

Woodcote Ward

FOCUS



Your Focus Team

Trevor Barker
Leslie Diana Coman
Cllr Alison Kelly
Cllr Jonathan Lees
Cllr Colin Taylor

November/December 2007

Residents' Party Councillors vote themselves a 14% pay increase

Residents' Party Councillors voted themselves a huge increase in their allowances despite a move from the Liberal Democrats to limit the rise to the rate of inflation.

"Once again the Residents' Party are using the months after

the election to hide unpopular decisions. If they were confident that the general public would stomach them taking a 14% pay increase, they should have put that in their election manifestos. The fact that this was kept quiet and only revealed after the election is sneaky," said **Trevor Barker**.



Residents desperate for road repairs

**Conservative-led County Council
make staff redundant then blame
staff shortages for failure
to deliver road repairs**

Liberal Democrat County Councillors were stunned to be told at a meeting on 19th July, that last year was the third in succession that the County Council UNDER-SPENT on roads - this time by £5.2 million. The excuse given was 'a loss of key design staff and vacancies'.

This is the same council that spent most of last year cutting the staffing of the highways department

by a third and paying out millions of pounds in redundancy payments.

Local **Liberal Democrat County Councillor Colin Taylor** told FOCUS "You couldn't make it up. New Road schemes have slipped for the second year running and important road improvements have not been delivered in many parts of the county."

Leslie Coman added: "Residents are rightly getting fed

up with the state of the roads in the Borough. Some roads are so bad it is like driving over a rumble strip. What concerns me is whether long term neglect will lead to greater costs for repairs when the Council finally gets round to doing the work."

**Tell your local Focus Team
about potholes or roads in poor
condition. Details on back page.**

Council holding back investment in recycling

As it becomes clear that doorstep collections of plastics and cardboard are not likely to start until 2009, Liberal Democrats call on the Council to take recycling seriously.

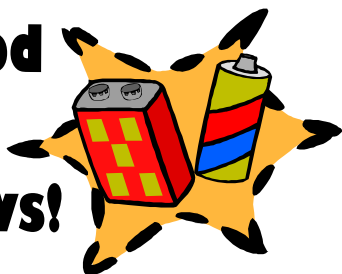


Doorstep collection of plastics and cardboard are not likely to begin until April 2009 at the earliest. The Council is holding back, waiting for vehicles which might be able to take non-compostable kitchen waste as well as other materials.

Liberal Democrats have been pressing the Residents' Party-led Council to invest in recycling by refocusing expenditure. RA Councillors claim that they are delivering 'cost efficient recycling'. This is not cost effective, it is costing the earth. The Residents'

Party have followed rather than led on this important issue showing they lack the courage to take on the real challenges that face the environment. It is only government targets and pressure from residents that have finally forced them to act.

Good News!



The Council hopes to introduce doorstep collection of batteries. A secure box needs to be attached to the recycling vehicles. In the meantime, if you want to recycling your batteries, take them to the Recycling Centre on the Longmead Industrial Estate.

Make a Green Resolution for 2008

Make a Green Resolution this New Year - change light bulbs for energy saving bulbs, recycle more. Tell Focus what you changed and we will publish it in Focus.



Recycle your Christmas Cards at M&S, in Epsom, or at the next WRAG Coffee Morning - call 0845 833 7467 for details.



Focus is printed on 100% recycled paper.

Please observe the speed limit

Residents are telling the Focus Team that some people are not observing the voluntary 20mph speed limit on the **Woodcote Estate**. There are concerns that with no pavements, pedestrians are particularly vulnerable and at night, with deer roaming around, vehicles travelling at speed could have a nasty accident. Please help keep our neighbourhood safe and drive slowing through the estate.

Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (and Borough Councillor) **Jonathan Lees** reports that the Fair Trade Forum meets regularly and held a number of events during National Fair Trade fortnight.

At a full Council meeting on 11 December, Members agreed to back the Fairtrade campaign and meet set requirements laid down by the national Fairtrade Foundation.

You can help by continuing to ask for, and buy, Fair Trade products in all our local shops.

Back Garden Land Petition handed to Minister



Cllr Julie Morris (left) and Leslie Coman outside the offices of the Department for Communities and Local Government, on a very windy day, handing in the Hands off our Back Gardens Petition.

Liberal Democrat Councillor Julie Morris, Tom Brake Lib Dem MP for Carshalton & Wallington and local resident Leslie Coman, handed in a petition calling on the government to remove back garden land from brownfield site designation.

Nearly 1000 people supported the Liberal Democrat Campaign, which also asked for powers to protect back garden and green spaces to be given to local authorities.

“Treating back gardens like warehouse yards fails to acknowledge the important social, environmental and ecological value of back gardens. Many gardens provide important wildlife habitats,” said **Leslie Coman**.

For information about the local pressure group RAVE (Residents Against Vandalism of our Environment) call 01372 728600 or **Cllr Julie Morris** on 01372 744297.

Amendments to Rosebery Playing Fields planning application

The Council’s Planning Committee have approved revised plans for the Rosebery Playing Fields development.

The new design ensures the Turkish Oak will be visible from the path leading to **Whitehorse Drive** by placing 2 smaller blocks of flats along the path.

The materials to be used will be more in keeping with the area and the blocks will have pitched roofs. The Committee also amended the fencing arrangements to reduce their impact on neighbouring **Meadow Court**. This was called for by Liberal Democrat County Councillor, Colin Taylor.



It was the fast action of former Lib Dem Councillor Lindsey Fisk, that stopped the Turkish Oak being felled a few years ago!

Colin also obtained a commitment to protect the trees from damage during construction. This will be achieved by way of a fence.

How to get in touch with your local Focus Team

Trevor Barker

Fairway, 7 Barons Hurst,
Epsom, KT18 7DU
Tel: 01372 742793
Email: trevor.barker@epsom-
ewell-libdems.org.uk

Leslie-Diana Coman

1 Christchurch Place, Christ
Church Mount, Epsom,
KT19 8RS
Tel: 01372 720753
Email: leslie.coman@epsom-
ewell-libdems.org.uk

Parliamentary Spokesperson

Cllr Jonathan Lees

5 William Evans Road, Epsom,
KT19 7DE
01372 749149
Email: jonathan.lees@epsom-
ewell-libdems.org.uk

The Nonsuch Estate - are we finally moving towards a sensible solution?

Conservative-led Surrey County Council (SCC), stepped in and took over Nonsuch and ordered a consultant's report at a cost of £100,000 to the council tax payer. The aim of the report was to assess the potential alternative uses for the Mansion as follows:

- Offices
- 5 star hotel and associated leisure and wedding facilities
- Quality residential apartments
- Mixed use scheme including local food emporium, and finally
- an appraisal of the catering proposals received by the Nonsuch Joint Management Committee (NJMC).

To add insult to injury, SCC has never put its hand in its pocket and given Nonsuch any money towards its upkeep, leaving it entirely to Epsom & Ewell & Sutton Councils to fund maintenance.

It has been reported that the Nonsuch Estate used to be on SCC's Countryside Register and was moved off this and put onto a 'disposals' list. Your Focus team is currently trying to find more about this through a Freedom of Information request.

Our Tory MP, Chris Grayling, said that SCC 'has always promised' him that they 'wanted public access to the mansion to be protected'. Well, I suppose it could be argued that there would be public access to a hotel as long as you could afford the 5 star charges! The implication of this statement, however, is that the Mansion House was under some sort of threat in the first place, which it wasn't - the only threat to the future of the Mansion came when Conservative-led SCC stepped in. Mr Grayling went on further to say that he had brokered

a deal with Surrey County Council. His idea, to offer a 125 year lease, was in fact proposed by the Borough's Chief Executive back in February/March this year. It is a pity Mr Grayling did not have the good grace to put his support behind an already tabled proposal - or perhaps in the hastily convened private meeting he had with his Conservative colleagues in SCC, they forgot to tell him that someone had already suggested this idea. One wonders if the rumour of a general election was the reason Mr Grayling met SCC - after all, who would want to go into a general election with your Conservative colleagues trying to sell off our heritage?

The NJMC have now met and agreed, in principle, to the

proposal to grant a 125 year lease to both Epsom & Ewell and Sutton Councils.

The catering contract, negotiated by NJMC has been on hold since this debacle started. SCC promised to support Nonsuch up to £95,000, to compensate for the lost income, and despite rumours that only half would be given, it appears that SCC will honour that commitment. At their recent meeting NJMC said that for the lease to be viable, not only would the £95,000 be required this year, but a further £85,000 would be needed in 2008/9. It is also understood that SCC has offered to pay for any public consultation or information, and this was accepted by NJMC.

Your Focus Team will continue to support the community-wide campaign to protect Nonsuch and press for a deal that ensures its future as a community asset.

Woodcote Reports Back!

We want to hear from you about issues that concern you, either in the Ward, the Town or nationally. Send this coupon to Leslie Coman or Trevor Barker, or write or email them - contact details on centre pages

Your Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone: