

The Molesey News

Voice of the Molesey Conservative Residents

Aug/Sept 2011

MEET YOUR MP

Esher & Walton MP
Dominic Raab will be
at St Mary's Church
Hall, East Molesey on
Friday Sept 9, 7.30pm.
Come and meet him
and ask a question!

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HELLO AND A WARM WELCOME

Dear Molesey resident, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this inaugural edition of *The Molesey News*, the voice of the Conservative Party in Molesey.

I am Steve Bax, a dad of two and local journalist from West Molesey. We may have met earlier this year when I stood for election to Elmbridge Council as the Conservative's candidate for the Molesey East ward.

I campaigned on a platform of keeping Molesey Library open, keeping police based in our town, and for action to tackle the shortage of school places in Molesey.

Although I didn't win I am indebted to the 608 Molesey voters who cast their ballots for me. If you were one of them - a big thank you! It was a privilege to meet so many people and hear their concerns and aspirations for our community.

Challenges

The Conservatives and I hope to continue a dialogue with you through this regular publication.

Along the way we will keep you informed about what is going on in Molesey, and hopefully raise awareness of some of the challenges facing our town.

You may have noticed that the political scene in Molesey has been a little stagnant of late - but it wasn't always this way.

In past decades our elections were closely fought battles. But since the political parties fell into decline locally in the 80s and 90s, the Molesey Residents Association has been dominant.

It now holds all nine of our borough council seats and both county council seats. And those councillors have become accustomed to large majorities and the certainty of re-election.

Democracy

Our view is that local democracy is best served when there are strong competing voices, and politicians are kept on their toes in the knowledge that if they don't perform they could be turned out by the voters next time.

So we are hoping to shake things up politically and introduce some long overdue healthy competition here in Molesey.

We know we face a long and sustained effort to convince a majority of people that we are serious about improving Molesey and worthy of the chance.

It will take deeds as well as words to persuade people but the work begins here! We'd love you to join us and to hear your ideas.

Thanks for reading!

Elmbridge in safe hands

MOLESEY residents can rely on the Conservative-led borough council to meet the tough economic challenges of the day while protecting services.

That was the message from Councillor John O'Reilly, leader of the majority Conservative group at Elmbridge, in an interview with the Molesey News.

Cllr O'Reilly, pictured right, said that although his party has no council seats in Molesey it doesn't mean it is not working hard locally and at Esher Civic Centre to maintain and improve the quality of life here.

One way it is helping is by keeping your council tax bills low so that you have more spending power and more choice. This is all the more important at the moment when household incomes are being squeezed from all sides.

Conservatives have frozen the Elmbridge portion of council tax in four out of the five years that they have run the council. At the same time they have achieved £5million savings - the vast majority of it by cutting waste and improving efficiency.

Cllr O'Reilly said: "People can compare our record to the previous five years when the Residents groups were in charge at Esher and the council tax went up 40%. There was no real focus on saving money or getting value. There was no clear direction or imagination.

"My team is focused on efficiency, maintaining quality services, and keeping taxes low, as times are tough for families at the moment."

Cllr O'Reilly is proud of the non-statutory provision of meals on wheels for elderly residents of Molesey, where the charges have been frozen despite the rising cost of food.

And for the council's "strong support" of the



Molesey Centre in School Road.

He also reassured Molesey residents that there are no plans to close Vine Hall or Mole Hall as opponents have suggested. "We looked into the possibility of the community helping to run these halls to save the ratepayer some money," said Cllr O'Reilly.

"In the end we couldn't agree terms. The proof of the pudding is that two years after all the accusations and rumours the halls are still open."

Regarding the controversial plans by Surrey County Council to introduce on street parking meters in Molesey and elsewhere, Cllr O'Reilly said the county has accepted recommendations that the first half hour of parking should be free.

He said: "Nobody likes to pay but if you can park somewhere all day then how will this help shops? What they need is a churn of customers."

One thing he believes will be good for business, and for Molesey generally, is the Olympics and the "huge influx" of people that the games will bring to town.

"There will be three cycling races passing through the town and I hope that will be very attractive to our shops, and of course I hope residents will enjoy the spectacle," Cllr O'Reilly said.

The council will be providing funds for the Olympics in Elmbridge and particularly for local legacy projects.

So if you have ideas of how the money should be spent please contact us via the email address above.

Or if you want to comment on anything you've read in this article go to our website.

<http://themoleseynews.blogspot.com/>

A word from Dominic Raab...

Living up the road in Thames Ditton, it has been a great pleasure getting to know Molesey over the past year or so, as your MP.

I have visited local businesses from West Molesey Trading Estate to high-tech firms like Chelsea Technologies, who designed the sensors used to help clean up the BP oil slick in the Gulf of Mexico.

I have got to know some of our great head teachers, from Rosalita Edwards' Nursery to Hurst Park School, and many other schools.

I have been down to hear from doctors at Glenlynn Practice and Friends of Molesey Hospital.

Community spirit

Whether it is speaking at the Women's Institute or enjoying the barbecue at the Mid-Summer Magic party at Hurst Park, I'm always impressed with the strong community spirit we have here.

The government is determined to cut the deficit, to maintain economic confidence but also to avoid burdening high levels of debt and taxes on our children in the future.

That involves tough decisions now. But, it also means it is important that the community hears



■ Dominic is put through his paces at the Rosalita Edwards Nursery

from and informs its local MP. It is important that we ensure the future of Molesey library.

The closure of Molesey police station reflected the changes in the way local policing is organised by Surrey Police. It is important that we retain a local police hub, but even more vital to strengthen the visible policing presence in Molesey.

Above all, I am committed to en-

suring Molesey has a strong voice in Westminster.

Since April 2010, I have held three public - town hall - events in Molesey. I am holding another on September 9th, 7.30pm, at St Mary's Church Hall in Bell Road, East Molesey.

Thank you to all those who have come along in the past. Whatever your political views, I want to hear from you.

Big support for Molesey Library

ONE hundred local residents have said they are willing to help run Molesey Library.

Surrey County Council wants to save staff costs by turning the service over to the community, but will continue to maintain the building and equipment, including books.

A steering group of residents has been formed to respond to the council's proposals, and it is expected that a management team will be set-up later in the process.

James Moore and Peter Ellis, both Molesey locals, have taken up posts as co-chairmen of the steering group. Two secretaries and a treasurer have also been appointed.

Mr Moore told *The Molesey News*: "We have seen a draft of heads of terms - what the council will provide and how they will do it. We have sent our questions back with things we want to clarify."

He said a timeframe for the handover is not clear, but the group must give its response to the proposals by October.

We will keep you posted on what happens with the library.

Boatman legal fight costs council £90k

One issue which was raised a lot on the doorstep during this year's election was the future of the 'Jolly Boatman' site opposite Hampton Court Palace.

This site in Hampton Court Way has long been a dumping ground for litter and other rubbish, and offers a poor impression of Molesey to the thousands of tourists who pass through every year on their way to the palace.

A desire to get the area cleaned-up was one of the reasons why Elmbridge councillors granted planning permission for a controversial 46-bedroom hotel at the site in late 2008.

The scheme by developers, Gladedale and Network Rail, also proposed to rebuild the dilapidated Hampton Court Railway Station and construct homes and retail units on land surrounding it - in addition to a care home for Royal Star & Garter ex-servicemen.

Falklands war veteran Simon Weston addressed councillors at the Esher Civic Centre in support of the application.

However, nearly three years on, building has yet to start due to a protracted legal battle launched by Keith Garner, a former Hampton Court consultant architect.

The law will not allow him to appeal the planning permission itself, only the council's decision making process, or in other words whether the council followed proper procedure.

So far the High Court and the Court of Appeal have ruled in the council's favour - but as Mr Garner has been granted a protected costs order, he is only ever liable for £8,000 of the council's costs - leaving taxpayers to foot the rest of the bill.

Due to the lengthy delay the Royal Star & Garter has withdrawn from the scheme and council leader John O'Reilly revealed in July that the borough has spent £90,000 defend-



■ Steve Bax visits the litter-strewn Boatman site during the local election campaign in April.

ing itself in court. What's more the bill could extend to six figures if Mr Garner is allowed to take his appeal to the Supreme Court.

Calling the situation an "absolute disgrace", Cllr O'Reilly said: "This is literally money going from residents into lawyers' pockets."

He added: "I respect the views of people who don't like the scheme. The council could have thrown it out but we thought it would have been beneficial. This is something that honest men and women can agree or disagree on."

Molesey Conservatives want to see the Boatman site cleaned-up and believe development could be a positive way to achieve this.

But we share the concerns of many of our fellow Molesey residents about the scale of the current scheme, as well as where hotel visitors will park and the impact on traffic.

We also recognise that the issue has cost the Conservatives support in Molesey and it will be difficult to win back trust.

Our view is that the best way to ensure good outcomes for Molesey in future is by electing Molesey residents as Conservative councillors to make our case effectively and to influence the majority group at Esher from within.

At our suggestion Cllr O'Reilly has offered to meet with the residents-led Hampton Court Rescue Campaign to find areas of agreement and establish a positive way forward.

Your views matter to us. Tell us what you think at <http://themoleseynews.blogspot.com>

"This is something that honest men and women can agree or disagree on."
- Cllr John O'Reilly

COMMUNITY NEWS

ATTENTION clubs, societies, community groups, schools, fundraisers etc. Send us your news and we will feature as much of it as possible in our upcoming newsletters. Email moleseysteve@gmail.com.

MOLESEY beat bobby PC Ian Madelin is urging residents to take steps to beat bike thieves.

There has been a spate of thefts in Molesey, Thames Ditton, Kingston and Surbiton, and while police have had some success catching the culprits, prevention is better than cure.

Bike owners can register their property at www.immobilise.com or www.bikeregister.com and should photograph it and write a description, so it can be reported accurately if stolen.

PC Madelin will hold a panel meeting at Mole Hall off Bishop Fox Way, West Molesey, on Wednesday September 7, 8:15pm, and at St Mary's Church Hall in Bell Road, East Molesey on Tuesday September 20, 7.30pm.

ELMBRIDGE Mayor John Sheldon has opened 30 new social homes in West Molesey.

The development in Faraday Road consists of six three-bedroom houses and 24 one and two-bed flats - built by Paragon Housing and Richmond Churches Housing Trust.

Each house is equipped with a 'photovoltaic panel' to generate electricity from the sun.

Councillor James Browne, the Elmbridge cabinet member for housing, said: "The build quality is superb - in my view easily matching private sector standards. The provision of three bedroom houses is particularly welcome as statistically if you are looking for anything larger than two bedrooms to rent you will be waiting longer than others."

HENRIETTA Playgroup in Walton Road has new managers.

Kim Woodrow and Nicky Hutchings from West Molesey have taken over the reins from Anne Ryder, who retired in July after 13 years. The group provides play sessions for pre-school toddlers on weekdays, and has spaces for the new term which starts on September 5.

Call 020 8487 0061.

MOLESEY Conservative Club at 96 Walton Road is looking for new members.

It costs £20 to join for a year and members enjoy a subsidised bar and live entertainments on every Saturday.

Police to stay in Molesey



SURREY Police has given an assurance that officers will continue to have a base here despite the closure of the police station in East Molesey.

At present there are four PCs, five PCSOs, a sergeant and a neighbourhood team co-ordinator working out of Molesey Police Station and serving the communities of East and West Molesey, Western green, The Dittons and Hinchley Wood.

But later this year they will be transferring to the Elmbridge Borough Council offices in Esher, as part of Surrey Police's strategy of closing lesser used stations to fund 200 new front-line officers.

The building is already closed to the public, with the front counter having shut in March.

Elmbridge Neighbourhood Inspector, David Hollingsworth, said the plan is for Molesey of-

ficers to have access to a local police post where they will be able to carry out paperwork and have their meal break. This will be in a "shared facility with a local partner".

He added: "The re-location of Molesey officers in suitable new premises is still a work in progress.

We are negotiating a potential alternative at present, but as we are still at the agreeing stage it is too early to provide details.

"I can say it is in East Molesey and it is a suitable alternative."

Conservatives support Surrey Police in its goal of freeing up money for frontline officers. We think it is vital that officers continue to have a base in Molesey and be accessible to the public.

We would like to see the station put to positive use after the police move out, possibly as an extension to the Orchard School.

No cricket club expansion without public support

PLANS by East Molesey Cricket Club (EMCC) to create a pitch and outfield at Hurst Meadows have attracted opposition from residents.

The club is seeking to expand and had asked Elmbridge Council for a 30-year lease on the land next to its club, which is currently home to wild grasses and flowers, and is popular with park users, dog walkers and of course the local wildlife.

Conservative councillor Jan Fuller, the cabinet member responsible for leisure, said a public consultation had taken place and she promised to reject the application if it is not supported by a "clear majority".

Cllr Fuller, *pictured above*, said: "Molesey Cricket Club is very successful and wants to expand, in particular for youth teams. Supported by Surrey Cricket club they

have asked to create this new pitch. I have had on site discussions with them and the Molesey ward councillors.

"It is the role of Leisure to promote sport in the Borough but not to the detriment of other leisure us-



ers. I have made it clear that I will not agree to the scheme unless I get a clear majority approval and even then I would want some environmental checks."

Campaigners have been making the case for protecting the meadow via the website [www.hurstm-](http://www.hurstmeadows.org.uk)

[eadows.org.uk](http://www.hurstmeadows.org.uk) where supporters are encouraged to download and display a poster.

EMCC has said it is now looking at other mowed areas which might provide an alternative.

Molesey councillor Alan Hopkins said vacant leisure ground at the Pavillion Club might be suitable.

We appreciate your feedback...

Your name:

Your address:

Your email address:

What do you think of this newsletter? How can the Conservatives make themselves more electable in Molesey?

Please tick if you would be willing to help deliver newsletters.

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