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Local News From Your Conservative Team in Oatlands Park ward

February 2016

A rough deal for Elmbridge and Surrey - central government hits the shire counties

Every year local authorities receive money called the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), this is money from national taxes which is redistributed as grants by central government to help support locally provided services. You may be astounded to learn that Elmbridge's RSG has just been slashed by over 60% for next year, 2016/2017, but even worse the RSG will be completely eliminated for Elmbridge, and 14 other councils nationwide, the year after. Of these 15 councils, 8 are in Surrey; the government assumes that higher local taxation will bridge the gap. Taking into account Elmbridge's previously forecast budget shortfall of £250k, revenue spending pressures of £200k and changes in business rate tariff adjustment of £250k, there is a projected budget gap of £1.5 million.

- Similarly, Surrey has had a reduction in its' RSG of over 38% forced upon it for the coming year. Historically the shire counties have had a bad deal from all governments, we contribute through general taxation and only ever get back a fraction of that money in grants and services:-
- Surrey currently makes the 2nd highest contribution to central government funds but receives one of the lowest levels of funding in return.
- Surrey receives back only about 20% of highway funding from road taxes collected from Surrey motorists.
- Surrey has the 2nd highest volume of traffic on its roads but bizarrely central government does not use volume as a factor when allocating funding.

So what will this mean for the council tax (CT) payers of Elmbridge? It is now inconceivable that we can freeze CT for the coming year so an increase of 1.99% is unavoidable, (this is just below the referendum level of 2.00% set by the government). It is almost certain that Surrey County Council will do the same. We do not yet know what the Surrey Police precept will be.

One piece of good news is that Elmbridge's New Homes Bonus will provide about £500k more than first forecast, which will help, and council officers have been able to identify £480K in additional savings. Use of part of the reserves will see us through 2016/17 but the real crunch will come in the years thereafter.

Planning Update

On 1st February the West Area Planning Sub-Committee unanimously rejected the latest planning application in respect of the ex Honda garage at 30 Queens Road. The developer had submitted a second application following the refusal by the Council of the first one last year. That first application is now at appeal with the Secretary of State's Inspector and we must wait and see if this second attempt will go the same way. All Members were agreed that although the scheme had been slightly reduced and new homes are desperately needed in the Borough, the bulk and mass of such a building in this sensitive location was just not acceptable.

Following a long and times tortuous progress through the planning system, the proposed new outdoor sports hub at Waterside Drive adjacent to the Xcel Leisure Centre has now been approved. The last hurdle was cleared a few days ago when the Secretary of State confirmed that he would not be calling the application in for further examination. The Council can now proceed with awarding contracts and we can all look forward to the Borough having a new, modern sports facility completed within the next two years.



Philip Hammond MP

Member of Parliament
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Philip.Hammond.mp@parliament.uk



Tony Samuels

Oatlands and Walton South
Surrey County Councillor

Tony.samuels@surreycc.gov.uk



Barry Cheyne

Oatlands Park Ward Councillor

bcheyne@elmbridge.gov.uk



Lewis Brown

Oatlands Park Ward Councillor

lbrown@elmbridge.gov.uk

elmbridgeconservatives.com
runnymedeandweybridgeconservatives.com

Local Government Boundary Commission - Final Proposals for Oatlands

The LGBC reported its final proposals on 5th January and surprise, surprise – they took no notice of us. The Order, which includes reducing the number of Elmbridge councillors from 60 to 48, now goes before both houses of Parliament and is subject to the draft negative resolution procedure which means that the Order can only be made after it has been before Parliament for 40 sitting days and, if approved, will come into force at the next local elections on May 5th. The Draft Order could be opposed in either house but this is incredibly unlikely.

Our new ward is to be called Oatlands and Burwood Park, it includes our existing ward of Oatlands Park except Marlborough Drive which goes to the new ward of Weybridge Riverside and the northern end of Oatlands Drive from The Mount onwards which goes to Walton Central. The new ward includes all of Burwood Park and an area just to the East, e.g. Westcar Lane, then along Burwood Road all the way up Seven Hills Road. It will continue to be a three councillor ward. The Commission acknowledges it received 37 submissions from the public and admits that a majority of the respondents from Burwood Park objected to being included with Oatlands whilst residents from Oatlands objected to the proposal to include them with Burwood Park. The Commission concluded that *"While we note the local views on the differences between Oatlands Park and Burwood Park, we are not persuaded to amend our draft recommendations"* which we suppose proves the power of consultation!

Baker St, from County Cllr. Ramon Gray

Surrey County Councillor for Weybridge, Ramon Gray is working on a plan to help regenerate Weybridge High Street. The Weybridge Town Business Group believes the town is losing out to other shopping centres. Ramon's view is that Weybridge needs to be a destination in its own right and the only way to move things forward was to present a substantial solution.

The plan has many aspects, one of which involves aiding the small, independent shops which are an important differentiator in a town like Weybridge. Baker Street, in particular, is a key element to the success of the whole high street and needs to be encouraged to flourish. A solution to enhance the Baker street area could be to close off the bottom of the street (from the High Street to a location to be decided) and to create a pedestrian precinct at its western end. This ought to create more interest, footfall and attention on the street and could possibly allow a regular market down the centre of the new pedestrianised area. Additionally, as it would remove the "T" junction then traffic would flow more easily through the town.

Social Events

Curry Lunch

Saturday March 5th, 12 noon at 73 Woodland Grove, Weybridge. Tickets, £17.50
Tim Simpson 01932 852309

The Queens Birthday Lunch

Saturday June 4th, 12.30, at Woodlands, Danes Way, Oxshott. Courtesy of Cllrs Mr and Mrs Samuels. Tickets, £15

Summer Drinks

Saturday July 23rd, 12 noon at Somersby, Oatlands Avenue. Tickets, £17.50

Autumn Lunch

Friday October 14th at Burhill Golf Club. Guest speaker Jacob Rees-Mogg MP. Tickets, £30

Tickets from David Morgan 01932 842749



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The 3SC case for devolution

The economy of East Sussex, West Sussex and Surrey (the 3SC area) is exceptionally strong. It has a combined population of 2.5 million and GVA of £74 billion, which is bigger than Wales or Greater Manchester. It is crucial for UK that the 3SC area continues to flourish as an economy in its own right as well as supporting the success of London. Yet the area's future economic performance, and the quality of life of local residents, is at risk because of worn infrastructure and demand pressures on public services at a time of spending restraints. Businesses are feeling the pressure too as they have difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. The councils in the 3SC area are seeking a devolution deal with central government to enable us to grow our contribution to the national economy by:-

- Agreeing a **long-term infrastructure strategy** to improve capacity on the rail and road networks and further develop the digital infrastructure;
- Taking action to **accelerate housebuilding and improve the range of housing**;
- Ensuring greater engagement with businesses, schools, colleges and other providers to ensure employers have access to the **skills** they need and address barriers to employment;
- Working with partners to deliver **public service transformation**.
Surrey County Council is confident that if a devolution deal could be done then in five years' time it could deliver:-
- At least 34,000 new homes;
- A firm programme for improving crucial transport corridors including the M23, rail capacity between London and the South Coast, our quadrant of the M25, the A27, the A21 and the A3 and M3;
- A reduction in hard to fill vacancies and skills gaps and an increase in the take-up of business-led training;
- A proven shift to preventative activity with a consequential reduction in costs;



David Munro will be our Police and Crime Commissioner candidate in May.

FIRST CHOICE for Surrey's Police & Crime Commissioner www.david4surrey.org.uk

Your **PRIORITIES ARE my PRIORITIES**

1

Make Surrey Police the Best it Can be

I want to make Surrey Police a force that all residents can be proud of. That means I will support them wherever possible but also insist on the highest standards.

2

Act as the Champion of All Residents

Make sure that the voice of residents is heard loud and clear when policing priorities and resources are allocated. Make further efficiencies so that money can be spent on what residents want.

3

Fight for Fair Funding

Despite an excellent police funding settlement from our Conservative government, money will always be tight. You need a strong PCC who can get Surrey a fair deal –and flush out unnecessary costs.

4

A Police Force Fit for the Future

Crime is changing and criminals use every advanced technology they can. Surrey's police force needs to stay one step ahead. Shaping the force for the demands of the future is vital.

5

Reduce the Fear of Crime and Support Victims

Surrey is a relatively low-crime county. But it doesn't feel that way if you are in fear of going about your daily business and especially if you're a victim. The police must be there for all residents.

6

Protect Surrey in an Uncertain World

2016 is likely to be as turbulent as ever. The threat of terrorism won't go away. I will fight to make sure that Surrey Police, working with key national agencies, have the resources and powers they need.



Conservative supporter?

We are always pleased to welcome new members to Oatlands Conservatives but would also appreciate help from anyone who may not wish to become a member. We have a team of Oatlands residents who deliver this In Touch and election material at intervals through the year.

If you can spare an hour or so, a few times a year, to help the Conservative cause by delivering in and around Oatlands then we would be very keen to hear from you.

Please contact Richard Bradley on bradleyfamily@onetel.com



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