change."

"As well as recruiting more officers, I'll make sure that they all walk the beat, regardless of their rank, and that people are made aware of who their neighbourhood officers are. I want the public to feel confident about passing on information about criminal activity, knowing it will be acted on."

The PCC role is similar to a local

Home Secretary. They set the police budget and strategic direction for Surrey Police - and they hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of residents.

Charlie is originally from Melton Mowbray, "a market town with a strong community feel". She speaks two foreign languages and has previously worked for the Red Cross, as well as served as an elected councillor in Merton Borough.

In her legal role she has visited defendants in prison, providing her with a good insight into the impact of drugs and poor mental health as triggers for criminal behaviour.

If elected, she will also ensure that more police are on duty on Saturday nights and that burglary victims get a same day visit.

She is keen to focus resources on tackling drugs gangs who operate cross borders and target vulnerable young people. And she will hold regular surgeries to find out people's concerns. "I want to be visible and accountable to Surrey's 1.2 million residents," she said.

Follow Charlie's campaign at www.charliechirico.org.uk



Tim Oliver

Surrey County Councillor for Weybridge

THANKS to the detailed work undertaken by residents of the Triangle, Surrey County Council was able to create a scheme to improve safety including a 20 mile-per-hour speed limit, the redesign of some of the road junctions and a ban on HGV vehicles throughout the area. There are also safety improvements to the rear of Manby Lodge School as part of the scheme.

The Surrey Highways team is carrying out a study of the traffic flow on the High Street and looking at options around the top and the bottom of Baker Street.

We need to maintain a balance between traffic flow and making sure that vehicles don't speed through these built-up areas.

Surrey County Council is looking at funding a review of the roundabouts at the top of Monument Hill which are increasingly unsafe for both vehicles and for pedestrians.

In addition there has been traffic study of vehicle flow into and out of Brooklands business Park to see whether there is any way in which traffic can be improved to prevent the complete gridlock at peak hours that we all experience.

Following a review of the residents parking permit scheme north of the High Street this has been extended to include some adjoining roads. We need to balance the understandable desire of residents to park near to the house whilst not preventing short term parking for people visiting the High Street.

We will do all we can to encourage parkers to use the public car parks at Churchfields and by the station rather than block the roads.

Street scene works until April

TWELVE weeks of works to improve the street scene in Weybridge High Street is underway and due to complete by 3 April.

The project has been drawn up with Weybridge Town Business Group and taken two years to finalise and approve. It is being funded by the Elmbridge Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a tax on local development.

The pedestrian area is being redesigned and resurfaced to create flexible shared space that will retain on-street parking and provide space for markets and



performances.

During the excavation of the street works area, it was found that the roots of the trees were causing issues with underground services and drainage. The existing trees had to be removed and will be replaced with semi-matured trees. Businesses are open as usual.

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56% of girls would rather be bullied than talk to their parents about periods. Source: You Gov 2018



Our menstrual education tools teach children everything about periods. This includes the biology, emotional, cultural aspects for this normal body process. We work with schools in Surrey to teach the kids to understand periods and puberty holistically. £10 pays for a set of flash cards to teach a class. Donate now: <https://binti.org/take-action>

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