

The Molesey News

CYCLE RACE
 Don't forget Hurst Road will be closed on Sunday August 10th for the Ride London-Surrey cycling race. Around 20,000 cyclists will pass through Molesey.

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Thank you, now it's full speed ahead!

Hello and welcome to this summer edition of *The Molesey News*. I am Councillor Steve Bax and I edit this newsletter on behalf of the Molesey Conservative Residents.

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who voted in the elections on May 22nd and particularly to those who supported our local MCR candidates.

In Molesey East voters paid me the most amazing compliment of electing me as their Elmbridge borough councillor! I feel thrilled, humbled and more than a little relieved to have won at last.

After three years of hard work and setbacks along the way, perseverance paid off and I could not be more grateful for this wonderful opportunity to serve.

Rest assured I will not be resting on my laurels but will be working hard to represent all my ward constituents, and of course to deliver on my manifesto.

These last few weeks have been a blur of meetings and learning how Elmbridge Borough Council works.

I successfully lobbied for appointment to the North Area Planning committee and Surrey County Council's Elmbridge Local Committee which means I have a say (on your behalf) on local



planning matters and roads.

I voted in June to bring forward the resurfacing of Palace Road to September, and arranged for the bushes blocking the pavement in Kent Road to be pruned.

I've managed to get the council to agree to empty the tetrapack recycling bin at the Walton Road

car park more frequently, and to switch off the lights in that car park's toilets after hours that are currently wasting taxpayer money.

I will continue to push for a leaner and more accountable regime at Elmbridge, with a focus on value for money and responsible spending (see our article on Surrey

County Council overleaf for an example of the opposite in action!).

And I will of course continue to produce this newsletter to keep you informed of local issues.

The elections were very positive for the Molesey Conservative Residents.

In Molesey North our hardworking candidate Grahame Throm-Jones canvassed a record number of homes and raised several important local issues.

He successfully reduced the entrenched Molesey Residents Association vote by 8%, while in South ward our candidate Christian Mahne made a similarly strong showing and improved the MCR share of the votes by 10%.

Both Christian and Grahame are pictured right, under the results column.

For years our elections in Molesey have been a one horse race, which has been unhealthy for democracy. We're glad that things appear to be changing.

Conservatives now have 32 seats (1 gain), residents associations have 21, Liberal Democrats' six and there is one independent.

ELECTION RESULTS

MOLESEY EAST

Steve Bax, Molesey Conservative Residents: 953 (elected)
 Tony Popham, Molesey Residents Association: 835
 T. Marshall, UKIP: 125
 M. Doran, Labour: 121
 P. Nagle, Lib Dem: 71
Turnout: 42.9%

MOLESEY NORTH

Stuart Selleck, Molesey RA: 1105 (elected)
Grahame Throm-Jones, Molesey Conservative: 364
 P. Wheatley, UKIP: 247
 R. Kelly, Labour: 111
 A. Sturgis, Lib Dem: 70
 Monkey the Drummer, Looney Party: 22
Turnout: 40.6%

MOLESEY SOUTH

Ruby Ahmed, Molesey RA: 1157 (elected)
Christian Mahne, Molesey Conservative Residents: 364
 J. Ajjane, Labour: 256
Turnout: 34.2%



News in Brief

■ **CRIMINALS** used the hoardings around the Jolly Boatman site at Hampton Court as cover for illegal flytipping.

They replaced the lock with one of their own and began delivering truck loads of waste (pictured) until residents rumbled the scam and called the police.

Elmbridge Council asked site owners Gladedale to clear up the mess and it has since been re-sealed. Lloyds Bank is understood to be selling Gladedale which is why no development has taken place at the site to date.

■ **PLANS** have been drawn up for a mix of houses and flats to replace Radnor House and the former Molesey Centre in East Molesey.

Paragon, the council's social housing partner, is to hold a public consultation in September with a



decision on whether to grant planning to be made later this year.

The council assured the MCR it is "highly unlikely" that Radnor House will be used as a homeless again shelter this winter.

■ **A NEW bridge linking Green Lane to Nielson's Field is a step closer following a meeting in July.** Elmbridge's Conservative Cabinet discussed several replacement options for the rusty 1930s steel bridge which was closed last year on health and safety grounds.

The work will take 15 weeks and complete by around April 2015.

Good news for good causes

MOLESEY Boat Club is set to be one of the first beneficiaries of a new pot of money which is now available to local good causes.

Community Infrastructure Levy, or CIL as it's known for short, is a tax on developers building here, and a way of them contributing to local infrastructure.

Most of the money is retained by the council to be spent strategically, but 25% is available for Molesey's nine borough and two county councillors to allocate.

We are currently seeking applications from local groups and projects for a share of the £81,000 currently in the pot, which is the largest in Elmbridge by some way.

Councillors have provisionally agreed to allocate £40,000 to the Boat Club to help it build an indoor rowing centre. Pictured right are Mayor Barry Fairbank and Councillor Steve Bax at the ground breaking ceremony on June 15th.

Bill Raspin, Chairman of the Boat Club, said: "The rowing tank will be available for the whole community to use and will enable us to provide a safe and stable environment for both able bodied and disabled people including schools and clubs to try out rowing and gain confidence before going onto the water."

Elmbridge has been without a rowing tank since the old one was demolished in 2004 to make way for



Xcel Leisure Centre.

This replacement will cost close to £300k with most of the money coming from fundraising and donations. It will be built on land in Graburn Way, East Molesey, which is being leased from Elmbridge Council. In return the club is paying £6,000 towards a new play park (see article overleaf).

A separate bid from the Thames Landscape Strategy to enhance the entrance to Hurst Park from Barge Walk has been received for £5,700.

The Council charges developers £125 per square metre, and £100 psm for a retail development. Elm-

bridge is leading the way as the first local authority to charge CIL, which is a more local version of the previous Section 106 charges.

To bid for CIL funding or for more information, go to www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning

ELMBRIDGE is planning four years of events to mark the centenary of the First World War. The first project was a community poppy campaign where the council gave away 100 free packets of poppy seeds to sow in flowerbeds around the borough. The Green Spaces Team will be sowing additional poppy seeds adjacent to the highway.

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'We are seeking applications from local groups and projects'

Elmbridge Council's 2020 vision

ELMBRIDGE Council has set an ambitious goal of becoming 'self-funding' and free from its dependence on the ever shrinking Government maintenance grant within six years.

Tim Oliver, Cabinet member for Resources in the borough's Conservative administration, is driving forward a strategy of property investments that will give the borough a stable income in the near future.

He told *The Molesey News* that the grant Elmbridge receives from Central Government to run services has diminished by 50% in the last four years, and will continue to go down. The council has successfully reduced its spending by £8million since the current administration took office in 2006, without impacting frontline services. But making efficiencies is only part of the solution and the council also needs to find new sources of income.

Cllr Oliver (pictured) said: "We have set the goal of financial independence from the Government grant by 2020. All local authorities want to be in that position but for most it is not realistic. Elmbridge is one of the few councils where that



is achievable, because of the decisions we've taken."

Elmbridge receives a 'New Homes Bonus' stream of money from the Government, which the council has used to build its reserves by around three to four million each year.

Cllr Oliver added: "This has al-

"Elmbridge has the ability and resources to be a top borough"

lowed us to invest around £13million so far in 'local assets', for example we purchased a row of shops in Cobham. Our investment crite-

ria is that it has to be in the borough and make a minimum annual return for the taxpayer of 6%."

As Resources portfolio holder Cllr

Oliver oversees Elmbridge's legal department, IT, finances and asset management. He is married to Debi, a GP, and has three children.

Though now a borough councillor for Esher, he was formerly East Molesey's county councillor from 2005 until 2009.

Cllr Oliver, 54, brings a wealth of experience from the world of business to the council. In 2000, the year he was first elected, he launched his legal services company, Prabis, and grew it from a turnover of £2million to just under £200million this year. It employs 2,500 people.

Whilst doing that Cllr Oliver was also chairman of the Shooting Star Children's Hospice for a number of years and oversaw its merger with Chase in Guildford.

He is now deputy chairman of his company, a less hands-on role which allows him more time to spend on council work.

Cllr Oliver said: "Local government isn't just about emptying the wheelie bins. Elmbridge can be a top borough to live in. We've got the environment and the quality of life and it's up to the council to see how we can add to that."

Cricket comes to Molesey Hurst



CRICKET pitches have been 'reintroduced' to Molesey Hurst Recreation Ground to replace those that were lost years ago.

A square of seven turf strips and one artificial strip were installed at the rec behind Hurst Pool in June by Elmbridge Borough Council.

The grass wickets will be ready in 2015 once the fine turf has fully established itself, but the artificial strip is already in use (pictured are the East Molesey Cricket Club Colts training on it with Councillor Barry Fairbank, the Mayor of Elmbridge).

The Council says the artificial strip provides "realistic bounce and spin, enabling youth cricket to be played in all weathers".

It should come in handy for East Molesey Cricket Club

which has been seeking new facilities for its Colts aged 5-17, and wishes to expand girls and disabled cricket provision.

It can also be hired by non clubs for £25.

Molesey Conservatives often hear it said on doorsteps that there is not enough for young people to do in Molesey so we welcome the new facilities.

The £28,150 price tag sounded surprisingly high to us, but on comparing prices online we discovered a new cricket strip can be anything from £3,000 to £7,000 with install and ground preparation! Nothing is cheap these days it seems.

Note: The Council is laying on FREE 'Play Day' activities for children and parents at Molesey Hurst on Weds. August 6th.

But County Council pay hikes are just not cricket!

TAXPAYERS were bowled over, but not in a good way, after Surrey County Councillors awarded themselves inflation-busting pay rises in May.

Council Leader David Hodge was given a whopping £16k increase to take his yearly allowance to £55,418, and his deputy's pay went up to £43,668. There were also rises for Conservative Cabinet members and backbenchers, following the vote at County Hall in Kingston (pictured), which was carried by 46 to 24.

Not surprisingly, there was a huge public outcry, and the council's own Independent Remuneration Panel, whose recommendations for more modest rises had been ignored by the Administration, resigned in protest.

As *The Molesey News* was going to press the news came through that Cty Cllr Hodge and Deputy Leader Peter Martin had bowed to public pressure and decided to accept only the lower rises put forward by the remuneration panel.

The Molesey Conservative Residents (MCR) welcome this belated climbdown, which while not entirely satisfactory, is a start. In our view, the spectacle of county councillors apparently with their 'snouts in the public trough' is outrageous and indefensible.

Worse still the County is meant to be saving £72million this year through cuts and efficiency drives,



and has raised Council Tax for its residents for three years running.

We supported a unanimous motion of the Esher & Walton Conservative Association in June to condemn the decision, and authorise a letter of censure to Cty Cllr Hodge.

He defended the rises saying "adequate remuneration" was needed to encourage younger people and those of modest means to seek election to the County Council, whose meetings are held in the working day.

There has however been growing uneasiness about excessive pay at County Hall. Surrey's chief executive is currently paid a quarter of a million pounds, and is surrounded by seven managers - all of whom earn more running a council than MPs receive for governing a nation.

The MCR is concerned if county councillors are also seeking to climb aboard this gravy train. Our public servants should not be using their proximity to tax receipts to reward themselves disproportionately.

New riverside children's play park

MOLESEY councillor Steve Bax recently had a chance to inspect plans for a new children's play park in East Molesey.

The play area, which will include a trim trail and various climbing frames, will be created on existing grass land at Barge Walk off Graburn Way, and adjacent to Molesey Boat Club.

It will be a replacement for the very basic existing children's park which is being removed to make way for the boat club's proposed indoor rowing tank.

The new equipment and install is expected to cost £60,000 with 10% of the money coming from the boat



club. Elmbridge placed the order in June and is hopeful of the facilities being open during the summer school holidays.

There will be a chain link fence and picnic benches. While an existing shelter is being removed.

COMMUNITY NEWS

POLICE used their new dispersal powers in West Molesey on three occasions between April and June.

Action was taken against a group of boys at Grovelands Rec for 'intimidating people and kicking a ball towards parked cars', and a mixed group at the Rec for being 'loud and abusive'.

This is being followed up with a letter to parents.

WELL done to Reverend Paul Webb of St Paul's Church, East Molesey who walked the 92 mile Pilgrims Way from Winchester Cathedral in late April.

He made the journey in memory of parishioners who died in the last year and successfully raised £1,200 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

St Paul's Church is currently undergoing repairs to its spire and tower, which cost £35k and was raised by the congregation and community. The work will be completed in September.

THE Prince of Wales pub is to turn its upper floors into nine en-suite hotel rooms.

The pub has been in Bridge Road, East Molesey since 1853, and was given planning permission in June for rooms and air conditioning units.

MOLESEY people who suffered uninsured losses during the winter floods can still apply to Elmbridge Council's Hardship Fund. This is a pot of Government money, topped up by the borough, to help residents, groups and businesses to recover.

EMLBRIDGE Council has a full programme of events to keep kids amused during the school summer holidays.

Its Shout! scheme from July 28th to August 29th offers everything from cycling skills and tennis, arts and crafts, theatre, cooking, and paintballing.

To book a place call 01372 474634 or go to elmbridge.gov.uk/shout

SATURDAY August 13th will be 'Love Your Library' day at Molesey Library.

There will be coffee and cakes, children's storytime and the Mayor of Elmbridge will award certificates to youngsters who complete this year's Summer Reading Challenge.

The library next one 'meet the author' event is on September 30th with Jessica Hepburn, director of the Lyric Theatre. She will speak about her book Pursuit of Motherhood. Tickets are £5 from the library.

DOLLY'S Team Rooms based at Staff's Bar in East Molesey was voted the best restaurant/cafe in 2014's Elmbridge Retailer of the Year awards.

A **HERD** of 15 billy goats are helping to maintain Esher Common the natural way.

They are on loan from Surrey Wildlife Trust and are proving adept at keeping the invasive scrub under control.

'Goat watchers' are needed so if you want to volunteer call the council's countryside team on 01372 474582 to find out more.



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