

inTouch

WITH YOUR COBHAM, OXSHOTT & STOKE D'ABERNON CONSERVATIVES

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KEEP IN TOUCH | TELL US YOUR VIEWS

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Green light for 6th May elections

ELECTIONS to Elmbridge Borough Council, Surrey County Council, and for the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner will be taking place on Thursday 6th May.

Your Conservative candidates have been selected and are raring to go - even though Covid restrictions mean conversations are likely to be online this year rather than on the doorstep.

Mark Sugden is our candidate to represent Oxshott, Claygate and Hinchley Wood at Surrey County Council. After an international business career, Mark moved to Claygate in 2007, where he joined the Parish Council and regularly raises issues on behalf of residents at the Elmbridge Local Committee of Surrey County Council.

He is an ardent supporter of the local Green Belt and protecting vital community services, as well as strong law and order and safer, better highways.

Mark said: "Despite challenging times, I will do all I can to make a difference for residents and build a brighter future. I'll take swift action to address the adverse impact on Oxshott residents of traffic on the A244."

David Lewis has already proven himself as a hardworking and vocal borough councillor, and is now hoping to put his experience to good use as Surrey County Councillor for Cobham.



"At Elmbridge, I have robustly defended our Green Belt. At Surrey, I would ensure that our roads and footpaths continue to be improved and that the Council's investment in flood prevention projects will benefit our area," he said.

The provision of quality services requires a strong economy. David, who has lived in Stoke

d'Abernon for more than 30 years, will support the work of the Surrey Growth Board, which is working to increase economic activity across the county.

Alistair Mann is our borough candidate in Cobham & Downside ward. He is Chair of Cobham Chamber of Commerce and was a Chair of Governors at St Andrews Primary School for six

years.

He said: "I'm keen to champion our local businesses and take a community-led approach to tackling local issues, from parking to planning. I share residents' desire to preserve the distinctive character of Cobham and our Green Belt."

Alan Parker CBE is standing to represent Oxshott and Stoke d'Abernon which includes Cobham Fairmile at Elmbridge Borough Council. He is a former Chief Executive Officer of a FTSE 100 company and has been a chairman and non-executive director for international companies.

Putting people first has been a priority throughout Alan's career and his CBE was awarded for services to industry. His experience will be a great asset to the Council.

Alan said: "I will do whatever is in my power to safeguard our Green Belt, keep our local businesses strong and drive waste out from our Council spending."

Polling Stations will be safe places at which to vote but you can also choose to vote by post or by proxy. Apply to vote by post to: www.elmbridge.gov.uk/elections/voting-by-post by 5pm on 20th April 2021.

■ **Pictured clockwise from top left: Mark Sugden, Cllr David Lewis, Alistair Mann and Alan Parker.**

Defending the Green Belt is our top priority



THE Conservative Group of councillors at Elmbridge Council is resolutely committed to defending our borough's Green Belt, irrespective of housing targets set by the Government.

Leader James Browne, pictured above at Knowle Hill, who is a Cobham councillor, says the borough's vulnerability to arbitrary housing targets is a direct result of the failure of the Liberal Democrat and Residents' Associations coalition to agree a Local Plan.

He explains: "They have had control of the council for four of the last five years and we are no further forward. The Local Plan has been delayed even further as the result of the latest lockdown and it is now not expected to be published until later this year."

"When the Conservatives controlled the Council during the 2018/19 municipal year, we instructed officers to draw up additional options for the Local Plan which protect our open spaces and Green Belt, preserving areas of natural beauty for future generations."

"Only the Conservative Group of Councillors at Elmbridge have given residents a guarantee that they will oppose releasing Green Belt land for future housing development."

In February, the Alliance of Elmbridge Residents and Civic Groups - which includes Cobham Conservation & Heritage Trust, Stoke d'Abernon Residents Association and FEDORA, issued a statement calling on candidates at the 6 May election to commit to protecting the Green Belt and resist the housing target of 633 dwellings per year.

Elmbridge Conservatives have no hesitation in giving those assurances as this has been our group policy for the last four years.



Joint effort to combat virus

Covid has dominated the news for the past year so much that there couldn't possibly be anything more to say about it.

However, you may not be aware of the tremendous work that has been done by Surrey County Council (SCC) and Elmbridge Borough Council.

This includes: SCC and Surrey Police and Fire Services co-chaired the Local Resilience Forum which has co-ordinated the response to Covid across the county including surge testing and open access testing.

Elmbridge has processed and paid businesses nearly £8M in government funded grants. 1,250 Meals on Wheels delivered every week. Between 600 - 750 welfare calls made to residents. Elmbridge Community Transport is taking people to receive the vaccine in Walton, Epsom and Chertsey.

Rough sleepers have been housed in cabins at West Molesey. And since the second period of lockdown, Hershams Village Hall is operating as a Covid testing site.

As of early February, 91% of over 80s had been vaccinated for Covid, 96% of over 75s and 76% of 70 -74 year-olds.

● **CHATTERBUS linking Oxshott, Stoke d'Abernon and Cobham to Brooklands has had its future secured for 2021-22 by grants of £10,000 by South Western Railway and £15,000 from Surrey County Council.**

Local councillors Mary Lewis and Andrew Burley are members of the Chatterbus board and confirm the service will be resumed when lockdown restrictions ease.

● **COBHAM County Councillor Mary Lewis has secured funding for speed activated signs and three additional pedestrian islands in Stoke Road. It follows a successful campaign by residents to have the speed limit in the road reduced to 30 mph.**



■ Lisa Townsend will be your champion and voice at Surrey Police

LISA Townsend has been selected as the Conservative candidate for Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner at the 6th May election. She's a former Cobham resident with a background in law and strategic communications. Lisa intends to be a 'critical friend' to the police and raise voters' priorities with the Chief Constable. "I'll ensure Surrey Police are more visible and reactive to the community's concerns, and engages with our vulnerable residents. I will also take a tougher stance on illegal traveller encampments," says Lisa. Follow her campaign at: www.facebook.com/LisaTownsendSurrey

RA and Lib Dems raid Council's reserves

ELMBRIDGE Borough Council is due to receive £14.9M in Council Tax this year but will still continue to operate at a loss.

The Council is run by an eight-party coalition of political Residents Associations and the Liberal Democrats, which is drawing down the reserves to plug a £3.7M budget shortfall this year.

Unlike Conservative-led Surrey County Council which balanced its books and was better prepared to weather Covid, the Borough had a funding gap of circa £5M that councillors had not dealt with before the pandemic.

This now stands at £9M, although the Government is expected to compensate Elmbridge for most of its Covid spending.

Elmbridge Conservative Deputy Leader, Cllr Ruth Mitchell, said: "A root and branch review of spending is required. We must deliver services to our residents more efficiently and at less cost."

"The RA/LD administration would rather kick the can down the road than take difficult decisions. "We will be campaigning to elect a Conservative administration to restore the finances back to health and meet our residents' needs."

Dom visits Cobham

COBHAM'S Chamber of Commerce Chair (and prospective councillor) Alistair Mann took MP Dominic Raab on a visit to Cobham High Street pre-lockdown hear from businesses about the impact of Covid.

Dominic was pleased to hear of the positive difference of the Government's Business Rates relief, VAT deferral and Job Support. Traders raised issues about parking, planning and the need to support high streets to thrive at the heart of local communities.

COMMUNITY NEWS



OAKSHADE Road and Silvermere Avenue in Oxshott have been resurfaced by Surrey County Council. If elected, your County Councillors will continue to push for additional local highway improvements and to seek more from Surrey's Highways budget which has been increased by £264M.

COBHAM County Councillor, Mary Lewis, secured funding for the repair of pavements in Blundel Lane, Stoke d'Abernon and Church Street, Cobham, in addition to the resurfacing of pavements in Station Road and Bray Road previously.

COUNCILLOR Andrew Burley arranged for Tim Oliver, the leader of Surrey County Council, to attend a meeting with the Oxshott residents' group FEDORA to discuss the A244 Leatherhead Road. Concerns were raised about the level of traffic through Oxshott Village, pollution and pedestrian safety, with Surrey Highways officers tasked with identifying solutions.

MARK Sugden, Conservative County Council candidate for Oxshott, is supporting a night time ban on large lorries diverting through Oxshott to avoid the London Low Emission Zone. Mark also backs the Elmbridge Local Committee funded feasibility study into a 20 mph speed limit through Oxshott village.

TWO-times Wimbledon champion Sir Andy Murray has revealed that he used the brick wall at Oxshott Village Sports Club to practice after his hip operation. He has also used the courts at nearby Reed's School, he told SurreyLive.

SURREY County Council is developing new pavements in Oxshott where land is available or when landowners are engaged, including alongside and to the south of Willow Croft, and between Danes Hill and the Village Centre on the west side of the A244.

RUBBISH and dog waste bins in Elmbridge green spaces are being replaced this year with larger capacity dual-use bins. Areas receiving new bins will include Littleheath Recreation Ground, Station Road Recreation Ground, Stoke d'Abernon Recreation Ground, River Hill, Leg o' Mutton, Cobham Recreation Ground and the Tilt.

AVERAGE Speed Cameras could be introduced along the A244 Leatherhead Road. Surrey County Council is discussing with Surrey Police on whether to progress the initiative. The existing mobile enforcement site opposite the Bear pub on the A244 is an example of cooperation between the Conservative Administration and Surrey Police working for local residents.

Surrey: 'A county council transformed'

SURREY County Council under the leadership of Conservative Tim Oliver is a Council transformed.

As leader of Elmbridge Borough Council from 2018-19, he championed Green Belt protection and secured a High Court injunction against Traveller incursions.

Tim then took over the reins at Surrey and has led reforms to almost every area of Council business - making £250m of efficiency savings while improving services for residents.

The Surrey leader, who is pictured right with MP Dominic Raab before the pandemic, told *InTouch*: "Covid has had a huge impact but thanks to our hard work to transform the Council, we have been able to provide financial security and certainty in guiding Surrey through the pandemic.

"Alongside that, we've continued with our ambitions in improving services and making this organisation fit for the future. That work will continue."

Over the past year, Surrey has met the cost of PPE delivered to the frontline, given financial support to the care and voluntary sectors, helped vulnerable residents, and



provided staffing to help the county through the pandemic.

In the next five years it will invest almost £2BN on improving infrastructure, tackling the climate emergency and growing our local economy, providing jobs, reducing inequality and improving the lives of all our residents.

Tim continued: "We must demonstrate to Council Tax payers that we are spending their money wisely and delivering the best value. We will continue to drive greater effi-

ciencies wherever we can and look to pass on that benefit to residents."

Surrey spends more than £1M every single day on Adult Social Care and more than £500,000 every day on Children's Services.

Many residents won't experience these services, but it is Surrey's duty to look after the most vulnerable and the Conservative Council will continue to do that, while pressing Government on sustainable funding to enable us to deliver that care.

Every year the Council spends £140M on environment, transport and infrastructure, over £30M on public health, £37M on community protection (including Surrey Fire & Rescue Service).

Tim's administration has four key priorities for Surrey County Council after the May elections.

These are: 1) Growing a sustainable economy (particularly critical as our county recovers from Covid); 2) Tackling health inequality - accelerating health and social care integration, to reduce demand on services while improving health outcomes for residents; 3) Enabling a greener future. Measures include planting 1.2M trees, investing in ultra low emission buses, promoting walking and cycling and replacing street lights with energy efficient bulbs; and 4) Engaging with our communities - making it easier for residents to play an active role in shaping decisions outside elections.

"I know that we have a brighter future ahead of us. We will overcome Covid, rise to the challenge of recovery and will continue to make Surrey the best place to live, work and to grow a business," said Tim.

Parking rise will hurt our local shops



THE Liberal Democrat and Residents' Association parties running Elmbridge Council voted through increases in parking charges in December.

They also removed the 30-minute short-term stay option, resulting in the minimum fee at village car parks such as Steels Lane, Oxshott, increasing by 125%, from 40p to 90p.

Oxshott Councillor David Lewis

told the Council meeting that local shops would lose trade if the half hourly ticket was removed.

He explained: "Small convenience stores and retailers depend on customers being able to park, pop in to buy a newspaper or pick up a prescription.

"Those businesses have done an incredible job in supporting our residents over the last few months."

Conservatives warned that the increases could backfire, with residents taking chances instead of buying a ticket.

However, Council Leader Stuart Selleck insisted the "broader picture" of the council's finances was more important, and a Conservative amendment proposed by David was voted down.

Community bids

YOUR Conservative councillors and candidates work closely with non-political residents' associations in the area and have regular meetings with them to learn about residents' priorities.

FEDORA - The Voice for Oxshott, Cobham & District Residents' Association (CDRA) and Cobham Conservation & Heritage trust (CCHT) and Stoke d'Abernon RA, along with many other faith and community groups, have submitted bids to Your Fund Surrey.

This includes a new community hub for St Andrew's Church, a pelican crossing in Steels Lane, a non-vehicle bridge across the railway in Blundel Lane and improvements to the centre of Cobham and on the Leg o' Mutton foot.

Conservative candidate Alan Parker said: "These exciting projects will benefit the whole area if funding is secured. It is really good that we have active groups to engage with and work together to improve our community".

FEDORA can be contacted at info@fedora.org.uk



Roadwork relief

MATT Furniss (pictured) is the Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Transport.

He is introducing a new policy, from April, of charging utility companies a lane rental fee when they dig up busy Surrey roads and carry out the works during peak hours.

The intention is to incentivise road crews to complete works in a timely fashion and minimise inconvenience to residents. Companies doing poor quality, rushed repairs will be required to come back at their own expense!

With any luck we might see an end to instances of roads closed without work being done.

Matt said: "I'm delighted that this new scheme will go-ahead. We're always looking at ways to reduce congestion on our road network and to keep Surrey moving."



Vaccine offers route out of lockdown

BY DOMINIC RAAB
MP FOR ESHER AND WALTON

IN RECENT months, the Coronavirus vaccination programme has shown us a clear route out of lockdown.

Over 18 million people have now been vaccinated, and we met our target to offer a vaccination to everyone in the top four most vulnerable groups by mid-February.

Looking ahead, we aim to offer a vaccine to all priority groups by May and all adults by September.

Locally, GPs, nurses and volunteers have been doing great work to protect Cobham and Oxshott residents - including at the nearby vaccination centres in Thames Ditton and Walton. Over 250,000 vaccinations have been administered across Surrey, with every one bringing us closer to normality.

While this is good progress, I am conscious that the lockdown causes difficulties for many individuals and businesses. There is still substantial economic support available, including monthly

grants for businesses forced to close. The government's loan schemes are available until the end of March, and so far the two most popular schemes have provided over £130M to local businesses.

Away from Coronavirus, your local Conservative team has been working hard on other key issues. We secured an important win in December, when the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government listened to our representations and decided not to increase Elmbridge's housing target. This is particularly important for Cobham and Oxshott, and I'm grateful to the local residents groups for their input.

There's more to do on this front. The Liberal Democrat / Residents Association coalition running the council are due to begin a consultation on the new Local Plan soon, and we are calling on them to protect the Green Belt. It is only by supporting local Conservative candidates in May that we can ensure our green spaces are protected for future generations.

Surrey switching to energy efficient bulbs

SURREY County Council has begun the huge task of converting 89,000 street lights into energy-efficient LEDs.

The council spends £3.8M every year on energy for street lights. By converting to LED, they'll use around 65% less energy, saving taxpayers £2M a year. The new lights will last 20

years - six times longer than traditional bulbs, and it will take three years to complete the switch over.

Surrey Cabinet Member for Transport, Matt Furniss, said: "This demonstrates our commitment to reduce energy consumption as well as aim of being net carbon zero by 2050."