Hersham Village Hall update

It appears that Hersham Village Hall will remain closed for a considerable amount of time. We understand that an inspection found that it would cost between £800,000 and £1 million to put right following years of neglect by Conservative administrations. Resident Councillors must also bear part of the blame by not fighting for this valuable asset for the Hersham Community by ensuring it was properly maintained. We understand that discussions are taking place in consultation with surveyors and architects in order to find a way forward. One plan currently being considered is to build a new Village Hall linked to a new Centre for the Community on the same site, similar to the Mole Hall in Molesey. The new facility would have flats above. There will be full consultation once any plans are finalised.

Julie Crook of Walton and Hersham Labour Party says “we would press for social housing to rent ideally under the control of the Council rather than yet more expensive private flats many cannot afford.” We believe the Council needs to move quickly and ensure Hersham gets its Village Hall once again, as it is desperately needed.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

I'm a Labour supporter, I'd like to join the local branch
I'd like to register as a Labour supporter, please send me a form
I'd like to get involved in campaigning locally

Hazardous pavements

An elderly man on a mobility scooter was recently injured in Winchester Road, Walton, when he hit a tree root that had grown into the pavement and his scooter was overturned. Many of our pavements are extremely difficult and dangerous to navigate for disabled people and parents with pushchairs, not helped by the illegal parking of cars obscuring visibility for pedestrians. It is time Surrey and Elmbridge Councils take remedial action before someone is seriously hurt.

Ways to get in touch

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MORcE TORY CUTS TO COME IN 2018

As those on low and middle incomes face the New Year and worry how they can reduce spending after Christmas in the face of rising food, childcare and transport costs, we read that Tory-led Surrey County Council have lately been looking at their own Budget for 2017/18. Their ongoing aim is to save a massive total of £104m, and top of their list is the adult social care budget - a predicted £25.9m of stinging cuts for the elderly and disabled to cope with, while the Children, Schools and Families budget takes a possible £22.1m hit. Surrey County Council Fire Authority made a cut of £10m to Surrey’s Fire Service last June and they plan to save an extra £3.58m this year. While local burglaries go unsolved, our nearest police desk in Esher operates office hours only and is closed at weekends. Street lights have been turned off at night and make us all feel less safe.

With currently just one Labour spokesperson on Surrey County Council, we look forward not only to the prospect in May of a Labour voice on Elmbridge Council to speak up for those in Walton and Hersham who want a proper wage and a decent home in a safe neighbourhood, but also to the certainty of a Labour government delivering a brighter and fairer future for the whole country as the Tories continue to weaken their grip on government.

Surrey County Council turns up the pressure

Councillors must also bear part of the blame by not fighting for this valuable asset for the Hersham Community by ensuring it was properly maintained. We understand that discussions are taking place in consultation with surveyors and architects in order to find a way forward.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU
Labour supports a £10 living wage

Walton foodbank is based in St John’s Church and is open 11am - 1pm every Thursday and Friday. Hersham foodbank is based in St Peter’s Church and is open 3 - 5pm every Monday and 2 - 4pm every Tuesday. For more information, visit waltonhersham.foodbank.org.uk

Working people on low wages, as well as those who rely on disability benefit and Universal Credit (often due to circumstances beyond their control), are increasingly having to visit foodbanks in order to feed themselves and their families. Since the foodbanks in Walton and Hersham were opened in 2013 they have helped thousands of local people. In 2015/16, 2,585 three day food parcels were handed out in the local area. On its busiest day last summer, the foodbank in St. John’s Church in Walton distributed food to 33 people in the space of two hours, then a record high. Over the Christmas period, they distributed food to 140 people, including a new record of 55 people in the space of two hours. Across Surrey as a whole, 14,000 food parcels were given out in 2016/17 - a 20% increase on the previous year, over three times the national annual average increase of 6.64%. This cannot be right anywhere in 21st century Britain, but it’s particularly shocking in an area which many would describe as “affluent”.

Homes for all

Elbridge is one of the most affluent districts in the world and much of our borough’s housing is as expensive to rent and buy as it is in central London. We are seeing a significant increase locally in the numbers of people, some of them in work, having to sofa surf or sleep in parked cars because they have no other alternative.

The Labour Party wants a fairer Britain which offers opportunities for the majority on low and middle incomes not just the rich minority. It would stand up for the rights of the elderly and those struggling with physical disabilities and mental illness, as Labour always have. All of our children should enjoy the best possible start in life with properly funded childcare and schools. Yet, here on our doorstep, there are deprived areas in Walton and Hersham where 30% of children live in poverty - 20% above the Surrey average, according to Walton Charity’s Streets Ahead report, 2014. The Labour Party believes in fairness for all. It’s in our Manifesto. For the many not the few.

We all own the NHS

Last year, the Blanche Heriot clinic at St Peter’s Hospital was closed despite a huge local campaign by NHS supporters, and the vital sexual health services which it provided split up between clinics miles away in Medford, Guildford and Woking which can be more difficult for patients to travel to. Cuts like these erode vital local NHS services and open the door to private companies. Following the fiasco at the Weybridge Community Hospital, which there is no definite plan to reopen, the defunding of the NHS continues to put significant pressure on local facilities and the people who rely on them.

We believe that parents deserve secure and safe play environments for their children, and would invest more local funding into reviving these playgrounds.

Walton Youth Centre update

Walton Youth Centre, which has, for many years, provided vital services to disabled people and vulnerable adults and young people in the local community, faces potential partial closure following a decision by Surrey County Council to convert half of the building into a nursery. We must ask why the Council cannot invest in a purpose-built facility or make use of the surrounding empty buildings or the abandoned school on Manor Road so that the requirements of one group of local people need not be met at the cost of the requirements of another.

Street lights needed for public safety

On October 18th 2016, Surrey County Council approved the decision to turn the street lights off in selected roads between midnight and 6am, a process which has been gradually rolled out over the year. Many local residents who return to and leave their homes between these hours will be affected by these decisions. Particularly for the many who walk or cycle to and from the station in order to commute to and from London, this has caused concern. Walton and Hersham Labour Party are vehemently opposed to this proposal and pledge to fight the plans. We have voiced opposition to the plans and are awaiting further information.

Walton and Hersham need local public safety

Tory central government want to increase local business rates in Elmbridge by 22.3%, 2.5 times the average rate in the South East, while high parking charges discourage visitors. Last year, we spoke to locals in Walton outside the Terrace Road Co-op, and many voiced concerns over the closure of many shops in the High st and High street. Walton can’t be allowed to become a ghost town. Shoppers want a broad range of affordable chain and independent shops, which boost the local economy and leave their homes between 6am and 6pm. Walton and Hersham Labour Party believe that savings should not come at the cost of people’s sense of safety.

Another secondary school for Walton?

Subject to panning permission, 1200 place Heathside Free School would open in 2019, located on greenbelt land at the junction of the busy Terrace/Hurst Road and Waterside Drive, which leads to Xcel Leisure Centre. It will not be controlled by a local authority, but run by Elm Trust. In Hersham, the site of Thamesmead playground is now a state of disrepair. Many parents rely on playgrounds to ensure that their children are able to exercise and play safely, and this is just one of several in the local area to have become dilapidated. The Thamesmead playground is now rarely used other than for cigarette butts, further making it unusable spaces for children. We believe that parents deserve secure and safe play environments for their children, and would invest more local funding into reviving these playgrounds.

Decrepit playground in Thamesmead area

The children’s playground near the flats in Thamesmead has fallen into a state of disrepair. Many parents rely on playgrounds to ensure that their children are able to exercise and play safely, and this is just one of several in the local area to have become dilapidated. The Thamesmead playground is now rarely used other than for cigarette butts, further making it unusable spaces for children. We believe that parents deserve secure and safe play environments for their children, and would invest more local funding into reviving these playgrounds.

Hands off Hersham

New Boundary Commission proposals for Hersham have stunned local residents, as the ill-considered plans would mean half of their close-knit community remaining in Esher and Walton’s Parliamentary Constituency, while the rest would find themselves in Philip Hammond’s Runnymede and Weybridge Constituency. Julie Crook, the Hersham spokesperson for Walton and Hersham Labour Party, commented: “It is particularly shocking in an area which many would describe as “affluent”.

Labour representatives will be running in all wards of Walton and Hersham in the May 2018 Elmbridge Borough Council elections. We are proud to introduce our candidates as follows: Walton North: Luke Hyland Walton Central: Peter Ramsbottom Walton South: Katrina Jepson Hersham: Julie Crook

supporting your local community in Walton and Hersham

The provision of social housing to rent in affluent, unequal Elmbridge is totally inadequate and the availability of shared ownership homes practically non-existent, so it’s no wonder that we have homeless support charities in Walton, where the average house cost rose by a staggering 49.5% from £89,475 to £332,500 between 1995 and 2015 (UK Land Registry figures). Local young people are forced to move away to find their own flat to rent or buy, and thousands of low income families in Elmbridge wait years in vain for a decent home. Many more truly affordable homes are needed in Elmbridge for ordinary working people, but will Housing Minister Dominic Raab and Elmbridge Council deliver them? Don’t bet on it.


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