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West Ewell By-election candidates' answers

26 June 2022

Epsom and Ewell Times asked each candidate a series of questions. Here are their answers.

Epsom and Ewell Times – Tell us a little about yourself. The non-political?

Alan Williamson – I am a 58 year old married man with a grown-up son. Since graduating from university I have worked in the financial services industry. For the past three years I have a committee member of West Ewell & Ruxley Residents' Association. I made it known that I was interested in standing for the borough council. Outside work I follow football and rugby, love reading, walking and cycling and spending time with my wife Lucia.

Marian Morrison – I've lived in the borough for over four decades and my son attended local schools. My working life has been spend in the public sector, both NHS and local government so I have a fair understanding of health and council matters. My professional roles range from quality and complaints to council committee work. I'm recently retired and went back to being a student at Nescot which was a great thing to do. I regularly attend a local church Ewell.

Mark Todd – I'm a local dad and businessman, and I've lived in the area for over 12 years. I'm part of the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board that protects and preserves local trees and Treasurer of the Epsom Wells Community Association that is saving and renewing a local community centre. For work, I co-founded a large internet business in which I played a leading role for many years. I'm currently starting a new business.

Kieran Persand – I was born and raised in Epsom and Ewell, attending local schools. My background is law but I'm very passionate about education, the environment and mental health. Any spare time I get, I love playing sp

How long have you lived in the Borough?

Alan Williamson 11 years

Marian Morrison 46 years

Mark Todd -12 years

Kieran Persand – All my life – 24 years.

Do you live in the West Ewell Ward?

Alan Williamson – Yes

Marian Morrison – No but I do live nearby in West Ewell.

Mark Todd – I live close by in Epsom – I know the ward very well

Kieran Persand – No

Why are you standing?

Alan Williamson – I am a firm believer in local decisions being made by local people without the constraints of national party politics. Epsom & Ewell is one of the most desirable neighbourhoods, with one of the best run councils in the whole country. By electing me as a Residents' Association councillor we can keep it that way.

Marian Morrison – I stood in the West Ewell ward in 2011 and received 500 votes and wish to stand again. It's important for voters to have a choice of candidates and I believe council decision making is more effective when there is a good opposition.

Mark Todd – To give a voice to local residents who have been ignored for too long. To demand improvements to the roads and pavements and to help fix the awful problems of raw sewage going into the local Hogsmill river. Having a Labour councillor as well as the two RA councillors would give W Ewell a stronger voice.

Kieran Persand – There are issues that are constantly being overlooked such as housing/developments, the green belt and crime. It is crucial that the Council has a strong opposition to push things forward. It's been shown what a conservative councillor can do locally, seen with the work Cllr Muir did to help keep the Wells Centre open.

Which Council Committees would you like to serve and why?

Alan Williamson – My primary interest would be in the Strategy & Resources Committee. I see this as underpinning the whole scope of council activity and requires the best-qualified candidates. My background in economics, financial services and committee work equips me ideally for this. I could also have interest in Community and Wellbeing.

Marian Morrison – Having worked in Surrey for the NHS and a nearby London Borough I'm familiar with aspects of health services, and planning and would be most interested in Planning, Community and Well-being, Health Liaison and Environment and Safer Communities committees.

Mark Todd – Community and Well-being – to help create a healthier, happier community. Environment and Safe Communities – our green spaces and trees need protecting to stop West Ewell becoming a concrete jungle.

Kieran Persand – Licensing and Planning Policy Committee – the lack of a Local Plan is hindering the development of the Borough massively. The local conservative group have formulated a plan which is well thought out and one which will improve the Borough.
Strategy and Resources Committee.

What do you think of the decision to spend £225,000 on the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan?

Alan Williamson – I welcome the availability and deployment of funds for this purpose. If Epsom town centre is to retain its vitality and attractive ambience it must use best practice to consider the way forward using strategic tools and resources. Expenditure such as this is warranted under the circumstances.

Marian Morrison – Epsom and Ewell needs to work together with residents to identify ways in which we can provide for future needs and at the same time ensure Epsom is a vibrant place for people to live, work and visit. Whilst this is a significant cost, good, sound planning for the needs for the next decades is vital for a good future.

Mark Todd – I think it's a lot of money and my understanding is more is actually being spent on it £350,000+. We do need a good plan to create a better, greener town centre fit for the future and I fully support this. I hope that the money will be well spent and I'd be keen to be involved in its management.

Kieran Persand – I think a masterplan to guide development in the Town Centre is needed but £225,000 is an awfully huge amount of money to be spending at this moment in time. I hope that it is not mismanaged and that something positive comes out of it.

Do you think the ULEZ should be expanded to or nearer West Ewell's borders?

Alan Williamson – I do not feel that at this point there is widespread public support for extending the ULEZ to West Ewell's borders. Whilst this decision is not solely ours I think residents should make their feelings known on this. I would be personally oppose such a development at this stage.

Marian Morrison – Whilst I'm supportive of reducing emissions, due to the proximity of the Chessington Spur being so close to West Ewell many residents will be impacted with charges incurred by short cross boundary car journeys. In my view the main driver for change is to provide income to support the massive costs of Transport for London

Mark Todd – As a local councillor here we would have no influence on the decision. No one wants to pay more tax; however we do also need to get old vehicles off the road that create dangerous toxic fumes. Fumes that poison our lungs and, according to one charity, kill 25 times more people per year than car crashes.

Kieran Persand – No – many families and local businesses would suffer, especially with the increase in the cost of living. The expansion would be too burdensome. The roll out would also be very costly with the increase in spending on cameras and the enforcement infrastructure that would be needed. That money could be spent on better things which would help tackle air pollution.

One question beyond the Borough. Do you support the policy of sending refugees to Rwanda?

Alan Williamson – No. More suitable policies must be found.

Marian Morrison – No. This approach won't stop desperate people.

Mark Todd – No

Kieran Persand – No.

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Anything else you would like to say?

Alan Williamson – Having attended school in the borough I feel an affinity with the area that has motivated me to seek election. I have been active in organising a Neighbourhood Watch in my street (Revere Way), and I have coordinated a formal petition to the management company for the estate concerning their service provision.

Marian Morrison – Liberal Democrats have a good track record in local government as demonstrated by two neighbouring boroughs, Sutton and Kingston, both close to West Ewell. People of West Ewell think carefully and consider voting for change.

Mark Todd – The local Labour Party in West Ewell has 30 members and in voting for me you're not just voting for Mark Todd but for the local Labour team to have influence and help the local area. If elected, we will not let you down and I will work with the Residents' Association councillors to create a better West Ewell.

Kieran Persand – None.

West Ewell by-election, our Q&As and your hustings

26 June 2022

On Thursday 7th July 2022 voters in the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Ward of West Ewell have the opportunity to vote for the candidate who will take the seat held for many years by the late Cllr Clive Smitheram of the Residents' Association.

The candidates are Marion Morrison (Liberal Democrat), Kieran Persand (Conservative Party), Mark Todd (Labour Party) and Alan Williamson (Residents' Association).

Q and As You can read the candidates' answers to Epsom and Ewell Times' questions HERE

HUSTINGS

Epsom and Ewell Times is holding an election hustings that **three of the four candidates** will attend. Alan Williamson (Residents Association), who works in the financial services sector, has advised that he is working that evening and cannot attend. The hustings will start at 7 pm on Monday 4th July at All Saints Church, 7 Church Rd, West Ewell, Ewell, Epsom KT19 9QY and will last one hour.

Attendance in person is encouraged but you may participate online if you register in advance HERE

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