

The Molesey News

Issue 15

MAGICAL MOLESEY

The fun starts at 5pm on Wednesday December 3rd in Molesey town centre. The Christmas lights will be switched on and there'll be stalls and entertainments. Many shops will open late.

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

STEVE SAYS:



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

It has been an eventful few months since our last edition. As well as speaking up for Molesey at my regular council meetings (which has been a great privilege!) I have also been concerned with a long-running blocked drain issue in East Molesey and the disproportionate noise caused by Heathrow's airspace trial over our town.

I am pleased to report success on both fronts, and I am grateful for the assistance of our MP in helping to bring the airspace trials to an early conclusion. You can read about both matters in this newsletter.

Electoral changes

Looking ahead there is an important vote on November 17th where councillors will decide whether to switch from annual to four-yearly elections in Elmbridge. I encourage you to read the arguments set out overleaf and let me know your views.

I have been finding out about Paragon's plans to replace Radnor House with affordable homes and look forward to the much delayed public consultation on that in November. I am also keen to ensure that the Borough is prepared to respond to any flooding that may occur over the winter months.

Finally, I will be laying a wreath in East Molesey on Remembrance Sunday (2pm) and I hope to see you there.

Relief over aircraft noise!

Heathrow calls early halt to its flight path trials in a victory for 'people power'

HEATHROW Airport has bowed to public pressure and announced an early end to its noisy airspace trials over East Molesey.

These had been due to continue through Christmas until January 26, but will now be concluding on November 12. Afterwards aircraft numbers and noise are expected to return to regular levels.

The level of anxiety caused by the noise disruption was reflected in the number of calls Councillor Steve Bax received from constituents in September. Having contacted Heathrow for the background, he leafleted homes explaining what was happening and how to contact the airport's complaints service.

Heathrow has been testing new flight paths at the request of the government, and as part of a Europe-wide modernisation of airspace. Whereas planes have traditionally tracked ground based beacons, from 2020 they will be using satellite navigation technology to follow precise lines in and out of airports. This will generate fewer emissions and less noise nuisance to residents because aircraft will ascend and descend more steeply.



Steve involved our local Conservative MP Dominic Raab (pictured), who held a packed public meeting at St Mary's Church Hall on September 24.

Dominic and Steve then met with Heathrow's policy director Nigel Milton and his team at Parliament on October 16th and fed in the scale and scope of residents' concerns. Mr Milton apologised for the level of noise experienced by the community.

He explained that the trials are not indicative of future flight paths, and that

a public consultation will take place in 2017 ahead of any permanent changes. Crucially he said that any eventual routes over Molesey will be rotated to give residents some respite.

Mr Milton also said the data collected during the trials had been "rich" and made it highly unlikely that further trials will be required.

Dominic Raab said: "I am very relieved local residents will be able to enjoy Christmas without the disproportionate noise from these

trials. Councillor Steve Bax and I worked hard to get Heathrow to act on local concerns, and it's good news that the authorities are listening."

Cllr Bax added: "Residents of Molesey responded magnificently to this challenge by emailing Heathrow and supporting an online

petition. Our voice made itself heard above the din of the aircraft noise, and the airport relented. This a great victory for people power."

For more information on the trials see heathrowairport.com/noise



'It's good news that the authorities are listening'

Free School plan

THE Cobham Free School Trust have said they are keen to open a secondary school here in Molesey.

They have applied to the Department for Education for permission to create a three to four-form entry school for children aged 11 through to 18, to open in September 2017.

If their proposal is accepted by the Government the next step will be to locate a suitable site in Molesey.

Land at Imber Court, the 90-acre Metropolitan Police sports club in Ember Lane, East Molesey, has been suggested, but the Club was quick to point out that it has not agreed to anything.

The Cobham Free School Trust, which opened a junior school in Cobham in 2012 and a secondary there this year, states that a new secondary school in Molesey would help address the shortage of state secondary school places in our area, and several possible sites exist.

It adds: "Whilst Surrey County Council has plans to expand its existing schools, we aim to offer parents a further choice in the form of a smaller educational establishment with traditional values and an academic focus."

The Molesey Conservative Residents (MCR) believe the idea of a



free school in Molesey has much to recommend it. Molesey has a population of 19,000, but for two decades since the closure of our former secondary modern we have been reliant on sending our children out of town for their schooling.

Surrey County Council's reluctance to consider requests for a new school has been frustrating, so the MCR will look at any 'free school' initiative with a degree of interest.

Any support that we provide will be conditional on a school's quality, location, and assurances that Molesey children will receive priority of admission.

As Steve Bax recently told The Surrey Advertiser: "A secondary school here would allow Molesey to stand on its own two feet and if done right, could be something for the community to be proud of."

See cobhamfreeschool.org.uk/imbercourt for more on this.

Commuter parking

THE Molesey Conservative Residents are continuing to push for commuter parking controls in streets close to Hampton Court Station.

Steve Bax recently met with Surrey's head of highways, Mr Rikki Hill, and subsequently requested that proposals for a 1 or 2 hour period of residents-only parking for Wolsey, Palace and Arnison roads to be considered.

We believe this would deter all-day commuter parking and free up space for residents and shop users. It would also allow essential gutter cleaning to take place.

Mr Hill has said the County wishes to see the effect of a recently introduced 70m restriction in Wolsey and Palace roads first, and that further changes will need to be considered as part of a borough wide parking strategy, next year.

The MCR wants to see proposals brought forward as early as possible and for residents to have a say on them, and we are concerned by the prospect of further delay and prevarication.

We will investigate proposals for an Elmbridge parking strategy and any opportunities it offers Molesey, and will report back to you.

Legal matter?

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Remembrance services will be held on Sunday November 9th at the West Molesey memorial at 10.45am and the East Molesey memorial at 2pm. Please come and show your support.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Have your say on election changes

ELMBRIDGE Council is considering significant changes to the way councillors are elected and wants to hear your views.

A vote of the council will take place on November 17th to decide whether to move from the current system, where a third of the council is elected each time, to 'all-out' elections where the whole council is chosen every four years.

There are substantive arguments for and against both systems. Under the thirds model residents have an annual opportunity to hold the council to account, by electing borough representatives for three consecutive years followed by Surrey County Council elections in the fourth year.

If they are unhappy with a particular policy they are able to express their feelings at the ballot box. On the flipside this also allows parties to see where they are going wrong and adjust course.

The downside is that parties are constantly looking ahead to the next May's elections, and could be less inclined towards long term and sometimes unpopular decisions.

Moving to whole council elections every four years could allow for



more effective planning, and there would be considerable savings to be made from holding fewer elections (around £42,000 per year).

However there is another complicating factor. The Local Government Boundary

Commission for England (LGBCE) is carrying out a review of all the Elmbridge Council wards. Led by Sir Tony Redmond, it will take soundings from councillors and residents, and consider reducing

“Moving to all out elections would allow flexibility”

the number of councillors from the current 60. This is likely to result in a redrawing of the council wards themselves.

The Molesey Conservative Residents feel the thirds system creates greater democratic accountability, but we understand that if thirds stay then the Commission will insist on three member wards.

This creates the danger of Molesey's wards either being merged with neighbouring towns, or having non-Molesey communities bolted on. But with an all-out elections model the Commission will allow two or even one member wards to be created, which would make it more likely that Molesey's community identity can be preserved.

The Molesey Conservative Residents believe this is important.

To take part in the consultation and read more of the arguments, please go to elmbridge.gov.uk and click on the 'Have Your Say - voting consultation' link. This closes on November 2nd, so please don't delay.

Steve Bax will be required to vote on this matter on November 17 and is keen to hear your views. Please email MoleseySteve@gmail.com.

A SECURITY review of Elmbridge's open spaces is being carried out by the council in response to the latest traveller incursion in Molesey.

On September 30th the car park at Hurst Pool in Dunstall Way was occupied by 14 caravans until they were moved on by the council police on October 2nd. The review will consider whether preventative measures such as height barriers can be installed for added security.

MOLESEY Art Society will be exhibiting members' work at St Alban's Primary School in Beauchamp Road.

The event is on Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th November, from 10am to 5pm and admission is free.

MOLESEY Library is hosting more guest authors events organised by its active Friends group. If this newsletter reaches you in time you might like to attend Francesco Scannella's talk on his mafia thriller Sicilian Shadows on October 28. Then on November 25, successful writer and former Kent Road resident, Penny Vincenzi is coming to talk about her books.

Both events start at 7.30pm and tickets priced £5 are at the library or pay at the door.

FLYTIPPERS dumped a bath and other building waste along Walton Road in West Molesey, by the reservoirs.

The debris was scattered over 200 metres and forced the temporary closure of the road on October 20.

Elmbridge Council said the criminal act had caused "considerable inconvenience" to the community, but no evidence was found to identify the culprit.

THE new look Mole Hall, now home to the Molesey Centre for the Community, had its official re-opening on September 14th.

Elmbridge Mayor Barry Fairbank unveiled a plaque and guests were able to find out about the various classes, events and activities held regularly.

The centre in Bishop Fox Way, West Molesey, now houses the borough's popular Meals on Wheels service, and contains a hair salon for elderly residents, as well as customisable hire space. A community garden will be added in the near future.

DO YOU know any little ones who would like to meet Santa?

The 3rd Molesey Scout Hut in St Peters Road will be transformed into a grotto and Magical Wonderland display on December 6th and 7th.

Entry is £5 per child and includes a quality gift, and £2 for adults. You can book from November 1st by calling Janet on 0794 0080466.

THERE'LL be fun things for children at Elmbridge's new natural play area in Graburn Way, East Molesey on October 30. Activities to celebrate its opening will include outdoor games, sports, smoothie making, a giant parachute and arts and crafts from 11am to 1pm.

Bridge Road 'pong' caused by fat



A BUILD-up of fat and grease in Molesey's Victorian sewer system have been blamed for the notorious 'Bridge Road pong'.

In September residents of Bridge Road and Palace Road complained of lingering unpleasant smells, which were particularly bad outside the Albion pub.

Steve Bax asked our Borough Council's environmental team to intervene, and after a lot of to-and-fro with Thames Water and a couple of false starts by its contractors, eventually some 700 yards of the sewer tunnel along the length of Palace Road was flushed clear.

The cause of the smell was found to be from an unholy mix of fat, cooking oil, grease and wipes congealing together to defeat the sewer

routes beneath the effected roads – all things which should not be disposed of into our sewer system via sinks, drains and toilets.

Councillor Bax took the opportunity to question Thames Water about the robustness of this sewer system, particularly in view of the fact that any development at the Jolly Boatman and Hampton Court Station sites would use the existing 19th Century tunnel network.

They said: "We believe the sewerage system serves the needs of local residents as it is running freely and there are no operational issues such as infiltration or collapses. It could not cope with the amount of inappropriate items being disposed of. If used correctly the system operates without any problem or inconvenience to residents."

Thames Water is distributing 'Bin It Don't Block It' leaflets with advice on the proper disposal of cooking fat - in short: pour it in a container, allow to cool and then put in the rubbish bin. A full copy can be downloaded from MoleseyConservatives.com.

The Molesey Conservative Residents have been informed that the area's sewers have been put on a schedule for regular inspection.

History comes alive in Molesey



THE Methodist Church in East Molesey was packed with visitors for Molesey Local History Society's latest exhibition in early October.

Titled 'Then and Now', it displayed historic photographs of Molesey locations alongside present day images taken at the same spot by members and professional photographers.

Paula Day from the Society said: "The displays really stimulated conversation and there was a constant buzz as people shared their memories of Molesey's past and the changes

that have taken place over the years. The photographs showed everyone that Molesey residents are fortunate to live in such beautiful surroundings."

Each pair of 'Then and Now' images was accompanied by fascinating information about the history of each location researched and written by Society members.

The exhibition was two years in the making and the Society aims to produce a book. To find out more about its regular events or on how to join, go to www.moleseyhistorysociety.org

Molesey spending board decisions

MOLESEY'S councillors met in September to allocate Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to local good causes.

CIL is a tax on local development, and individuals and groups are encouraged to bid for a share of it to fund community projects.

Of the £81,626 in the pot this time, councillors contributed £20k towards a replacement bridge at Nielson's Field (the Conservative administration is funding the rest) and £5,700 for landscaping at Graburn Way and Barge Walk. St Paul's Church was given £10k to complete repairs to its spire.

More controversial was an application from the Molesey Boat Club

for a contribution towards its indoor rowing centre. This will be used by the wider community including disabled children.

Councillors had previously agreed to give £40k, but at the meeting some Molesey Residents Association members said they now wanted to award only half the amount. This contradicts claims in the MRA's recent newsletter of its "total support" for the boat club.

Steve Bax argued strongly for the project and supported a compromise by a fellow East Molesey councillor of £30,000 award. We are pleased that the boat club has since received a further contribution of £50,000 from the borough wide CIL pot.



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