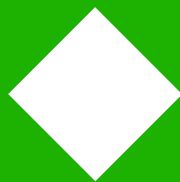


Esher Matters

The Esher Residents Association Newsletter
for Esher, Hersham Riverside & Lower Green



OUR 100th EDITION

Our 100th newsletter -
what have we achieved?



Bill Bedford. Plaque for
test pilot to be unveiled



Richard Williams's
Councillor update

GREEN BELT COULD BE SOLD IN NEW LOCAL PLAN

As Elmbridge Borough Council officers prepare the new Local Plan there is increasing concern that, in an effort to get close to the Government's spuriously concocted housing numbers, they will propose giving up some 'less well performing' Green Belt land.

Many of you will have completed last year's consultation that sought views on how the Council might hit the Government's proposed housing numbers. The results were overwhelmingly in favour of 'Option 4' - no building on Green Belt land. However, the Council does not have to abide by this.

The consultation was not a referendum and officers may be fearful that Option 4 is so far from the Government's targets that, if proposed, Government inspectors would just reject their plans and could, in an extreme case, wrest control of the Local Plan from the Council. It has to be said that this is highly unlikely since no council in the country has had its powers withdrawn in this way.

What is clear is that if you voted for Option 4, you've been listened to, but your views carry very little weight indeed and there is a desperate need to make sure that Council officers understand that:

THE GREEN BELT IS NOT FOR SALE!

The Green Belt is Not For Sale!

Further consultation

A further consultation ‘**Creating our vision, objectives and the direction for development management policies 2020**’ begins on 27 January and runs until 9 March. It is anticipated that there will be far fewer respondents, consequently the results will carry even less weight than the last.

However, this is very important and we urge you to complete it.

It can be found at: <https://consult.elmbridge.gov.uk/consult.ti/visobjdir/consultationHome>. Anyone who hasn't already responded to the September consultation will need to register with Elmbridge first. This is another chance to tell Elmbridge Council about the value of green spaces.

The Green Belt and the Climate Emergency

Elmbridge Borough Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019. This was supported by all councillors. Green spaces are the lungs of our environment and vital in the fight against climate change. How is it then, that a Council that appreciates the gravity of this emergency can consider giving over our much loved and hugely valuable Green Belt to developers?

We clearly need to build new homes, but we should be building them where there is already development, where the infrastructure is in place and where we are not throttling our precious environment with yet more cars and more traffic jams.

We have said before that Government inspectors never demand that councils give up Green Belt land, but if it is offered, they take it and, once offered, demand that more is given up.

If you value Elmbridge's green spaces, then we urge you to push the Council to take a very strong stand against giving up any Green Belt land at all. Once the dam is broken, developers will be all over our Green Belt and councillors and officers will find it hard to defend any Green Belt from development. If you thought Sandown was a terrible idea, wait until every piece of Elmbridge's Green Belt is in developers' cross hairs.

We are calling on all groups around Elmbridge, from all parties, to support a campaign to press Elmbridge Borough Council and its officers to declare

THE GREEN BELT IS NOT FOR SALE!

Sites under threat

Much valued green spaces

If Elmbridge Borough Council supports giving up areas of our Green Belt, two significant sites in Esher are under threat:



Moore Place Golf Club

In a shock move in 2019, the owners of Moore Place Golf Club suddenly closed its doors. Charterhouse Strategic Land plans to build 250 homes on the 30 acre site should Elmbridge Council release Green Belt land as part of the New Local Plan.



Sandown Park

The Jockey Club may have been spurned at their last attempt to build 318 flats and a 150 bed hotel on their site, but give them a whiff of Green Belt permission and they'll be off to the races again.

Image: Eagle Radio

Make no mistake, very significant and much valued green spaces will be vulnerable if any Green Belt land is given up to placate the Government inspectors.

Esher and Walton MP, Dominic Raab felt the heat in the last election with his majority being slashed. He has previously refused help to Elmbridge Council over the Government's excessive and illogical housing numbers. We think he should listen to his residents, most of whom do not want any building on the Green Belt and actively help us and the Council win this battle.

Noted Esher Residents Series

No1. George Blair Imrie

(George) Blair Imrie (1885-1952) was a proponent of the Arts and Crafts movement in architecture, along with architects such as Norman Shaw, George Devey and Edwin Lutyens and the designer William Morris.



His houses are renowned for their use of quality materials such as oak window frames and doors with wrought iron fittings, leaded lights and hand made roof tiles.

He married in 1910 and lived in “Little Simors” Clare Hill, Esher for many years. Much of his work was in Surrey and most notably in Esher. You can see his fine Arts & Crafts houses on Clive Road, Clare Hill, the Claremont estate and at the top of Milbourne Lane.



Imposing Blair Imrie designed house on Clive Road

Architect George Blair Imrie

Blair Imrie's practice, Imrie & Angeli, won the competition to design the main building for the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Wisley. The purpose-built, half-timbered, Surrey-style building was completed in 1916.

Known as the "Laboratory" this is a focal point of Wisley and considered to be an early example of conservationism as the building was designed to be in keeping with the garden and was built using recycled materials from derelict properties.



*Left: The 'Laboratory'
RHS Gardens Wisley
Image: Patche99z*

*Below: Esher Urban DC
detail Lower Green house*



During the great building boom, between the two world wars, Blair Imrie became well known for his layouts and design of social housing estates. He received a prize for the Lower Green housing scheme (left) designed for the then Esher Urban District Council.

In contrast, his firm also developed 390 hectares of land on St George's Hill,

Weybridge, into a private estate for wealthy business people, centred around a golf course.

Blair Imrie has left Esher a legacy of a fine body of well designed houses and housing estates.

Bill Bedford blue plaque award



The Esher Residents Association Committee has agreed the award of a Blue Plaque to record the fact that A.W. (Bill) Bedford – test pilot - lived at The Chequers, West End Lane, Esher, from 1968 to 1996.

Bill Bedford was a wartime fighter pilot who went on to become Chief Test Pilot for Hawker Aircraft Ltd. He will always be remembered for his trailblazing role in the test flying of the Harrier jump-jet (below), the world's first vertical/short take-off and landing (VSTOL) aircraft.

He was at the controls of the prototype Harrier for its first flight on 21 October, 1960 and performed the first ever vertical jet operations on an aircraft carrier (HMS Ark Royal). He then, as International Marketing Manager, promoted the Harrier through to its delivery to the RAF and Royal Navy as a unique operational fighter jet.

The plaque, which commemorates Bill Bedford's life and role in this historic aviation story, will be unveiled at 3pm on Saturday, 1 February, 2020, in a short ceremony at The Chequers. Spectators are warmly invited to attend the ceremony.



ESHER MATTERS 100th edition

This is our hundredth edition of the Esher Residents Association Newsletter. In a world of social media, you may ask why we persist, particularly when writing, designing, printing and distributing it is incredibly labour intensive.

Our website receives a lot of hits, as does our Facebook page, but the Newsletter still appears to be welcomed through every letterbox in the ward. For us, it is still a tremendous way of informing Esher residents about what is going on in Esher, what Elmbridge and Surrey County Councils are proposing for the area, as well as enabling us to campaign for improvements to our environment.

Throughout the 44 years we've published it, we've covered many important stories and campaigned for so many issues that matter to people who live in Esher, its Lower Green neighbourhood and the many people who live in Hersham Riverside.

Three major themes appear to have been constants throughout. Roads, traffic and parking; Protection of the Green Belt, open spaces and the Commons; Protecting the built environment and supporting residents oppose inappropriate development.

Recent editions have recorded the successful "listing" of Hawkshill Cottage, Tawney House and "Cobblestones" (below) at the top of More Lane. Our successful campaigns to protect the Green Belt at Drake Park and Sandown and to refurbish King George's Hall and the Lower Green Community Centre have also featured strongly in the Newsletter. Here's to the next 100!



Our Brown Envelope

We have enclosed an envelope suggesting a donation of £10 to help us run the ERA. Unlike the national parties, we are run entirely by volunteers and this newsletter, our website and all other activities are paid for by donations from people like you. If you've enjoyed this newsletter and would like us to continue our work, please do contribute - we suggest £10, but if you'd prefer to give less, (or more!) that's fine too. Hand the envelope to your road rep or donate online: Sort code: 20-90-56 Account no: 00232025. Thank you!

News from your Councillor

Planning, the High Street and Parking



The Jockey Club's development of Sandown Park including 318 flats and a 150 bed hotel was unanimously rejected by the Planning Committee. I sat on this committee and was heartened by the strength of opposition. However, the Jockey Club will almost certainly appeal and local campaigners will need to reach for their banners and leaflets once again.

The new Local Plan will be consuming much of my time in future. As alluded to elsewhere, there is a real danger that we will lose our green spaces to concrete if we don't fight building on the Green Belt.

I chair the Future High Street Working Group. We can't define the future of shopping, but we can assist retailers and shoppers with appropriate planning, by bidding for investment, helping create spaces where people want to congregate and offering retail sensitive parking. However, much to my frustration, I have lost the battle to prevent increased parking costs in Esher.

Whilst rates will not rise across most of the borough (including Hersham) the Berguette and Highwayman's Cottage Car Parks will suffer increases of up to 90p for all day parking. This will be especially difficult for shop workers who rely on their cars because the buses services are so poor. The High Street is crying out for cheaper parking, but fellow councillors insist that we must stick to the Conservatives previous budget and Esher is the victim.



Cobb's Arch in Lower Green is a wonderful cut through for parents wanting to get from Cranmere Primary School to Lower Green Road. During the winter months it is almost impassable so I have started the process of applying for funds to have a proper path under the railway bridge and across the common land to the main road. Dealing with Network Rail will take time, but I will persevere.

Richard Williams