

PUBLIC MEETING

Your MP Dominic Raab will be at St Mary's Church Hall, East Molesey on Weds February 18th, 7.30pm to give an update on his work on your behalf and to take your questions. All welcome

The Molesey News

Issue 16

Editor: Steve Bax | Email: MoleseySteve@gmail.com | Web: www.moleseyconservatives.com | Twitter: @MoleseySteve

STEVE SAYS:



Hello and welcome to the first Molesey News of 2015. I am Councillor Steve Bax and I edit this newsletter on behalf of the Molesey Conservative Residents political group.

I hope your year is off to a good start. 2015 promises to be significant and memorable.

June 15th will mark 800 years since the sealing of the Magna Carta by King John in our neighbouring borough Runnymede, which gave rise to the rule of law, personal freedoms and the modern parliamentary democracy we enjoy today.

Speaking of which, it won't have escaped your notice that there is a General Election in May - the closest and least predictable for a generation.

Molesey's MP Dominic Raab is holding a public meeting here on February 18th (details above this column) where you can find out about his record and future priorities.

And the MCR will also be unveiling our excellent Borough election candidates in the coming weeks.

Democracy

Over at the Council, in addition to helping residents with planning issues, I have been progressing my plans for flood wardens in Molesey and looking into the issue of over-fishing in our rivers. Many of my other activities are details elsewhere in this newsletter.

With the announcement by the Boundary Commission that the council is reducing in size I will be fighting Molesey's corner as new ward boundaries are drawn up. As ever I welcome your views.

Radical plans for Radnor

Three storeys of affordable homes to replace Radnor and Sandra Houses

SOcial housing provider Paragon has unveiled plans for a comprehensive redevelopment of the Radnor House and Sandra House sites in Hansler Grove, East Molesey.

It intends to build a trio of three-storey blocks of affordable housing for families to help meet a demand in Molesey and the borough.

But in doing so it must knock down not only Radnor House - a former elderly person's home, now laying empty - and the adjacent old Molesey day centre, it will also demolish Sandra House which is still in use and home to key workers and their families.

Paragon displayed its plans at an open evening at Radnor House in December and invited residents to give their feedback.

Molesey councillor Steve Bax attended a meeting with Paragon's business director Chris Whelan in the Autumn to discuss the proposals which were then in an earlier stage.

Steve raised concerns about height and mass of the proposed buildings and also about the ill-advised decision to make a road access in the narrow and heavily congested School Road.

He had further discussions with Elmbridge's Cabinet member for Housing, Councillor James Browne, who assured the small number of temporary housing units at the site



will be for families made suddenly homeless - not 'neighbour from hell' types which was the Molesey Conservative Residents' concern - who Elmbridge Borough Council has a duty to house.

Currently when these cases occur they are put up in bed and breakfast in the London Borough of Hounslow at cost to our taxpayers.

Councillor Browne admitted that Elmbridge is "under pressure to meet housing targets" and is unable to compete with the deep pockets of private developers in buying new land for affordable homes. So it has

to make the most of sites that are owned by EBC and Paragon such as this one.

With things having gone a 'little too quiet' recently, Steve got in touch with Paragon on February 12.

Mr Whelan, the director, revealed that a planning application would be submitted for the scheme in around April this year.

Until then the plans are being revised in response to residents' feedback from the consultation.

Mr Whelan said: "We are looking at the mass to see if we can reduce



the impact, and are generally trying to see if there are things we can improve following the consultation."

Paragon will revisit the School Road entry idea with Surrey County Council and has promised to assist Sandra House residents in finding alternative accommodation.

Both sites will be demolished and built at the same time as one another for reasons of cost and to avoid unnecessary disruption.

Email us if you are concerned.

THERE could be trouble ahead for people who rely on some of Surrey's 200 bus services. The county council says it can't keep up with rising operating costs and is looking at all options to reduce the £19million it currently spends per year on local transport.

Concessionary bus fares and subsidies for less profitable routes are in the firing line. Some 29.2m bus journeys are made in Surrey and over half of these are taxpayer subsidised.

New bridge needed



AFTER 120 years of service the Victorian bridge over the River Mole at Esher Road is 'nearing the end of its working life' and must be shortly replaced.

If given the go ahead by borough and county councillors this month, Surrey officers will draw up designs, costings and a timescale for the estimated £1million project and construction could start in 2017.

Clearly the demolition of this well used but corroded bridge, and the installation of a new one, will cause massive disruption as traffic is redirected via Hampton Court Way.

The MCR is seeking to impress on the County the need to minimise the impact on road users, however we are optimistic that a new bridge

will bring desirable and needed improvements to the road layout.

Cllr Steve Bax said: "Residents have repeatedly raised safety issues about excess speeding, the lack of a crossing and the narrow footpath on the east side that is well used by Orchard School children.

"In the council chamber last year I suggested we ought to look into extending the footpath on the west side from Alders Grove to Walton Road to reduce the need to cross. Happily I'm told that the new bridge can accommodate this and create a wider road and pavements.

"We must also seize the opportunity to improve the dangerous access/exit to Molemer Road, which has long been a problem."

NANCY TRIBUTE



MOLESEY Conservatives would like to pay tribute to one of our long standing members, Nancy Scott who died in November aged 86.

Nancy was a great friend and supporter of the party together with her late husband Ray.

She lived in Cherry Orchard Road, West Molesey, and had a well deserved reputation as a tireless supporter of good causes, among them the lifeboats and Molesey Hospital.

Ken Kingham recalled how when visiting her he "nearly always ended up with a job" adding she was so "active and persuasive".

Former MP Ian Taylor called her a "friend and a stalwart contributor to life in Molesey".

Her memorial service was held at St Peter's Church in West Molesey on January 24th.

Legal matter?

Talk to The Professionals



- Wills & Powers of Attorney
- Conveyancing
- Company Commercial
- Family & Matrimonial
- Disputes
- Probate
- Employment



KWW Solicitors 70 Walton Road East Molesey
020 8979 1131
www.kww.co.uk

Like candy floss and brass bands? Come and see us at Magical Molesey on December 3rd!

This newsletter is sponsored by



Dish, 3 Bridge Road, East Molesey, KT8 9EU. Tel: 020 8941 1095.
We are open from 6am Monday to Sunday so join us for breakfast

Dozen fewer councillors from 2016

THE Boundary Commission has announced that the number of Elmbridge borough councillors will be reduced from the current 60 down to 48.

The change will take effect at the local elections in May 2016 and over the course of this year the Commission will take soundings from parties and the public and draw up 16 new wards of roughly equal size.

The Molesey Conservative Residents will be making the case for Molesey to retain its unique identity under any new arrangement and will resist moves for our town to be amalgamated with others electorally.

However the best chance of avoiding a messy partition would have

been for Elmbridge Council to have embraced 'full council' elections, where all 48 councillors would be appointed every four years.

This system would have allowed the flexibility for wards of varying sizes and councillor numbers, and could have preserved the boundaries that currently exist.

Councillor Steve Bax voted in favour of a motion to switch to all-out elections in November, but opposition councillors including a majority of the Molesey Residents Association chose to retain the current annual elections, despite the risks to Molesey's cohesion.

Those same councillors are also

vehemently opposed to a reduction in the number of councillors, even though it is in the taxpayer interest and will save much needed money that is currently being spent on councillor pay, allowances, training and equipment.

They wrote to the Boundary Commission to argue that the Council could not function adequately with less politicians, even though

Surrey County Council with its vast geography somehow manages on just 81 councillors.

Turkeys seldom vote for Christmas

is the saying which comes to mind.

The MCR welcomes the reduction. We believe a leaner council is in taxpayer interest and long overdue.

Since 1976 when the 60-strong council was formed the Borough Authority has relinquished control over highways to Surrey, contracted out refuse collection and transferred its housing stock to a social landlord.

Officer headcount has reduced accordingly and belts have been tightened across all departments. It cannot be right, as the MRA seems to think, for councillors to be immune from the need to make savings.

To have a say on where the new boundary lines should be go to <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

"A leaner council is in the taxpayer interest and overdue"

Heathrow to attend noise public meeting in Molesey



RESIDENTS who were subjected to weeks of disruption during the airspace trials over Molesey last year have a chance to 'turn the tables' and have Heathrow listen to them.

MP Dominic Raab and Molesey councillor Steve Bax have arranged for a delegation from the Airport and the Civil Aviation Authority to come to East Molesey and address a public meeting.

It will be at St Mary's Church Hall in Bell Road, 6.45pm on Thursday 5th March, and will be an opportunity for residents to hear about future plans and to ask questions.

Stuart Lindsey, Head of Airspace Regulation at the CAA, will give an update on future airspace strategy, and Heathrow's director of sustainability, Matt Gorman, will also speak.

Steve Bax said: "People in Molesey expect some aircraft noise but

what we saw and experienced last Autumn was way in excess of our normal levels of disruption.

"I had many emails and calls from constituents who were being driven to distraction and wanted to know what was going on.

"Dominic and I got on the case, distributing a flyer and holding a public meeting. We met with Heathrow director Nigel Milton and his team up at the House of Commons and obtained a pledge that the airspace trials would be ended two months earlier than planned, in November."

Though this happened an unusually long period of easterly prevailing winds resulted in more flights over Molesey in mid-November and the noise levels again spiked.

Steve added: "Heathrow explained that it - in common with airports across Europe - are moving to a new system of guiding planes via satellite navigation technology rather than tracking beacons on the ground. This has potential to increase capacity but also to reduce noise as planes can be made to ascend or descend more dramatically.

"I wanted to get the Airport to come to Molesey and explain its plans and get a sense of the feeling on the ground here. I'm glad they have agreed to attend."

Missing barrier is risk to safety



MOLESEY Conservatives have secured an important victory for public safety locally.

Thanks to pressure from MCR branch secretary Terence Alexander and Councillor Steve Bax (pictured), Surrey County Council has agreed to replace the broken barrier by the war memorial in East Molesey.

Presently around 50m of barrier is missing and cars are regularly parking across the pavement area, with pedestrians as well as mums with buggies being forced into the road.

Despite this being an obvious accident waiting to happen, there appeared to be little urgency from the authorities to do anything about it. Surrey tried to pass the buck to Elmbridge and vice versa.

Terence, who lives along the riverside in East Molesey, refused to let the matter drop and enlisted the help of Steve.

Eventually Elmbridge officers uncovered years-old documentary proof that the area had been designated as highway land in 1887 and that Surrey was liable for repairs.

Steve has since had confirmation that the County is obtaining quotes from contractors with a view to replacing 50m of fence line by April or May this year.

Steve said: "The safety of our residents and children and that of visitors to the riverside cannot be overstated. I am pleased the County has decided to act, and not a moment too soon! All credit is due to Terence for his perseverance."

Jolly Boatman has new owners

A HEDGEFUND consortium has bought up Gladedale, the developer which owns the Jolly Boatman site next to Hampton Court Station, for £175million.

Elmbridge Council is waiting to hear if the new owners wish to exploit the costly existing planning permission for a hotel, retail, flats and a underground car park or come up with a new scheme.

Molesey councillor Steve Bax met with Elmbridge officers to request a new planning brief to restrict unacceptable or overbearing development at the Boatman.

Unfortunately officers say this would not work as the existing planning permission would override. We will continue to argue for any development at the JB to be proportionate and sensitive.



MEZZET

LEBANESE RESTAURANT

"WE BELIEVE IN FRIENDSHIP AND TASTY FOOD"



The finest Lebanese cuisine in Molesey. Have you tried it yet?

43 Bridge Road, East Molesey
Reservations: 020 8979 4088

FREE glass of house wine with your meal when you show this advert.



Police boss scraps tax hike plan

SURREY'S police commissioner wrote to councillors before Christmas to say he was giving thought to a 24% hike in the police precept of the council tax.

Kevin Hurley's plans would have added about £50 a year to the average Molesey household's bill. Under government rules he would also have had to hold and win a referendum (at a cost of £1m) before implementing so high a rise.

Steve Bax discussed the matter at length with the Mr Hurley (pictured), and while sympathetic to the budget pressures Surrey Police faces, urged him to find alternatives. Mr Hurley carried out further consultations, and as *The Molesey News* was going to press, announced he was abandoning the proposals 'for now' and would seek a more modest 1.99% rise instead.

In his latest letter, he writes: "Having surveyed and spoken to thousands of people over the last few months, it is clear that, whilst there is a consistent level of support from around a third of residents for paying a significantly bigger amount towards policing in their council tax, the majority view remains against



that decision."

The Commissioner argues that Surrey has been underfunded by the National Funding Formula to the tune of millions of pounds a year, and this had been compounded by austerity.

Staff makes up 85% of the force's £207million budget with the rest spent on IT, infrastructure, vehicles and essential supplies.

Mr Hurley claims up to 400 police posts could be lost if he cannot plug a £22million budget hole.

Steve has raised the matter with MP Dominic Raab who is continuing to lobby the Government for fairer funding for Surrey.

COMMUNITY NEWS

POLICE are warning parents to be vigilant after two recent incidents of a suspicious man approaching children.

On January 3rd a man in his 60s driving a silver or gray car offered a lift to a boy walking his dog in Ember Lane. Then on January 30th a similar incident occurred in Raphael Drive, Thames Ditton.

Police want anyone with information to call 101 and quote reference 45150008443.

HEAD to St Alban's Primary School in Beauchamp Road from April 2-7 for the Molesey Art Society Spring Exhibition. Many of the group's 250 members will be showcasing their creative talents with artwork available to buy. See www.moleseyartsociety.co.uk

MOLESEY Library will host a talk by Elizabeth Proudman, chair of the Jane Austen Society, on Tuesday April 28th, 7.30pm.

She will be a guest of the Friends of Molesey Library, who have a full line-up of guest author events this year.

On February 28th novelist Robert Irvine will be at the library to talk about his murder mystery, *A Row of Beans*.

Tickets to both events are available from the library at £5.

FRIENDS and family of PC Andrew Duncan from Molesey will be taking part in the Hampton Court Half Marathon on February 22nd.

They will be raising money for a memorial fund set up in memory of Andrew, who was killed in the line of duty by a hit and run driver in 2013.

His sister Julia Williamson has appealed for readers to sponsor the 13-strong team at <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/runtorememberandrew>

FAULTY traffic lights across the river in Hampton Court Road was responsible for the gridlock in Molesey in late January.

Transport for London (TfL) engineers blamed a broken and corroded part for lights failing near to the Esso garage, which backed traffic up the entire length of Hampton Court Way, as well as in Hurst Road, Walton Road and Esher Road.

HURST Park School in West Molesey was forced to close on its first day back after Christmas due to problems with the heating.

The next day two year groups had to be bused to Cranmere School in Esher while workmen tackled a broken pipe and electrical issues.

Work is now underway on the new school building at the former John Nightingale site in Hurst Road which will house 420 pupils and 30 nursery children.

HAMPTON Court Palace is celebrating 500 years since Cardinal Wolsey commissioned builders to lay its foundations.

Its rich history will be brought to life by Aardman Productions, who are creating a five minute film starring 5,000 young people and families. There will be a wine fountain at Easter to toast the Palace, and two large garden parties in the summer.