



# College Ward Residents Association

## **Spring 2011 Newsletter &**

## **Notice of AGM**

to be held at

**The Queen's Stand, Epsom Racecourse**

on

**Wednesday 16th March  
7.45pm for 8.00pm**

**Guest Speaker:-**

**Detective Chief Superintendent Adrian Harper**

**Theme:**

**Policing in Epsom - the effects of cuts.**

The College Ward Residents Association is an organisation dedicated to you, the local resident. Every year we hold an AGM at the Queens Stand at Epsom Downs Racecourse, where we present a record of our work and achievements for the year.

As a resident of College Ward, you are cordially invited to join us, to listen to our presentation, and to participate in that most enjoyable pastime, local debate. You'll enjoy a glass of wine and nibble too!

If you think local politics are dull and unimportant - think again! What you think is important, and in the CWRA you have a genuine opportunity to express your views - don't waste it!

We look forward to your company at the AGM, Wednesday 16th March at 7:45pm..

# Agenda

1. Welcome from the Chairman
2. Approve the minutes of the AGM held on 28th April 2010
3. Approve & adopt the Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2010 and to appoint an Auditor
4. Election of the Committee for 2011/2012
5. Reports from Chairman and County Cllr Chris Frost
6. "The effects of cuts on policing in Epsom"  
Speaker: Detective Chief Superintendent Adrian Harper
7. Open Forum
8. Closing Summary by the Chairman

**Please stay for a drink and a chat after the meeting**

Membership of CWRA Committee is open to any College Ward resident and we welcome applications.

Nominations should be received by the Secretary (see page 12) no later than 2nd March.

***A Happy Easter  
to all  
College Ward Residents***



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## A message from your Chairman . . .

As a result of the economic recession, in January 2010 your forward thinking Borough Council anticipated a gap of income over expenditure of over £1M. This meant that some hard decisions had to be made and at the time it seemed that only Epsom & Ewell was being affected but now, with the General Election over, the newspapers and TV are full of service cuts and reduced expenditure decisions.

The Borough has already made efficiency savings of £700,000 through various measures such as energy consumption reduction, wage freezes, civic budget cuts, how certain services were managed and sadly some job losses - all made without affecting frontline services. Yet some very hard choices still have to be made. Almost daily, we learn of national cuts in welfare services, new schools, departmental budgets reduced by 25%, swimming pools being closed and libraries disappearing.

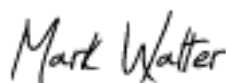
If you attended some of the Council meetings you may be forgiven for thinking that Epsom & Ewell were living in a parallel universe for the Lib Dem and Conservative Borough councillors seemed to argue that - hard choices did not have to be made and that we could actually increase Council spending in new areas! At the July Council meeting, the Lib Dem councillors voted to employ a new Climate Change Officer at a cost of £45,000 and, spend money on unproven transport initiatives and tourism. Thank goodness the RA councillors threw this out!

The reason I mention this is because when we have trawled College Ward's roads (and we have now twice visited every property in College Ward during the past 4 years) we've heard some strange stories gleaned from the literature distributed by the Political Parties. We have always told you the truth with no manipulation of the facts. We work to serve your needs as a community and in the past we have always resisted commenting on some provocative statements printed by others - and for that we sometimes suffer! I hope you will remember that when you get a leaflet from your local party politicians telling you they would save every service or find 'easy' efficiency savings, the reality is rather different. Rightly or wrongly, the Coalition Government are making huge cuts to budgets, grants and services. To pretend that Epsom & Ewell is immune from these factors is unrealistic and unsupported by what we see in our daily lives.

This year during our trawls, we have also resolved several issues which you felt had not been properly dealt with by your Lib Dem councillors. We are happy to help for as I've previously stated, we exist to serve YOUR needs and the community as a whole. But we can only do that with your active support.

The committee and I look forward to meeting you at our forthcoming A.G.M. on the 16th March or indeed at any of our regular committee meetings.

Yours sincerely,



# STOP PRESS

We are delighted to report that your new Neighbourhood Inspector, Craig Knight has just been appointed.

Craig has over 16 years experience serving in both Kent and Surrey, mainly in the uniformed areas of policing but he also has more specialist policing experience in public order and firearms command.

He is particularly delighted to be coming into Epsom and Ewell as your Neighbourhood Inspector and looks forward to working alongside you in the future.



*College Ward Priorities:* At the recent Woodcote, College and Stamford panel meeting traffic issues have been raised with regards to the junction of Treadwell Road and Downs Road. Surrey County Council are working with the Police to resolve these issues.

The next Panel Meeting will be held at 8.00pm on 16th March at The Holiday Inn, which unfortunately clashes with our AGM.

## Borough Elections

These will take place on Thursday May 5th.

If you wish to receive a postal vote telephone the contact centre on 01372 732000 and after hearing the options, hold on for a member of staff to deal with your request. The last day for receipt of new postal voters is Thursday 14th April at 5pm. If you would like a form for a Postal Vote please contact the CWRA Secretary (see page 12).

If you can spare some time to help us during the election we will be very pleased to hear from you. Contact Brenda Linney (see page 12)

## New CAB Service for Young People

The Citizens Advice Bureau has launched a new website of advice for under 25 year olds. The website [www.advice4me.org.uk](http://www.advice4me.org.uk) has been set up to address the needs of younger people who sometimes face different issues to citizens of other ages.



Nationally the Citizens Advice Bureau has seen a 21% increase in enquiries from younger people covering such issues as personal loan debts, credit, store and charge card debts, privately rented property, Jobseekers Allowance, telephone and broadband debts, pay and entitlements and dismissal from work.

Please pass on these website details to any young people who you feel would benefit from the CAB's free, independent, confidential and impartial advice.

## Epsom General Hospital - The Campaign Continues

After much local campaigning; Epsom Hospital will be divorced from St Helier. It was never a happy marriage as funds and services seemed to be moved to St Helier even while Epsom residents argued that the journey to Sutton for patients and their visitors was long, difficult and unwelcome.

However, the new future of Epsom Hospital remains to be decided. A stand alone Hospital, or one that links into another Surrey hospital? A question to be answered and one which is all too familiar for those of us campaigning over the years to save key services at our hospital.

We must be positive and alert. Epsom Hospital will survive, but we must, once again, ensure that the decision makers are made very aware which acute services we want retained. Accident and Emergency 24/7, maternity, paediatrics and ITU are what that local residents have campaigned for and they are the acute services which your Residents' Association councillors have, and will be, championing in the coming months.

A Project Board is being set up to produce a new forward plan for Epsom Hospital, although the outcome may not be known until the end of 2011. It is important that representatives of the local community play a part in the creation of that forward plan. We have already taken action by putting forward names to the Chair of the Project Board to ensure that local Residents' Association Councillors are involved in the process.

Residents Association Councillor Neil Dallen is spearheading a campaign ( supported by the local Guardian newspaper) to collect signatures for a petition in support of maintaining the services listed above. It's a positive campaign, designed to remind the decision makers of your views. **Join the campaign. Sign the petition. Make your voice is heard!**

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## Surrey County Council to introduce on-street parking charges

The Conservative administration has decided to introduce on-street parking charges in Surrey. No 'back-bench' County Councillors of any political group have been asked to decide whether this is appropriate for Surrey, nor have they been consulted about the location of parking bays or charges to be levied. The scheme will be rolled out over a year, with Epsom & Ewell due in November. There's supposed to be 'statutory consultation' before each new scheme but all this means is a notice in the back of a local newspaper and some notices on lampposts by the proposed parking bays - and the schedule for Epsom is for this to happen in August/September! Charges to be set at 3 levels:

High	£1.40 per hour; 70p for half an hour
Medium	£1.00 per hour; 50p for half an hour
Low	60p per hour; 30p for half an hour

High charges apply in major towns like Guildford and Woking. Medium charges apply in most towns and large villages, and low charges apply in small shopping parades.

Make you comments known by e-mail the Parking Team at [parking@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:parking@surreycc.gov.uk), or write to The Parking Team, Room 308a, Surrey County Council, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston, KT1 2DN.

# Ward News

## The Falling Leaves

In 1992, when College Ward's three Residents' Association Councillors, mindful of residents needs, introduced the special

leaf collection service for Ashley, Downs and Treadwell Roads, Milburn Walk and The Ridings which suffered leaf fall to a greater extent, like no other part of the Borough. When this arrangement ceased in 2010 we were very concerned at the impact on residents. In fact one resident told me that she had approached one of College Ward's Lib Dem councillors and said "she was useless". Since last October we have fought tirelessly to get this issue put back on the Environment Committee's Agenda. Finally, the topic appeared on January's agenda papers, which report specifically named the CWRA Secretary's objections on behalf of CWRAs residents. As a result, weekly collections will be made during the seasonal collection period (September to February).

### **Opportunistic and rather disingenuous!**

Some residents in the affected areas have received a leaflet about 'leaves', distributed by College Ward's Lib Dem councillors and you may be under the impression that they were the driving force behind these changes. This is not so. When this was first discussed in January 2010, it was noted that all three remained surprisingly quiet and furthermore, they voted for a suspension of the service!

## Planning

We successfully fought inappropriate proposals to develop a property in Walnut Close which subsequently went to Appeal. We are pleased to report that the Inspector supported our view and dismissed the Appeal on the main issue - the effect the development would have on the character and appearance of the Downs Road Conservation Area. The previous Government's changes to the planning rules have made it more difficult to substantiate refusal but CWRA has consistently fought to preserve the character of College Ward - particularly in Conservation Areas, otherwise there seems no point in designating Conservation Areas in the first place!

## Friends of the Parks

Some while ago, CWRA raised funds to improve the amenities of our parks and I am delighted to report that Alexandra Park will benefit from new seating in the playground and Elizabeth Welchman Gardens will be the subject of more bulb planting and improvements to the wooden fencing from which one can overlook the lower grassed area in the chalk pit.



It was College Ward Residents Association who first conceived the idea of the Friends of Alexandra Park (FOAP) in the early 90s and this idea was later adopted to include Elizabeth Welchman Gardens. Despite rumours to the contrary we are still going strong!

## The 60+ Concessionary Bus Fares Scheme

This is currently administered by the Borough Council and provides for residents to use their bus passes from 9.00am Monday to Friday. In April Surrey County Council takes over the running of the Scheme and, at SCCs December meeting, the ruling Group voted to change the Scheme and delay the weekday start time to 9.30am.

For every resident over 60 in Epsom & Ewell who is a pass holder this is a cut to a valued front line service. For some, the change will be a major inconvenience, especially those with early morning hospital appointments or those whose first available alternative bus starts at 10.00am and those who continue in active employment. It means that our residents are once again, getting a lesser service than friends and family living in London.

What makes the decision even more unacceptable is that, when the matter was debated at the Council Meeting, the Conservatives voted to end the debate after only five councillors had spoken and they refused to allow any Residents' Association County Councillor to speak on the issue.

## Hospital

We've been busy collecting signatures, in the town and elsewhere, for a petition to save A & E, Intensive Care, Paediatrics and Maternity at Epsom Hospital, whatever the future holds. (See item on p 6) Our photo shows Ruth Sharma and Robert Charlton manning the stall in Epsom on a very windy Saturday afternoon.



Gill Heym

## Neighbourhood Panel Meeting

Speeding traffic still a problem. The principal concern was the recent spate of burglaries. We were assured that some perpetrators were in custody and others had been identified and were under surveillance.

Nevertheless there was no room for complacency. Usual modus operandi was to enter from the back of the property, restricting access to ground floor and then leaving via front door with keys and then taking the car. Ensure your burglar alarms are active. Police appealed for public vigilance in this respect and stressed suspicious activities and instances of anti-social behaviour should be reported.



Richard Baldox



## Surrey County Council News

**SCC to lose £41 million funding over two years:** Central government grant has been cut by 25% over two years - £25.5m in 2011/12, that's 4.3% less. Another 10% will be cut in 2012/13, amounting to £15.5m.

The total formula grant from Government will decrease from £178.2m this financial year to £152.7m next year. The Government changed the way formula grant is allocated this year. The local government finance settlement announcement set out that nationally the formula grant from Whitehall would be reduced by 9.9% in 2011/2012 and by 7.3% in 2012/2013. In addition, the Government said councils' 'spending power' for 2011/12 would be cut by 4.4% on average. 'Spending power' takes into account income such as council tax and other grants as well as the core formula grant. At the time of writing, the council is still awaiting final details of some specific grants.

**Concessionary Bus Fares scheme:** Government insists that the scheme's administration is passed to shire county authorities with effect from April 2011. The national start time has always been 09.30 on Monday - Fridays, but, led by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, nearly all Surrey Borough Councils paid for a start time of 09.00. When the County Council takes over in April the Conservative administration has decided that the start time will move to 09.30, to save an estimated £230,000 p.a. There are no time restrictions on weekends or public holidays. The existing scheme enhancements for disabled pass holders across the whole of Surrey is to be maintained, i.e. no time restrictions on free travel. Companion passes for disabled pass holders and people over 60 who find it very difficult to travel on their own will be retained.

**May Gurney wins roads contract:** The council's current joint road maintenance contractors Ringway and Carillion will be replaced by May Gurney on 28<sup>th</sup> April. Under the proposed six-year deal, worth more than £60 million, 30,000 of all potholes May Gurney will repair in a year will be fixed within 24 hours of being reported. Currently, 19,000 a year are repaired within a seven-day deadline. May Gurney was also awarded a six-year drain cleaning contract and a two-year contract to improve road surfaces.

**Wallace Fields Schools parking issues:** I am still working on the school traffic issues. At the time of writing the County's budget has not been agreed, so it's too early to know whether any money will be allocated for completing a parking restriction review. The Infant School's Liaison committee that I helped set up will be considering whether some more staff parking on site is possible as this would reduce the number of vehicles parked all day on adjacent roads. At present, I still don't have a date when the Access Protection Markings that have been requested will be implemented. The work may be delayed because the County is in the process of changing the highways contractor.

**Boundary Commission recommends no reduction in the number of County Councillors:** It feels that the number should remain the same, despite some of us suggesting the numbers be reduced to save money. The review will be redrawing some boundaries, as some County Divisions are significantly larger or smaller than others. The aim is to make everyone's vote 'worth' as much as everyone else's.

Chris Frost

# CWRA OFFICERS & MEETING DATES

Chairman:	Mark Walter	mark@one2seesigns.co.uk	07770 836 457
Vice Chairman:	Colin Bird	vandcbird2@btinternet.com	01372 723443
Treasurer/Sec'y:	Gill Heym	gillheym@ntlworld.com	01372 811 135
Road Reps:	Brenda Linney	brenda@mwjlinney.com	01372 721 446
Electoral Roll:	Chris Allen	krisaltips@yahoo.co.uk	01372 727 507
Advertising:	Mike Linney	mike@mwjlinney.com	01372 721 446

## 2011 Meeting Dates

March 9th      April 13th      May 11th      June 8th      July 13th  
September 14th      October 12th      November 9th

We meet at South Hatch Restaurant at 8.00pm on every second Wednesday of the month apart from August and December.

Any paid up RA member is welcome to attend our meetings and raise any local issue. It's helpful if you email or telephone the Secretary before the meeting.

## Subscriptions - still held at only £3 per household!

Despite increases in the cost of living and across the board we are happy to report that subscriptions remain at £3 this year. However we do need your strong support if we are to maintain our high level of service to you, the residents.

Please put your money in the white envelope in this Newsletter and pop it in your Road Rep's door or contact any officer of the committee (see above) who will make arrangements to collect it. Many thanks.

## Ever thought about becoming an RA Councillor?

### Would you like to join the CWRA Committee?

You could help influence decisions which may directly affect you and your family. We're not at all 'formal' and quite a friendly bunch but we do care passionately about our local environment and local issues!

Why not come along for a 'sampler'?

Just call or email the Secretary on

01372811135

email: [gillheym@ntlworld.com](mailto:gillheym@ntlworld.com)

## Reducing Regulation and Costs

If there's anything positive to have come out of this country's financial crisis, it's the fact that our national politicians have now had to look at the value and cost of rules and regulations that have been imposed on local government and councillors over the years. Residents Association councillors have consistently argued against over regulation by Ministers, time consuming form filling, and costly audits imposed from above - but the party politicians have always insisted that they were necessary and have increased rather than reduced regulation. However, with public funding much tighter and central government wanting to off-load more tasks on to local government, things are changing and what was once absolutely necessary is now being discarded. A few examples.

**Financial Audit:** Every year each local authority has to have its books inspected by the Audit Commission - **and pay for the privilege**. In one sense it was a good thing for the Borough Council as, year after year, your RA led Council was judged as performing very well by the Auditors. However, the exercise is costing the council taxpayer about £138,000 a year. Now the Coalition Government has declared that from 2012/2013 this costly financial analysis by the Audit Commission will cease, saving the Council a quite unnecessary expense.

**Comprehensive Area Assessment:** The CAA was a full inspection of every local authority by an outside team of 'experts' designed to grade the authority in terms of a criteria determined by central government. Suddenly the CAA has been abolished as unnecessary and again money, time and resources are being saved.

**National Performance Indicators.** For many years local authorities have had to employ staff to provide the national Government with data related to hundreds of National Performance Indicators. Who in Government ever checked the statistics or read the data? Now the Coalition Government has decided the collection of all that information is a waste of time and, in Epsom and Ewell, that may mean a saving of about £40,000. What a pity we ever had to spend that money in the first place.

*For years Resident Association councillors have argued that Audit inspections cost far too much, the CAA wasted time and resources, and collecting meaningless statistics was an unnecessary expense. At last - party politicians, both nationally and locally - have come round to the Resident Association way of thinking!*

