



The Weybridge News

Winter 2018/19

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

HELLO AND WELCOME

HELLO and welcome to The Weybridge News, a community newsletter produced and delivered by your Weybridge Conservative councillors.

Our thanks first of all to all of you who supported Local Conservative candidates in May's Borough elections.

We are delighted that Charu Sood was elected to represent the St George's Hill ward with a healthy majority, but sorry to lose Andrew Muddyman in Weybridge Riverside - by less than 50 votes.

Overall, the Conservatives won over 46% of the vote in Elmbridge and regained control of the Council. We are delighted that Tim Oliver was appointed Leader of the Council (Weybridge residents will know Tim as our county councillor).

The new administration has hit the ground running by insisting on improvements to the refuse service, taking steps to abolish the previous administration's tennis tax and securing a High Court order to protect 150 of our parks, car parks and open spaces from unauthorised encampments.

Tim Oliver recently held an open meeting in Weybridge to take questions from residents that was lively and well attended. We are working hard to make Weybridge and the borough an even better place to live and work. Enjoy the edition and best wishes for 2019.

- John Rowland



A 'master plan' for Weybridge centre

WEYBRIDGE Hospital and Library could come together under one roof under a new 'master plan' for the town centre.

The possibility of a multi-purpose community hub were among the topics at a public meeting with Conservative Councillor Tim Oliver, Leader of Elmbridge Borough Council and Weybridge's County Councillor, in October.

Other questions at the Your Voice Matters event related to traffic congestion, the High Street, recent planning permissions and concerns over a possible sale of some of the Churchfield allotments by the Weybridge Charity.

Cllr Oliver said: "The past few months have been very busy working with residents and key groups on starting to build a master plan for the town. There is a very real opportunity to create an all purpose community hub bringing together healthcare and community facilities such as the library as well as the community and sure start centres."



L-R: Tim Oliver with ST George's Hill councillors Ian Donaldson and Charu Sood

Tim said Surrey County Council had been aiming to improve the library for some time and, with the event of a new hospital hub being built following the fire, there would be an opportunity to integrate a number of services on the site.

Surrey County Council and NHS England are jointly seeking funds to develop the Weybridge master plan in consultation with

local stakeholders. Their objective will be to meet the future needs of Weybridge residents and deliver additional benefits to the town centre's vitality and viability.

North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), who are the local NHS decision makers, are launching 'The Big Picture' - their open and honest discussion with local people about delivering care outside of hospital.

Tim continued: "Following this, there will be a clearer picture of the services that will eventually go into the new healthcare facility at the Weybridge hospital site.

"They will want to engage the local community closely including around the design."

ON 3 MAY, Charu Sood was "honoured" to be elected as a Weybridge St George's Hill Councillor with a majority of over 400 votes.

She says: "It is a real privilege and a pleasure to represent the community's interests at the Council and I promise to live up to the expectations of all of my voters who have trusted in me."

RA fury as Tories scrap 'tennis tax'

ELMBRIDGE'S Conservative Cabinet has voted to scrap the tennis court hire charges introduced last year by Resident Association and Lib Dem councillors.

Entry pad gates and online booking will be retained to track usage and keep vandals out, but fees will be scrapped, if the Full Council agrees.

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.

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." Ending the charges - dubbed the 'tennis tax' by critics - honours a promise in our May manifesto.

On the case over local roads

THE parlous state of St George's Avenue continues to be of major concern to Weybridge residents.

With winter on the way, further break up of the road surface is inevitable. While it can't come soon enough, funding for the resurfacing of the worst section is to be included as part of the Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project.

Your Weybridge St George's Hill councillors, Ian Donaldson and Charu Sood are strongly lobbying Surrey County Council for the resurfacing works to be completed in the early stages of the project.

Traffic reduction also remains our priority. The bottleneck from Weybridge town centre through Weybridge Station and down into Brooklands Road continues to be a headache for road users.

Providing alternatives is crucial to cutting congestion. A major scheme - known as the Brooklands Business Park Accessibility Project - is to establish a cycling and walking route between the Brooklands Business Park, Weybridge Railway Station and towards Weybridge town centre (including between the station and Heathside School). This has moved a step



closer with confirmation that the government-backed Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will provide part-funding. Additional funds of £625,000 from the Community Infrastructure Levy are being sought.

The route was granted planning permission earlier this year and will be separated from busy traffic and make it easier and safer to cycle and walk in the area. It will be well surfaced and have enough lighting for use all year round.

The scheme will include a range of improvements to the area included improvements to pedestrian crossings close to the station, improving signage and providing better public bus facilities.

Councillors have been advised that work on this transformative scheme should start in 2019/20.

Cash injection for cinema project



WORK is continuing to transform Weybridge Hall into a local cinema with flats above.

The building had been under-utilised for some time despite various initiatives to revive its fortunes. And it was found to be in need of significant investment (around £400k) for internal work alone to simply retain the status quo.

Planning permission was granted in March this year to convert the Hall into a cinema on the ground floor with five affordable housing units above.

We expect the building to remain in council ownership and the cinema to be run by a cinema operative.

Cllr Ruth Mitchell, the Cabinet Member overseeing the project, said the final bill is likely to be around £2 million due to complications.

Weybridge Councillor Michael Freeman added: "There are no doubts about the benefits the cinema could bring to Weybridge. It is disappointing that the risks associated with the project - such as asbestos - were not fully considered by the previous council administration.

"We will ensure that it will not increase the parking difficulties and noise for near neighbours."

Fight goes on for Walk-in Centre

YOUR Weybridge Conservative councillors are continuing to campaign for a replacement for the town's much missed walk-in centre, which burned down in July last year.

While the two GP practices are running smoothly in the temporary accommodation on the site, patients with minor injuries are often having to travel to A&E at St Peter's or Walk-in Centres in Woking or Ashford.

Cllr Ian Donaldson (St George's Hill) attended a meeting of the Local NHS where he was informed that Walk-in Centres are being replaced by Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs).

Cllr Donaldson told Weybridge News: "Regardless of what it's called, the key issue is that Weybridge has a centre which can deal with urgent but minor medical issues. If it made sense for Weybridge to have a Walk-in Centre it makes just as much sense for it to have an Urgent Treatment Centre."

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Council crack-down on illegal camps

RESIDENTS demanded action to tackle the spate of unauthorised camps and fly-tipping in the Borough, and Elmbridge's Conservative Council has done just that.

At the our 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 this month, 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 – as we saw at Brooklands Lane in September when an incursion was resolved within hours - under threat of



arrest, fines or seizure of assets.

In the absence of an injunction the council has to carry out welfare checks and obtain court orders which take several days.

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.

The issue has been growing

with convoys of up to 60 vehicles flocking to the Borough.

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 11 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 the cause of unauthorised camps.

If you spot any weakened security fence posts, railings etc. that protect public land, please report these so the council can affect repairs.

Go to www.elmbridge.gov.uk/news/unauthorised-encampments

COMMUNITY NEWS

'PRE-CONSTRUCTION' works are underway ahead of improvements to the Weybridge Streetscape between Ship Yard and Elmgrove Road.

Plans include a small plaza close to the Ship Hotel as well as paving and street furniture improvements outside Waitrose and Morrison's.

Detailed design work has continued apace, and it is hoped that the work will begin in the New Year. Weybridge Councillor Michael Freeman says the revitalisation works have been "a long time coming, but will be worth the wait."



BROOKLANDS Park is to get solar-powered toilets like the one pictured above, when the Danfo facilities are installed in the next few months.

GOOD NEWS for Whiteley Village residents who will again have the opportunity to register with the Hersham Surgery as Dr N. Sahathevan has arrived and the list is now open. Cllr Ian Donaldson is pursuing resident concerns with the lack of NHS dentistry.

IT SHOULD be easier to make an appointment with a GP thanks to a new national 'extended access' initiative.

In addition to being able to book GP appointments at your local practice, you will also have access to additional appointments during the evenings and at weekend at four locations across the local area (Walton, Ashford, Sunbury and Woking).

These additional appointments will be available from 6-9pm on weekday evenings (including bank holidays) and from 9am to midday at weekends. Patients can book these appointments through their local GP practice.

ST JAMES' Church in Weybridge has installed the town's first community defibrillator, which is available to the general public 24-7. The purchase and maintenance of the equipment has been financed by St. James', The Friends of Weybridge Hospital and Waitrose.

Brooklands race car visits Council



BROOKLANDS Museum representatives visited Esher Civic Centre in October and staged a unique demonstration showcasing their famous Napier Railton race car.

Built in 1933, this legendary vehicle set the all-time speed record for the Brooklands track at Weybridge, and is very much part of Elmbridge and motor racing history.

Tamalie Newbery, the new chief executive at the Museum addressed councillors, with the desire of deepening the partnership between the Museum and the Council.

She explained that the Napier Railton embodies Brooklands Museum, as a place where history is kept alive, with awesome machines, engineering and the fantastic people who design, build and run them.



Allotment governance

IT MIGHT often be missed but one of the biggest landowners in the centre of Weybridge is the Weybridge Charity.

It has a long history of helping local residents in financial need and fulfils the important function of maintaining a large open space at Churchfields. This provide allotments to bring to residents opportunities for fresh air, a healthy life style, exercise and, of course, "home grown" fresh fruit and veg.

Elmbridge Council formally appoints six of the nine Weybridge Charity Trustees, who have traditionally been councillors or former councillors, but a number of residents have expressed an interest in the role.

Weybridge Riverside Councillor Michael Freeman welcomes a decision by the Council to make the process of appointing Trustees more transparent.

He said "It is unfortunate that the trigger for this was the news that the Charity wanted to sell part of the allotments for development.

"Residents can bring much needed skills and local knowledge in helping the Charity raise new funds, respond to changing needs and in developing its approach to improving quality of life and life chances for local disadvantaged people.

"That is also the aim of the Walton Charity which seems to provide a good local example just up the road from us".

Railway won't pay for ramp



YOUR Conservative councillors have long campaigned for the station ramp on the Brooklands Road side of the station to be permanently opened.

South Western Railway (SWR) say they will consider the proposal and provide an estimate of the likely cost, but are refusing to fund it. Your councillors are looking into all the options.

Cllr Charu Sood (St George's Hill) summed up: "It's a great frustration that the ramp remains closed at peak times. We are disappointed that SWR will not fund a scheme that its customers so clearly support.

We will consider carefully alternative funding methods to open the ramp permanently, providing it can be done cost-effectively."

Cllr Ian Donaldson (St Georges's Hill) has raised concerns with Surrey County Council about weeds on the bridge, and expects that these will be cleared in due course by either the council or Network Rail.

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ELMBRIDGE laid down the law with its waste contractor after hundreds of missed collections over the summer.

Cllr Glenn Dearlove, Cabinet member for Environment and Transport, held "robust" meetings with Amey and its directors, in which he insisted the company improves or faces fines.

He tells *The Weybridge News*: "As a result, our contractor, Amey, has trained more existing staff to be drivers and is rolling out improvements to the in-cab devices, so that missed collections can be closed down in real time. In addition an extra garden waste vehicle has been introduced.

"We will continue to monitor performance to ensure that residents of Elmbridge receive the quality of service they expect."