

MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024

www.moleseyresidentsassociation.org.uk

e-mail contact: mjaxton@live.com



Chairman: Stuart Selleck, 2 St. John's Road, KT8 9JH Tel: 020-8979-2466

Molesey Residents Association Councillors at Elmbridge

Ruby Ahmed 020-8979-4210 Mike Axton 07763-781933 Tony Popham 07970-107937

MRA Councillor at Surrey County Council - Ernest Mallett 020-8979-6446



SUCCESS!

For several years now, Molesey Residents Association has been trying, via our County Councillor, Ernest Mallett, to persuade Surrey County Council to provide a road crossing facility in Walton Road by the West Molesey War Memorial.

At this point, very close to the local Sainsbury's store, there are bus stops on both sides of the road so pedestrians frequently have to make dangerous crossings of the busy Walton Road - close to the sharp bend in the road by the New Road junction.

We are delighted to see that, while carrying out the resurfacing of Walton Road, Surrey C.C. took note of our proposals and included a pedestrian refuge in the middle of the road. At the same time the road edging alignments were slightly modified to control traffic speeds – all making the act of crossing the road at this point so much safer. Well done, Surrey C.C. - even if it did take a while.

The resurfacing of Walton Road is much appreciated with all the potholes and rough surfaces now a distant memory – what an improvement! Local residents are very pleased with these improvements and are glad to be able to cross the busy Walton Road in safety. MRA Cllrs. Mike Axton and Ernest Mallett are also pressing SCC for measures to improve road safety around Chandlers Field School and they have agreed to consider a 20mph speed limit in the roads around the school.

77-79 Walton Road
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OUR FUTURE IN MOLESEY

Over the last few years, it has increasingly suited the main political parties to fight local elections on national issues such as the NHS, energy costs and the cost of living. Although very important, these issues are completely beyond the control of local councils and irrelevant at local elections when only local issues are at stake.

One should not underestimate the value of having Residents' Councillors on Elmbridge and Surrey County Councils compared with those with national political parties. The main differences are independence and local accountability. Residents' Councillors are not attached to a national political party, which has a whip that overrides local concerns where ideology, direction and even newsletters come from national party headquarters.

This was clearly demonstrated in the early 60s, when the Conservative controlled Esher Council suddenly sprung a plan to house London's overspill in high rise flats, by clearing Palace, Wolsey and Arnison Roads. The residents of these roads joined together and ran an extremely vigorous campaign against the Council, which they won and this is now a conservation area.

The victorious residents decided they would put their new found skills to use and, in 1965, formed the Molesey Residents Association to achieve direct representation on the local Council, so that never again could the community be so easily and secretly threatened. Since then, we have successfully fought many campaigns over issues of development, highways, education and local services. We successfully saved the Thames Riverside lands for public use from development, caused Mole Hall and the swimming pool to be built and prevented the closure of Molesey Hospital.



We work throughout the whole year to promote and take action on behalf of all Molesey residents, much of it unseen. We give planning advice to residents as well as fighting inappropriate developments, such as The Jolly Boatman and Pavilion sites. Molesey is a great place to live, and we feel proud that over many years, we have significantly contributed to the local community.

However, the passage of time is taking its toll on our unpaid volunteers. Without more active committee members it is more difficult to maintain all our work.

We are always open to new ideas for us to go forward, please contact us if you would like to get involved in the future of Molesey.

CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS

MRA Cllr. Ruby Ahmed has been having on-site discussions with council officers about EBC plans for play area improvements at West Molesey, Grovelands and Molesey Hurst recreation grounds. EBC proposes to replace some of the equipment at the 3 sites to improve play opportunities and will start the procurement process early this year. EBC has launched an online survey to ask residents about the type of equipment they would like to see installed.



MRA County Cllr. ERNEST MALLETT's HIGHWAY REPORT

My Highway area is West Molesey from Langton Road/Dennis Road westwards. Although Steve Bax, and possibly Dominic Raab, claimed credit for the resurfacing of Walton Road, the West part was done under requests from me. Raab claimed credit for Dennis Road (and he certainly wrote) but I have been pressing for resurfacing here for some time. Costs for Dennis Road were estimated at £50,000 but finished at £144,499. The badly potholed section of Molesey Park Road was also resurfaced.

Of two suggestions for crossing refuges on Walton Road, one was achieved near the War Memorial.

I have a 20mph scheme for High Street, Molesey Avenue and Seymour Road areas being looked at. Funding between £175,000 and £287,000 would be needed plus £100,000 per scheme for refuge crossings and design costs per scheme. Hopefully Weston Avenue will also be funded.

Anyway, success! Cherry Orchard and Hurstfield Roads and pavements have been done or planned.

After ten years of campaigning, Berkeley Drive/The Crescent/Boleyn Drive have had the new cheaper technique of concrete surface milling. Of course, all the iron covers had to be dug out and lowered. The price went from £57,000 to £75,000 and then, as two sections had to be dug up and replaced entirely, I estimate £250,000 was spent. It is not surprising that County had resisted doing the road for so long! There was a bit more money made available to me, so half of Rosemary Avenue benefitted.

Upper Farm Road is on a positive schedule and I am hoping that First & Second Closes are going to be included in the latter part of 2024.

I am hoping for a crossing at St. Albans school and improved school warning signages at St. Albans and Chandlers Field schools plus a 'lights' crossing on Hurst Road for Hurst Park School.

Overall, costs are very high so getting Highway Works carried out is not easy.

MOLESEY DAY CENTRE To the great dismay of many elderly residents, the Centre in Bishop Fox Way has been closed since before Christmas for 'Health & Safety' reasons. MRA Cllr. Mike Axton has been pressing the Administration at Elmbridge for assurances about its future, and the Council has now announced that the Centre will reopen from 26th January, but only on Fridays.

This is still not good enough, but Mike has been assured that the opening days will be extended going forward, and that there is no intention to run the Centre down, or to close it,

HURST POOL



The Hurst Pool is a vital local amenity but it is ageing, so Elmbridge Council has been looking at the options for its long-term future. The council officers, looking at all the possibilities, drew up three options, all of which would guarantee an ongoing swimming facility: 1) A simple refurbishment of the pool; 2) Adaptation of the current facility to include a gym, studio, splash pad and café; 3) The building of a completely new pool, with the possibility of incorporating other amenities, such as a GP surgery and a library. This last option would be very expensive and the report, outlining the options for the Cabinet at Elmbridge Council, floated the possibility of building some housing on part of the recreation

ground to help pay for it.

MRA Councillor Mike Axton made it very clear at Council, and in discussions with the Administration at Elmbridge, that MRA cannot support any residential development on the recreation ground.

However, the local Conservatives immediately seized upon this third option, calling it a proposal (which it never was) and used it as a scaremongering tactic during the last council elections, urging voters to vote for them to prevent it happening.

There was never a chance of this going ahead, as was evidenced by the recent overwhelming Council decision to proceed with the simple refurbishment of the pool, and no more. The Conservatives will probably claim this was all due to their campaign! MRA thinks it would be a sensible improvement to introduce a small cafeteria facility to the pool and have written to the Council to say so. This option is now being seriously considered by officers at Elmbridge Council.

INTRODUCING PAT GORMLEY

Mike Axton is retiring after 24 years as MRA Councillor representing West Molesey. However, our membership secretary, Pat Gormley, will be standing in Mike's place. Pat has lived in Molesey for 30 years, was a school governor for 4 years, spent 12 years managing boy's and girl's teams in Molesey Juniors and is currently Chairman of the local group now running Vine Hall. We can thoroughly recommend him as Mike's successor. We do hope you will back him in May!



Make a date to come to our **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** to be held at **VINE HALL** in Vine Road, East Molesey **on FRIDAY, 15th MARCH** starting at **8 pm**.

You will be able to hear what your Association has been up to over the last year and, after the routine business is over, take the opportunity to chat with councillors and committee members. Non-members may join at the door for only £4 per household per year - or £15 for five years.

ELMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN

This sounds a boring subject but it sets the basis for all developments in Elmbridge for the next decade or so and has to be submitted for approval by a government Inspector.

The Secretary of State has appointed an independent Inspector who will consider the soundness of the submission based on the "test of soundness" as set out in paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Inspector will consider the evidence provided by the Council to support the plan and any representations submitted by local residents and interested parties such as the MRA, developers and house builders.

With it's mix of lower housing targets and enhanced environmental policies including no release of Green Belt land, many other local authorities are looking with interest to see how the Plan fares at the Examination in Public

The first public hearing sessions of the Draft Elmbridge Local Plan Examination will commence on Tuesday 27 February 2024 and will cover the Duty to Cooperate, as well as Legal and Procedural Compliance. More information is available on our website.

GLENLYN SURGERY

We have received information that Glenlyn will likely be losing three of its doctors..

This is surprising to us since, even with the present number of doctors, it is reported to us that it is extremely difficult to get appointments, so it very much looks like the appointments position may get worse.

We are working alongside Thames Ditton RA, writing to ask for a visit to seek explanation of the reasons behind this disturbing decision - and the lack of community engagement beforehand.

It looks as though, under the NHS Recovery Plan, as presented to MRA County. Cllr. Ernest Mallett on the Public Health Committee at Surrey C.C., GP services will mostly be replaced by pharmacists or online diagnoses and prescription issues. This is likely to be known as 'Virtual GP's' - in line with a system of 'Virtual Wards', whereby those who don't have immediate life-threatening illnesses will not go to hospital but will have treatment at home with a domestic supply of whatever is needed - beds, drip equipment and limited visiting nurses. Welcome to a new style Health Service!



YOUR MRA MEMBERSHIP

We hope that you will want to support the Association in looking after Molesey's interests. We are now in a new membership year so, if your membership is not up to date or if, surprisingly, you are not yet a member, you may take out your 2024 membership for only £4 per household for the current year or, to save yourself the job every year, £15 for a five year membership. You can send a cheque or cash to any of the addresses at the bottom of this page or, if it's more convenient, you can pay by bank transfer to Molesey Residents Association at our Santander account **86284805**, sort code **09-01-28**.

If you pay this way, please send an email to mra.subs@gmail.com confirming your name and address so that we are sure who sent us the money! If you can manage to pay for five years, it will reduce our administration load. We will ensure that you receive a membership card/receipt. Thank You!

Your Membership is Greatly Appreciated

If you would like to pay direct, please return the tear off slip with £4.00 or £15.00 to one of the following addresses:-
20 Walton Road KT8 0DF, 10 Molesey Park Road KT8 2LE or 7 Mole Abbey Gardens KT8 1QD (off New Road)

We will make sure you get a Membership Card *Thank You*



MOLESEY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP - SPRING 2024

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