

FOCUS

On College Ward

Spring 2024

Liberal Democrats



KEEP TENNIS FREE FOR KIDS - sign our petition - see inside for details

Tories Sacrifice Green Belt

Another broken promise - this Government doesn't really want to protect our Green Belt!

The Tories have got some cheek!

Local Conservatives pretend their party **CAN** honour a pledge **NOT** to include Green Belt sites in our Local Plan. But their own Conservative government has recently told Mole Valley Council that it **CAN'T** remove all Green Belt sites from their Local Plan.

Without a Local Plan, both brownfield and Green Belt sites are open to audacious development. Epsom & Ewell needs a Local Plan to protect these sites and have the legal powers to enforce what happens on them.

More delays mean Green Belt sites are under threat

"The Conservatives don't listen to the housing needs of local communities," said Liberal Democrat council group leader **Julie Morris**. "They insist on using out-of-date figures from 2014, and even some of our own so-called independent councillors cannot see that our priorities here are to keep our Green Belt free from inappropriate development. Increasing density in our



urban areas will help keep our countryside safe. It's really not difficult to understand!"

College Ward Councillor **Julian Freeman** continued, "We have listened to what residents said during the consultation. Their priority is for high quality, energy efficient homes, especially for key workers. We have pushed for those in our comments on the draft Local Plan, and in the council meetings held since the end of November on how to move the Local Plan forward."

Lib Dem campaigner and parliamentary candidate **Helen Maguire** concluded, "How can we trust the Conservative Government to listen to the views of local residents (and local Liberal Democrat councillors!) when it won't even deliver on its promise last year to let local Councils decide what is best for their own area? **It's time for them to go!**"



Read the Lib Dem submission on the draft Local Plan on our website:

www.bit.ly/EELDLocalPlan

or use this QR code:



Council Tax Up

But the Council is still in trouble

The Council has set this year's council tax rise at 2.99%. This is the maximum allowed by the government, despite inflation being much higher.

Cllr. Alison Kelly, delivering the response to the Residents' Party's Budget, expressed concern that we are slow to use money paid to the council by developers. This is intended to help with affordable housing and infrastructure/improvement projects in the borough. But spending this money looks like it is being held back so the interest can be used on day-to-day expenditure.

The council is also digging into its cash reserves for more than half a million pounds next year as well as hoping to raise a similar amount from increased car park fees. **"This is not sustainable,"** she said, warning that, if the council cannot balance its budget, it could face bankruptcy.



Cllr Alison Kelly told the council their finances are **"not sustainable"**

She pointed out that both the Playhouse and Bourne Hall cost us hundreds of thousands of pounds and that we need these to become self-sufficient, otherwise, as discretionary services, they would be forced to close immediately.

Cllr. Julie Morris, leader of the Lib Dem council group, argued that the council should have more faith in local residents. "Ask [them] what their priorities are and give them options for spending and saving money **Carry**

public opinion with you and it costs less and achieves far more in the long run."

Lib Dem parliamentary candidate, **Helen Maguire**, commenting afterwards, said that "councils run by all parties are feeling the squeeze of this Conservative government's pressure on local finances. We need a change of government to see an improvement."

*You can view the entire budget meeting on **YouTube** - just search for "epsom and ewell council".*

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Helen Maguire for Epsom & Ewell

Your local Lib



Keep Tennis Free for Kids

Cllr **James Lawrence** and your Lib Dem councillors are concerned that from 1st April **our tennis courts will no longer be free.** The council will be introducing a new 'pay as you play' scheme across all tennis courts in the borough.

"We understand the financial pressures on the council," said **James**, "but we think it is important that there should be times when children and those in financial difficulties do not have to pay these charges."

Sign our petition to keep some free time for children and those receiving Council Tax benefits here:

www.bit.ly/tennis-petition

Or use this QR link:

Or contact James for a paper version.



Chalk Pit Rumbles On

The Chalk Pit continues to disturb residents but **“we haven't given up on this”** assures Cllr. **Julie Morris**. She pushed with fellow councillors on the Environment Committee to allocate £140k to fund external consultants and further action on the breaches of operating conditions.

Meanwhile, Cllr **James Lawrence** (pictured) continues to work with residents and fellow councillors to ensure authorities take the



appropriate enforcement actions.

In December last year, Surrey County Council (SCC) issued a breach of condition notice on the landowner of the site, stating that the operators were not complying with a planning condition that was to prevent the use of the trommel before the completion of the encasement building.

There are new constructions in the Chalk Pit without permission, which have been reported to Epsom & Ewell Council (EEBC) and SCC. “It is infuriating for residents who play by the rules to be subject to operators that refuse to do so,” said **James**.

We continue to encourage all residents when they hear noise nuisance to email EEBC at chalkpit@epsom-ewell.gov.uk and SCC at mwcd@surreycc.gov.uk, copying us in as your local councillors, your county councillor, and the Environment Agency. This helps to ensure all authorities are reminded how this site affects the quality of life of all those who live in the area.

o Dem Team

Working hard for our community

More Town Hall Secrecy

Liberal Democrats have again had to challenge the Residents Association-controlled council about secrecy.

Councillors have been told that they mustn't reveal what has been discussed at

councillor briefing meetings. Even the topic being discussed must not be revealed!

“Sometimes a Briefing might involve commercially sensitive information and then confidentiality might be appropriate,” said Cllr **Julie Morris**. “But we should presume that what is discussed is public information unless there is a good reason that it shouldn't be.”

“We will continue to fight and campaign for open and transparent government, locally and nationally.”

Ed Davey comes to Epsom

Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey MP marked the launch of Parliamentary Candidate **Helen Maguire's** 2024 election campaign by paying a visit to Epsom town centre.

“I'm here because I think we can win this seat,” said Sir Ed on a visit to Epsom Market. “The Conservatives are so out of touch, and I think people want change.”

A recent YouGov poll, commissioned by the Daily Telegraph, indicated that the Lib Dems in Epsom & Ewell are neck and neck with the Conservatives.



Paul Kennedy

Police & Crime Commissioner election in May

» **Paul Kennedy is the Liberal Democrat challenger to Surrey's Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).** Paul is a former barrister, accountant and actuary with over 30 years' professional leadership experience.

» **Paul is a local councillor** who has long campaigned to bring back community policing. He will cut the PCC's bloated office budget, and spend the money on frontline policing instead.

» **Paul came 2nd last time** with over 112,000 votes. He is the only candidate who can beat the Conservatives across Surrey.

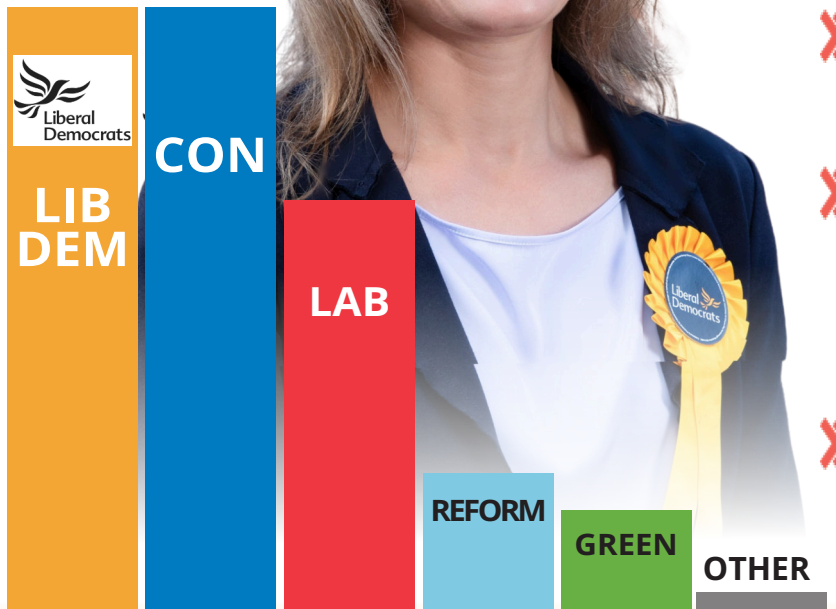
Working together



Helen Maguire

General Election this year

LATEST NEWS
Now it's neck and neck!



- » **A General Election is coming this year** and not a moment too soon. Time is up for the Tories.
- » **Local people trust the Lib Dems** - we have more District and Borough Councillors across the constituency than Labour and the Conservatives combined
- » **Labour HQ admit they cannot win here** - if you want real change, only the Lib Dems' **Helen Maguire** can win against the Tories.