

# The Esher News



Community news from your local Conservatives

Spring 2013

## MEET YOUR MP

Local MP Dominic Raab is holding an open meeting at Esher Civic Centre on Thursday April 4th from 7.30pm. All are welcome to come along and ask a question on any local or national matter.

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## 'A fresh face fighting for Esher'

Hello and welcome to the inaugural Esher News. This is a newsletter from your local Conservatives which aims to keep you informed of local issues and what we are doing at borough and county level to improve things here in Esher.

I am the editor, Steve Bax, and it is also my honour and privilege to have been selected as your Conservative candidate at this year's Surrey County Council election on May 2nd.

I am all about local issues. I was a local newspaper reporter in Surrey for many years, so I know how councils work and I am used to fighting the corner of residents.

I manage websites for national news company in London and so I know the importance of good communications. I am also a clean broom with no ties to

lobbyists or outside forces - my priority is and will always be to residents.

My wife and I have two children under five, so I understand the pressures facing families today and believe local government has a duty to help.

I want to ensure that every child in Esher has a local school place, but that when schools expand the impact on local residents is understood by officialdom and practical solutions are found.

And of course schools are only part of the story; it is vital that our young people have jobs to go to when they graduate, and as the county council is Surrey's biggest employer it must play a part in creating local opportunities.

Surrey residents pay enough tax and deserve decent roads. Potholes are a bugbear of mine and I keep on at Highways until they are fixed. I welcome the

Surrey Conservative pledge to spend £27million over the next five years to fix our roads network.

Just like the national government, there are tough financial decisions to make here in Surrey. Families are having to watch the pennies and make their money go further, and it should be no different at County Hall.

The Conservative administration is bearing down on costs while continuing to drive up standards, but councillors must be your eyes and ears and insist on value for YOUR money.

I very much look forward to hearing your views during the April campaign, whether on the doorstep or by email.

If you would like to help canvass, deliver leaflets or even to display a poster, I would love to hear from you.

Thank you and enjoy the newsletter.

### Crisis looms for Esher hall



KING George's Hall may have to move from Esher town centre if its trustees cannot find £150,000 to repair the roof.

Elmbridge Council has quoted the six figure sum as part of a schedule of dilapidation.

This presents the hall's trustees, including Esher's three borough councillors, with a difficult set of choices.

Options on the table are to raise the money and invest in the building - which some say is not economically suitable for refurbishment; or to demolish and rebuild the hall - either at its current site next to the Civic Centre, or at another suitable location in Esher, with the sale of the land releasing funds for a new hall. Any move would be subject to public consultation.

Councillor Simon Waugh favours keeping King George's Hall where it is but colleague David Archer would like to explore options for moving it to Lower Green, possibly as part of a community hub that could include a medical centre.

He said: "Relocating to Lower Green would be an investment in the area."

What do you think? Should King George's Hall move to Lower Green or elsewhere? Please email your views to MoleseyEsher@gmail.com

## Traffic chaos at Cranmere?

Congestion and safety concerns in Lower Green as Esher school expands

SURREY County Council is drawing up plans to enlarge Cranmere Primary School in Lower Green to meet a soaring demand for school places in Esher and surrounding areas.

The school in The Drive can accommodate 390 pupils - some 180 of them in temporary buildings - but in future it will have a capacity of 630 plus a 26-space nursery.

The county will build a spacious new school on land behind Arran Way, and once pupils move over in 2015, it will bulldoze the existing 1970s school site and restore it to Green Belt.

#### Concerns

Esher Conservatives recognise the urgent need for extra school places and welcome the investment in Cranmere Primary, but we share the concerns of many local residents who say the streets around the new school already struggle with parking and would be unable to cope with a daily influx of hundreds of school-run vehicles.

Local residents and parents have formed the Cranmere Community Traffic Concern (CCTC) to lobby the council and other relevant authorities to "see the bigger picture" and address the congestion and safety issues which the new school could create.

CCTC is calling for a drop-off area to be created at the new site as well as extra parking spaces for residents in Douglas Road to alleviate the congestion.

They think this could remove the need for people to park on grass, as it is feared this could damage underground water pipes and be costly to repair.

The group is also concerned about the safety of children crossing Douglas Road, as this is a route for heavy goods lorries going to and



Pictured: HGVs in Farm Road and Douglas Road, plus mud left by parking on verges. Above: Steve Bax in Arran Way.

from the nearby industrial estate, often mounting kerbs and verges.

Steve Bax, Esher Conservative candidate at the upcoming Surrey County Council elections is taking a close interest in the issue, and has had meetings with the head teacher at Cranmere, residents and the project manager for the school expansion.

He said: "From what I have seen of the designs, the new school will be a superb modern facility for the children and the wider community.

"But it is vital that Surrey addresses the very real concerns about congestion and children's safety that will most certainly arise from moving the school to Arran Way.

"I am - and will be - pressing for joined up thinking on this issue."

John Farrer, project manager for the new Cranmere, confirmed there are no plans to widen Arran Way, but said some extra parking will be created on the railway side of Douglas Road, as well as a footpath entrance re-opened in Blair Avenue.

Mr Farrer said: "The existing Cranmere Primary is a 1970s build-

ing with many ongoing maintenance issues, including a poor roof and significant drainage problems. The building has many short comings including a lack of small teaching spaces, group rooms and offices.

"The new school will be a 21st century facility for teaching. It will include a nursery, dedicated group rooms, break-out spaces and the potential for community use spaces."

What do you think about the school expansion and congestion? Email Steve Bax at MoleseyEsher@gmail.com

# Moving the memorial will ensure dignity



Esher Conservatives have recruited a decorated local army veteran to help with a plan to move the war memorial to the centre of Esher Green.

Ward councillors hope that by shifting the monument from its current spot at the roadside, it will improve the 'safety and dignity' of remembrance services, as crowds would no longer have to stand in the road at risk from traffic.

John Handford OBE, a retired colonel from Esher, is managing the project and hopes to move the memorial by 2014, in time for the 100th anniversary of the Great War.

Mr Handford is formerly of the Parachute Regiment and served in Afghanistan and Northern Ireland.

He said: "Having attended remembrance services at the memorial it is clear that it is in a cramped and ungainly position. It should be moved to the centre of the Green

where it would sit in a more dignified setting away from the noise of the road and the clutter of signs and lampposts. This would bring it to life throughout the year, making it more of a prominent feature and enable us to enjoy a more poignant Remembrance Sunday."

He added: "I am driving this forward on behalf of our community who I know respect our Armed Forces and particularly those that have fallen over the years."

The memorial will remain in the line of sight from Church Street and will not be enhanced or embellished.

Esher councillor David Archer has obtained a quote for

£14,000 for the work and said the money will come from fundraising rather than the public purse.

"The new location will bring more dignity to our annual service and make it safer," he said.

Esher Conservatives will keep you posted of developments.

**"I am driving this forward on behalf of our community who I know respect our Armed Forces."**

## In touch with local views

**DOMINIC RAAB, Conservative MP for Esher & Walton, gives an update on his work locally and at Westminster.**

"I spend a lot of time speaking to local firms and staying in touch with business groups, such as the Esher Business Guild. That way, I get candid feedback on the pressures facing small businesses, which informs my views on policy.

"I have also been meeting with local charities, including the Princess Alice Hospice, and supporting local community initiatives like the Esher Neighbourhood Fund – which I helped set up to support less well-off areas such as Lower Green.

"I regularly visit local schools – from Cranmere Primary to Claremont Fan Court School – to hear from students and staff. I recently went out for a morning in an ambulance with local paramedics from the Chertsey depot. Again, nothing beats getting out of the Westminster bubble and hearing directly from those on the frontline.

"Up in the House of Commons, I have been focusing on the economy. The government has taken on board some of my proposals to cut red tape to get businesses hiring.

"We also had a tragic case of a waiter from the Sherpa Kitchen in Esher who was killed by a gang, but the perpetrator used human rights arguments to scupper his deportation order. So, I am leading a campaign to change the law, so foreign criminals cannot escape deportation



simply by citing a right to a family life.

"Finally, I liaise regularly with our local councillors, so I know how important the upcoming County-Council elections are.

"In Esher, Steve Bax is standing for the Conservatives. I have worked closely with Steve over the last few years, and I know he would be a dedicated and hard-working local champion – particularly on key issues that matter at county level, such as schools policy."

Visit [www.dominicraab.com](http://www.dominicraab.com) to contact Dominic or to sign up for his popular monthly newsletter.

### School places success

SURREY County Council placed 85% of children in their first preference secondary school, according to recently released figures. This compares to a London-wide average of just 71%, and just 69% in Lib Dem-run Kingston.

## COMMUNITY NEWS



**ESHER**-based Princess Alice Hospice is gearing up for its 21st Towpath Trundle on Sunday May 19th from 11am.

It is asking supporters to follow Alice Bear along the banks of the Thames between Walton Bridge and Sadlers Ride, Hurst Park in Molesey (you can start at either end) and if you register by May 10 you will receive free entry to the teddy bear's picnic held afterwards at Sadlers Ride.

Peppa Pig will be there as well as music, refreshments, Beat the Goalie and giant Jenga. Over the decades the sponsored walk has generated more than £200k for the hospice.

POLICE have appealed to residents to keep an eye out for lead thieves who have been active in Esher lately.

In recent weeks churches, garages and businesses have been targeted, and the culprits are prepared to climb high, sometimes to steal relatively small amounts of lead. However, the damage that can be caused internally can be considerable and costly.

Call Surrey Police on 101 or, Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, if you have information.

**LOWER Green Community Association is running projects to improve the lives and opportunities of local people.**

After the area took part in a national 'Neighbourhood Challenge' programme last year, many small projects got off the ground, including arts and crafts, knit & natter, an after school club, fitness classes and support for jobseekers.

LGCA, based at the Community Centre in Farm Road, is also hoping to identify local skills and connect people with similar interests. Email [lowergreenlife@gmail.com](mailto:lowergreenlife@gmail.com) to find out more.

ESHER councillor Simon Waugh and ex-councillor Debi Oliver have raised funds for Princess Alice Hospice by dressing up as a pantomime horse.

They took part in a re-run of last year's Mayor's Charity Pantomime Horse Race at Sandown Park, which was recorded for a new Chris O'Dowd comedy.

The panto horses even had to re-run the race 20 times for the cameras!

**MOLESEY Art Society's annual exhibition is on April 4th-9th at St Albans School, Beauchamp Road, East Molesey. More details at [www.moleseyartsociety.co.uk](http://www.moleseyartsociety.co.uk).**

## 'Give a little to get a lot'

**ELMBRIDGE** Council leader John O'Reilly is calling on residents to 'give a little to get a lot' after announcing that council tax will go up this year to safeguard frontline services.

The borough is implementing a 'modest increase' of just under 2% in its portion of the council tax (around 7p a week for an average Band D home), after concluding that this would be better than cutting services.

The increase, along with a rise in parking charges, will generate an extra £450,000 for the council budget, but even then it will still need to save £1.1million over the next financial year.

Cllr O'Reilly (pictured) said: "Your Conservative administration has frozen the borough part of the council tax for five years in the last six, and at the same time we achieved £6million savings with no impact on services.

"Every so often a modest rise is needed to protect the services residents value, but rest assured we will continue to bear down on costs as we always have."

The council is having to cope with reduced government funding and a drop in income as its investments in high interest accounts reach maturity.

Esher councillor and cabinet member for resources, Tim Oliver, is driving forward a strategy of purchasing property so that it can generate extra income in the



future and reduce the need for council tax rises.

Meanwhile Surrey County Council has been explaining what residents will get in return for a 1.99% rise in the county portion of your council tax.

Leader David Hodge said for an extra 44p a week per household, his administration will be able to invest £10million in raising school standards; £45million in providing 12,000 school places; £25million to improve roads; £11million in adult social care, and £750,000 on apprenticeships.

He said: "People consistently tell us that what matters most to them is roads, school places, opportunities for young people to get into work and looking after the vulnerable.

"The easy option would be for us to park the problem until after the election but that would be irresponsible and saddle Surrey with a financial time bomb that would go off in five years crippling Surrey's finances."

## fairway wills

If you're looking for help with:

- Wills
- Trusts
- Estate planning

Why not give us a call on 020 8783 1411.



Fairway House, 127 Walton Road, East Molesey, KT8 0DT

## SCC war on potholes

ALMOST 50 miles of Surrey roads will be repaired at no cost to the taxpayer as part of Surrey County Council's commitment to improve roads.

The Conservative administration at County Hall has secured a 15% discount on its £100million five year roads contract with May Gurney.

It has decided to plough the £15million saving straight back into the highways budget, paying for 50 miles of repair - and will invest another £25million over five years to blitz potholes and their root causes.

Cllr John Furey, responsible



for transport, said: "Following the recent decision on council tax we now have the money available to take huge strides in improving our roads. Over the next five years many of the worst roads in Surrey will be overhauled in a bid to tackle the root cause of potholes."

Residents can request a road to be repaired by emailing [improvemyroad@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:improvemyroad@surreycc.gov.uk)