

**FROM YOUR LOCAL COLLEGE WARD LIB DEM TEAM:
Cllr. Julie Morris, Cllr. David Gulland, Helen Maguire, James Lawrence, Alison Kelly**

GOVERNMENT DITHERS OVER FUTURE OF GREEN BELT

...AND PLUNGES COUNCILS INTO UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THEIR LOCAL PLANS

Liberal Democrat councillors have suggested that Epsom & Ewell Borough Council delay the publication of the next phase of its Local Plan from the current date of early February, so as to incorporate potential changes to the housing targets and Green Belt development strategy suggested by national government.

The government announced just before Christmas that it would be consulting on possible changes to its Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill (www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy). The most significant suggestion for Epsom & Ewell is a **proposal that it will not be necessary to use Green Belt land** if it's the only way a borough can meet its housing targets.

"The original timetable for the draft Local Plan to go out to public consultation from early in February could well stand if it can be tweaked in accordance with the government's suggested changes," says Cllr **Julie Morris**. "But it might be better to delay a month until the consultation has ended so that the council can properly consider making appropriate and considered changes before it goes online for public consultation."

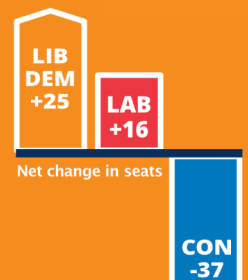
Julie is a member of the borough council's Planning Policy committee and has previously been critical of Epsom & Ewell council's slow progress towards the production of a Local Plan.

"We hope a delay won't be necessary but pausing for a few weeks could potentially save months of extra work in 2023" says **Cllr Morris**. "It could also make our Plan more robust and compliant with the reforms government is now suggesting, whilst also being more in tune with local opinion."

2022 By-election results

Congratulations!

Liberal Democrats
win 51 council by-
elections in 2022...
with 30 gains from
other parties!





RESIDENTS CONDEMN ALDI CONSULTATION AS "A SHAM" in Epsom have run into more protests by local people.

Their previous proposals on the same site were thrown out by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council in 2016, and then lost on Appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. In the interim a new Lidl has opened up just 200 yards away.

Aldi's new plans are expected to become a formal planning application in the next few weeks, after "consultation" has taken place with local residents.

A local resident who lives almost next door to the development site said "They pretend to have consulted people, but it's only a few people. They offered a virtual consultation for 1 day only and it was outsourced. If you want to engage with people come and talk to us" was her invitation to Aldi.

A resident of nearby Wyeths Road which backs onto the site commented "Lidl had an exhibition so everyone could attend and see the plans." Her neighbour added "We

mustn't give up. We fought them off 5 years ago and we can do it again"

Stopaldi campaign coordinator, **Julie Morris**, met a local police officer who lives nearby. He was quite clear about siting the foodstore on the notoriously hazardous "five ways" junction: "In the past two years I have had to deal with four incidents, one serious, when off duty". The Aldi business model relies on lorry deliveries which can arrive at any time of day. This would make the junction even more treacherous.

Helen Maguire, Lib Dem parliamentary spokesperson, summed up the feelings of the assembled protestors: "no-one has anything against Aldi but it's the wrong place for a foodstore - this area is almost 100% residential. What the people of Epsom are crying out for is more starter and affordable housing, not another foodstore."

COMMUNITY COLUMN

Warm Hubs have been set up across Epsom and Ewell this winter.

These let people enjoy a safe, warm and friendly environment in which to enjoy a hot drink, social activity and receive information and advice. The hubs are open to all but are particularly beneficial to residents in hard to heat homes, those who are isolated, or those worried about their energy bills.

Warm Hubs in Epsom are held every

Wednesday at the Epsom Methodist Church, 13 Ashley Rd, and daily (except Sunday) at **Epsom Library**, 6 Epsom Square. Opening times vary but are always open between 9:30am and 5pm.

You can **park your bike** at any bike stand in Epsom for FREE. Please use these where possible so you don't block a bike lane or footpath.

The **Hook Road Car Boot Sale** has moved indoors for the winter. The Hook Road multi-story car park will host the event every Sunday between 15th January and 19th February. It will return to the Hook Road Arena in March.

LIB DEMS CAMPAIGNING LOCALLY

With Surrey at risk of 16 new fracking sites following the Liz Truss (remember her?) government's decision to lift the ban on fracking, Lib Dems took to the streets of Epsom in October to protest and to collect signatures opposing the decision. Within a week of their action, Rishi Sunak had become the next Conservative Prime Minister and had reinstated the fracking ban. *Coincidence?? We like to think not!*



Local parliamentary spokesperson **Helen Maguire** (second left in photo below) joined campaigners in Ashtead to ask local people to sign our petition to **stop dumping sewage into rivers** such as the Mole and the Hogsmill.

Lib Dems are calling on the government to clean up our rivers by strengthening powers to hold companies to account for their raw sewage discharge and to introduce a Sewage Tax on water company profits to fund the clean-up of our waterways. "It's a disgrace that this government has simply let water companies off the hook," said **Helen**.

If you haven't done so already, you too can sign the petition at change.libdems.org.uk/stop-sewage.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Councillor **David Gulland** is pressing the council to act against developers who fail to provide replacement trees, even after a **Tree Replacement Notice** (TRN) has been issued.

The council's response was that they aren't obliged to keep a record of TRNs issued, so there is no record of how many have been served. Moreover, they don't have sufficient manpower to monitor TRN compliance so have to rely on voluntary compliance or on local residents telling them when TRNs haven't been observed.

"This is extraordinary," said **David**. "No wonder we have had several instances recently where replacement tree planting hasn't taken place despite a TRN being issued."

LIGHTS ON

Prompted by a query from a local resident, Councillor **David Gulland** asked the council why the Christmas lights in the town centre were still lit up during daylight when we're all meant to be saving energy?

The council tells us that the new lamp columns are not fitted with timers as a standard feature. The council has looked at purchasing new timer technology to conserve energy, but apparently can't afford it. "This seems like a classic example of being unwilling to 'invest to save'," says **David**.



A CREMATORIUM FOR EPSOM?

Residents' Association councillors decided to discuss an "income generating opportunity" in private at a recent council meeting despite opposition from Lib Dem and Labour councillors. This meant that all public and press would be excluded from hearing any details. However, before they were excluded, one RA councillor let the cat out of the bag that the "opportunity" was for a **crematorium**.

It seems that the RA council prefers to take secret decisions that are not open to scrutiny by local people.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Let us know about any issues you have that your local Lib Dem FOCUS team might be able to help with:

Name:

House No:

Post Code:

Phone:

Email:

- Keep me updated about Lib Dem campaigns and activities
- I can help deliver Lib Dem leaflets in my area
- I want to join the Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats will use your contact details to send you information on the topics you have requested. Any data we gather will be used in accordance with our privacy policy at libdems.org.uk/privacy. To exercise your legal data rights, email: data.protection@libdems.org.uk

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**MAKE SURE YOU GET JULIE AND DAVID'S MONTHLY ROUND-UP OF LOCAL ISSUES ... AND MORE!
GO TO WWW.EPSOM-EWELL-LIBDEMS.ORG.UK/EN/SUBSCRIBE-BY-EMAIL**