

inTouch

Community news from your local Conservatives in Weybridge Riverside and St George's Hill

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A bright future for Weybridge Hall



Charu Sood at Weybridge Hall with Charlie Swift

WEYBRIDGE Hall is facing an exciting future – as a new theatre for our town.

The Church Street venue's derelict days look to be ending after businessman Charlie Swift (pictured, left, with St George's Hill councillor Charu Sood) was granted permission to purchase the hall and transform it.

Swift Entertainment, owned by Charlie, has a strong track record, having rebranded King George's Hall in Esher as a theatre and made it a roaring success, attracting famous names such as Brian Blessed and Harry Hill.

Welcoming the development, Cllr Sood said: "I believe this is very good news for Weybridge and will complement our masterplan for improving the town centre.

"The new theatre will boost our local economy and fill a gap for live entertainment. Not only will it bring a mix of well-known performers to Weybridge, but I predict it will help to uncover local talent too. I think it will be very good for our town."

Charlie's vision for Weybridge Hall is to turn it into an

Edwardian style top end theatre with interiors in gold, red and brasses. The ground floor will house the main theatre with a capacity of more than 300 seats.

The first floor will have two function rooms and a bar and on the second floor, there will be a hireable dance studio and music rehearsal rooms.

Work on the new theatre will start in early 2023 with the curtain expected to rise on the first live performances in September 2024.

Charlie told Weybridge InTouch: "I want to create a West End quality theatre in the heart of Weybridge. This will increase footfall for the high street and local restaurants and bars. The idea is to provide high quality entertainment for all ages and tastes."

He added: "The inside is virtually derelict, so there is a huge amount of work to be done. This is a big project! I'm sure there will be a grand opening but it's too early to say what this will look like – watch this space."

The much-loved Jubilee Clock will also be restored as part of the project.

Join our team

LOCAL Conservatives are community-minded volunteers who work closely with our MP and councillors to preserve all that is good about Weybridge.

With your support we can do even more. If you can help us to deliver leaflets, or if you would like to join the party please call Susan Seery on 07774 234072 or email susan@aetaena.com

Calls for more CCTV

CLLR Sood arranged for Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner Lisa Townsend and Sergeant Rob Thomas to come to Weybridge.

The pair took questions from residents at Christ the Prince of Peace Church Hall in October. They were asked about a variety of topics including CCTV, speeding, streetlights, and night crime.

Pictured with Lisa is Colin

McFarlane, Conservative candidate for St George's Hill. He said: "What was striking was the unrelenting pressure that the police are under 24 hours a day.

"I am keen to explore what the council and the community can do to help, whether through more CCTV or neighbourhood watch."

Many residents were keen to know the locations of CCTV



in Weybridge and that can be found at:

www.elmbridge.gov.uk/safety/cctv-in-elmbridge/

Seven Hills prosecution



ELMBRIDGE Council has prosecuted the owners and occupants of land north of Seven Hills Road for failure to comply with an enforcement notice.

The council alleged there had been unlawful siting and storage of caravans for residential accommodation and site security and large amounts of waste onsite.

On 4 November, a district judge told the defendants that if the enforcement notice was not complied with in full by 27 January 2023 that time, it could result in fines up to £25,000.

Raring to go for 2023 – meet your

LOCAL elections will take place in May 2023 and in the months ahead your Conservative candidates will be knocking on doors and listening to residents' views.

Colin McFarlane has been selected as the candidate for Weybridge St George's Hill ward, where he has lived with Patricia for over 20 years.

He writes: "I feel fortunate to live in Weybridge, which is a splendid, unspoilt and safe part of the country and I would like to preserve for our children and grandchildren.

Our borough is under a lot of pressure to accept new developments. Whilst there must be development to provide new homes for young people and families this must be properly planned, controlled, and managed.

At present with no approved Local Plan from the RA and Liberal parties running Elmbridge Council we are at risk of losing control of housing development.



Colin McFarlane, who works for the first responders ambulance service

I have campaigned locally for many years alongside our excellent councillor Charu Sood so I know St George's Hill ward and its residents very well. I want to enhance the quality of life so many of us enjoy but also to improve the life and provide for the less fortunate residents.

I am a team leader with North West Surrey Commu-

nity First Responders. We provide rapid assistance to the Ambulance Service for time critical incidents in Elmbridge and Runnymede, often being first on the scene.

For Restart a Heart Week in October we gave CPR training to a number of students in schools in Elmbridge.

I am passionate about the redevelopment of our town

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Making progress despite

By Tim Oliver, Surrey County Councillor for Weybridge



Just as things were starting to get back to a level of normality post Covid, we find ourselves facing a 'cost of living' crisis. Inflation will have a significant impact on all of us as well as on the county council's ability to deliver vital services.

The increasing demand for adult social care and for support for those children with additional needs means that three quarters of the county's budget is spoken for before we look at all the other services including highways.

However, in Weybridge I am pleased that we continue to make progress with the regeneration of the high street including the replacement of the

hospital and a complete refurbishment of the library.

The NHS locally have been working hard on completing the design of the building that they will submit for planning permission as well as agreeing with the health service the services that are needed to be located within the building. It is expected that they will submit a planning application in the

ur local Conservative candidates



Freddie (centre) campaigning in Weybridge with Dr Ben Spencer MP and association chairman Neva Novak

centre and our environs plus the encouragement of appropriate businesses.

I look forward to listening to you and having a conversation with you and hear your thoughts about how the ward may be improved."

Freddie Tshiaba, who lives in Weybridge Riverside ward with his wife Ann, is re-standing in 2023 after a strong sec-

ond place earlier this year.

He writes: "I sincerely would like to thank you for your support during the local elections of May 2022. It was an honour to meet so many residents on the doorsteps during the campaign.

I learned so much about what you love about Weybridge and what needs to be better.

pite inflation pressures



early part of next year for a building that will house the GP practices but will also offer on the day urgent care treatment. The timeline for completion of the health hub is late 2025.

The library building will be stripped back to its concrete frame with works commencing next summer and will be completely refurbished and re clad with completion in the summer of 2024.

I have been instrumental in introducing the new owner of the Weybridge Hall who will carry out a full refurbishment and reinstatement of the building as a working theatre. This will be an exciting project and bring some much needed footfall into the town centre.

There are several road and pavement improvements that will start in 2023 which will

see a greater priority being given to those walking and cycling in the town as well as improving safety.

One key feature will be a crossing by Manby Lodge School which hopefully will make it safer and more attractive for children to walk to school. The works will be phased but are expected to be completed by the end of 2023.

We will continue to fight to relocate the memorial at the top of Monument Hill, ideally to Churchfields Recreation Ground. For those who attended the recent remembrance service it was clear that having traffic driving round the monument during the service was both undignified and unsafe.

2023 will see a lot of activity and investment in Weybridge as we start to see many of these projects commence, many of which will add to the vibrancy and attractiveness of the town.

Contact me at:
tim.oliver@surreycc.gov.uk

I am grateful to everyone who supported me and the priorities I championed: restore Weybridge local hospital, oppose the rise in car park charges (even more important given rising inflation), and reinstate the on-and-off-again garden waste service.

My passion for representing Weybridge at the council has only been strengthened by the campaign and so I have decided to stand again, and I hope I can persuade you to lend me your support in due course.

In the meantime, I will continue to defend your interests and work closely with our local Conservative team including our MP Dr Ben Spencer, Weybridge County Councillor Tim Oliver, and borough councillor Charu Sood. Together we continue to advocate for a better life in Weybridge Riverside.

I am always happy to hear from you, and feel free to reach out to me using the contact information here below.

And, if you are interested in becoming more engaged with the Party activities and plans, I would love to work with you. Once again, thank you for your continued support.

Do you have a question for Freddie or Colin? Email freddie@tshiaba.co.uk or cgmcfarlane@weybridgeconservatives.com

Splashpads under threat



PADDLING pools and splashpads are under threat again, a year after Cllr Charu Sood led a successful campaign to save them from closure.

In July, the Liberal Democrats and Residents Association parties who run Elmbridge Council voted to 'phase out' our free wet play facilities and consult on their long-term future.

This is despite one of the driest summers in recent memory and a 'cost of living' crisis which is hurting some our poorest residents.

The council ran a survey to find out residents' views on water-based play. This presented such facilities as wasting water and invited respondents to say that alternative provision such as sandpits, swings, zip wires, skateparks would be better.

Cllr Sood said: "I think we need all these things. They argue that the pools are old and waste water so they should close. This is the wrong way to look at it.

"We should be upgrading our pools and splashpads to make them more environmentally friendly."



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NEWS

IN BRIEF

WARM Hubs have been set up across Surrey to provide support to residents who are concerned about the soaring cost of heating their homes.

Locally, this includes Weybridge Centre for the Community in Churchfield Place (KT13 8BZ) where residents are able to drop-in Monday to Friday from 9am - 4.30pm to enjoy a hot drink, meet others and get free debt and energy advice.

TAXI drivers say they are being 'driven out of business' by Elmbridge Council bureaucracy and delays renewing licenses.

Some have been unable to work because their licenses have run out or medical certificates have been going out of date.

Conservative councillors took up their cause and have pressured the Lib Dem and independent-run Council to agree to review of the service.

ELMBRIDGE Council has signed a new deal with McLaren Fine Foods, organisers of Weybridge Farmers Market. This means the quarterly markets will continue throughout 2023 in Churchfields Car Park. They offer local tasty treats, delectable delights and fresh local produce, bakes, cakes and more. The next Weybridge Farmers Market will be held on Sunday 4 December between 11am - 3pm.

DEPUTY Mayor Charu Sood visited the Robert Phillips Gallery in Walton to view the work of more than 80 local artists.

She said: "It was heart-warming to see the amount of talent we have in our borough. A few entries were from young artists aged 16 which was lovely to see. I was also pleased to see work of some of my own local residents on display."

'No more delays. We need new hospital now'

By Dr Ben Spencer, MP for Runnymede & Weybridge

Five years have passed since Weybridge Community Hospital burned down in a raging inferno so intense that residents sought shelter in St James's Church.

Weybridge was a much-loved community hospital. It housed the Church Street and Rowan Tree practices, community nursing, physio, imaging, and a walk-in centre in which people could be seen on the day.

Since I was elected as your MP, it has been my priority to ensure our hospital is restored. The team working on site in temporary buildings are doing a fantastic job in difficult circumstances. There is simply, not enough space.

This month, I led a debate in Parliament about the future of Weybridge Hospital. I made the point that we need "permanent healthcare facilities, not temporary facilities made permanent".

I know that many residents already struggle to see a GP or healthcare practitioner. If more housing is approved, things will get worse.

So, I am making the case for an improvement in our local infrastructure, of which



Dr Ben Spencer MP at Weybridge Hospital

healthcare is a key part.

The essence of a community hospital is same-day access to care, whether that is advice from a pharmacist, nurse, or a member of the extended multidisciplinary team, or speaking to or seeing a GP.

I am delighted that the integrated care system (ICS) has confirmed that that is what it is going to provide.

Although I share the ambition for the redevelopment of our town centre, this must not delay the re-provision of the hospital. So I favour a two-phase approach to the work.

The sticking point for the hospital is that no agreement has been reached for the sign-off of the funds needed.

NHS Property Services has offered only a proportion of the total amount of money needed for the rebuild, not the full cost, with the ICS and Surrey County Council left to make up the difference.

Not only does that put unfair pressure on the council and other services, but it adds further delay and uncertainty.

We need the agreement of the NHS to fund this project now and to provide certainty for residents. I am pressing hard for this to happen.

Beyond this, I know local families are worried about their energy bills and the rising cost of their weekly shop.

If you are experiencing hardship, I would urge you to contact your energy supplier and Elmbridge Council, who may be able to connect you to Government support.

I would also urge you to check on and support vulnerable friends, family and neighbours over the winter, and to contact me if you or others are in need of additional support.

Finally, I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. - Ben

Boundary changes

THE independent Boundary Commission for England has published its proposals for a major change to parliamentary constituencies.

This includes Dr Ben Spencer MP's constituency of Runnymede & Weybridge which is proposed to take in Whiteley Village from neighbouring Esher & Walton, which in return receives Oatlands and Burwood Park.

The entirety of Weybridge Riverside and St. George's Hill will remain in the Run-



nymede and Weybridge Constituency, while still coming under Elmbridge Borough Council.

The Commission is required to make sure that each constituency has between 69,724 and 77,062 electors. You can comment until 5 December at www.bcereviews.org.uk