

Local MP comes to our defence?

30 September 2024



In a significant development in UK party politics, **Helen Maguire**, the Member of Parliament for Epsom & Ewell, has been appointed to the frontbenches of the Liberal Democrats. On September 19th, Liberal Democrat leader Sir **Ed Davey** announced that Maguire would take up the role of spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces. This announcement follows the unveiling of the Lib Dems new 33-member frontbench roster, following the party's success in July's general election, where they secured a record 72 parliamentary seats.

Maguire, a former Army captain in the Royal Military Police, brings extensive real-world experience to her new role. She served in Bosnia on a NATO peacekeeping mission and in Iraq, where she assisted the rebuilding of the Iraqi police force. Maguire took to X (formerly known as Twitter) to express her enthusiasm, stating that she is "delighted and honoured" to take on the role, while also highlighting the need for the UK defence budget to reflect the challenging times we face.

A party spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces plays a crucial role in communicating the party's stance on national security, military strategy, and defence spending. Helen Maguire is likely to become more prominent in debates on these issues in the House of Commons, especially in light of ongoing global conflicts and increasing geopolitical tensions.

In an era of emerging threats, the public will increasingly turn to the main political parties to ensure the military is effectively managed, underpinned by competent, transparent, and realistic governance. As global conflicts and tensions continue to rise, trust in the leadership and oversight of the armed forces will become a central issue in upcoming elections, with national security playing a critical role in shaping the public's confidence and the country's future stability.

Maguire faces a challenging task, especially as the Liberal Democrats work to rebuild public confidence. The party is likely to be cautious to avoid over-promising on policies, mindful of the damage caused when they reneged on their pledge to scrap tuition fees during their coalition government from 2010 to 2015, a decision that deeply hurt their voter base.

As the third-largest political party in the UK, the Liberal Democrats are attempting to position themselves for further growth. With Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer's approval rating dipping in recent Opinion polls and ongoing uncertainty surrounding the direction of the Conservative Party, the Lib Dems may believe that they are poised for future electoral gains. The political winds of British Politics are constantly shifting, and as Helen Maguire takes a substantial step forward into the spotlight, her performance on the frontbench might just determine if the Lib Dems can ride the wave of electoral success, or end up washed out to the fringes at the next general election.

Epsom pensioners gather less winter fuel pay this St Stephens

30 September 2024



Thousands of pensioners across Epsom, Ewell, Ashted, and Leatherhead are facing the loss of vital winter fuel payments following cuts by the UK government, sparking fears that many will struggle to keep warm this winter.

Helen Maguire, the Liberal Democrat MP for Epsom and Ewell, has urged the government to reconsider its decision, warning that vulnerable pensioners could be left choosing between "heating and eating" during the colder months. Maguire opposed the cuts when they were voted on in the House of Commons on 10th September, but the measures were passed despite her concerns.

The cuts primarily affect pensioners over the age of 80 who are not in receipt of pension credit. Previously, these pensioners were automatically entitled to an additional £300 to help cover their energy bills in the winter. Now, many will lose this support unless they qualify for other benefits.

Data released earlier this week shows that in Epsom and surrounding areas, 5,788 pensioners aged over 80 who do not receive pension credit are at risk of losing their Winter Fuel Payment. In total, 18,261 pensioners in Epsom and Ewell could be affected by the government's decision.

Last winter, over £3.3 million in support was distributed to pensioners in the constituency, with £1,525,800 going to those aged over 80. These figures are expected to fall significantly this year due to the cuts.

"Thousands of pensioners here in Epsom and Ewell are desperately worried about how they will make it through this winter," said Ms Maguire. "These latest figures are deeply concerning. It is not too late for this government to change course, reverse their plans, and protect vulnerable pensioners here in Epsom."

In response, Chancellor **Rachel Reeves** has defended the government's decision, framing it as part of a broader strategy to stabilise public finances. "We are facing challenging economic times, and difficult choices must be made to ensure the sustainability of our public services," Reeves said in a recent statement. "However, we remain committed to supporting those most in need, and we have maintained targeted assistance for the poorest households."

Reeves also pointed to ongoing support measures, including the Energy Price Guarantee, which she says will help alleviate pressure on households most at risk. "We recognise the importance of protecting our pensioners, and our policies are designed to ensure that no one is left behind. But we must also take steps to manage public expenditure responsibly."

Despite this, charities and local advocacy groups have voiced concerns about the potential impact on older residents. Many fear an increase in demand for services such as food banks and emergency heating grants as pensioners struggle to afford rising energy bills without the additional winter fuel support.

As winter approaches, the situation remains uncertain, with many pensioners hoping for a reversal of the cuts or further government action to protect those most affected.

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Our Health Deserves Better

30 September 2024



I want to take this opportunity to thank those who voted for me at the general election. There is much to do to improve our situation in Epsom & Ewell and I am committed to help achieve this for all the residents of Epsom, Ewell, Ashted and Leatherhead.

Having visited Epsom Hospital only this week I reflect on the recent statement by Chancellor Rachel Reeves and find it impossible not to feel a deep concern for the future of our local healthcare infrastructure.

The Chancellor's announcement, which hinted at potential cuts to various infrastructure projects, including the ambitious plan to deliver 40 new hospitals, has left many of us in a state of unease. Among the projects at risk is the new emergency care hospital at Sutton, a critical facility that promises to alleviate the pressures on Epsom and St Helier hospitals. As the newly elected Liberal Democrat MP for Epsom & Ewell, I find this prospect deeply troubling.

Our community has been waiting far too long for this vital investment. The new hospital at Sutton is not just another building; it's a beacon of hope for many. It's designed to be a centre of excellence, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for the most serious emergency cases. Without it, our local healthcare services will continue to struggle with sub-standard conditions at Epsom and St Helier. These facilities, already stretched beyond their limits, cannot continue to bear the brunt of our community's healthcare needs without significant improvements.

The situation is dire. The buildings at Epsom and St Helier are overdeveloped and outdated. They desperately need the relief that the new Sutton hospital would provide. This isn't just about buildings; it's about the quality of care and the well-being of our staff and patients. Our community deserves better, and we cannot afford to wait any longer.

The Chancellor has offered a meeting with the Health Secretary for MPs representing affected constituencies. I eagerly anticipate this opportunity to voice the concerns of Epsom, Ewell, Ashted, and Leatherhead residents. Our message must be clear and resolute: the Conservative party's economic mismanagement has left our public services in disarray, and we cannot allow their broken promises to cost us our much-needed hospital.

For years, the Conservatives have failed to deliver on their promises, leaving our local health services to languish. The

proposed hospital at Sutton represents a crucial lifeline, not just for today but for the future of healthcare in our region. It is a promise of better days, of healthcare services that our community can rely on.

As your MP, I am committed to fighting for this project. We must ensure that the funding for the new Emergency Care Hospital at Sutton is protected. The people of Epsom, Ewell, Ashted, and Leatherhead deserve nothing less than a healthcare system that meets their needs and supports their well-being. The time for waiting is over. It's time for action, and I will not rest until our community gets the healthcare investment it has been promised and so desperately needs.

Image: Maternity Unit at Epsom Hospital. Left to right; James Blythe CEO; Liz Cullen, Head of Midwifery; Helen Maguire MP

Lib Dems' Helen Maguire - "Getting Things Done"

30 September 2024



Epsom and Ewell Times is publishing the appeals of the Parliamentary Candidates standing in the General Election for the constituency of Epsom and Ewell. This is the appeal from **Liberal Democrat** candidate **Helen Maguire**.

My Army training gave me focus, my police work gave me a determination to maintain good order, while being a working mum of three in Claygate taught me a great deal about my local community.

It's these and other aspects of my career that led me to become a Liberal Democrat and to stand for Parliament to serve my local community - and to get things done to make the constituency of Epsom & Ewell a better place.

While there are many issues the Liberal Democrats want to tackle in the next Parliament, there are three big issues in Epsom & Ewell close to my heart. I want to see them fixed. I have been campaigning on these for the last 18 months and I want to take them to Parliament as your local representative and get them resolved.

My first concern is health and social care. Previous Conservative governments have run the NHS into the ground, and as far as Epsom & Ewell is concerned, have consistently failed to resolve one of our biggest issues, which is the overcrowding at Epsom and St Helier hospitals.

Our health care professionals across Surrey came up with an exciting and practical plan to build a third hospital which would be designed to treat the most difficult emergency cases, so that local people could get world class care in an emergency. The building of this new critical care hospital at Sutton would then free up Epsom and St Helier to be upgraded to significantly better district hospitals, caring for all other aspects of medical care.

The Conservatives have consistently promised to build the critical care hospital, but nothing has happened. As a result, our pressurised NHS workers are having to deal with overcrowding and poor facilities - even getting into Epsom to park can be an issue!

At the most basic level successive Conservative governments have failed on health and social care. So many people can't get to see their GP when they need to. The Lib Dems want to give everyone the right to see a GP within seven days, or within 24 hours if they urgently need to - and we'll train another 8,000 more GPs to deliver this.

Finding NHS dental care can be as difficult as finding hen's teeth. The running down of NHS dentistry is causing great concern and so the Lib Dems will guarantee access to a NHS dentist for urgent and emergency care, putting an end to the dental deserts we see emerging across the country.

Mental health services need shaking up so we will push for mental health hubs for young people. We also must produce better results in terms of cancer survival rates and want to introduce a guarantee that all patients will start treatment for cancer within 62 days for urgent referral.

Successive Conservative governments have promised to do more to resolve the social care crisis, but nothing of any substance has happened. We have come up with a raft of fully costed measures aimed at making people's lives much easier than they are now. We want to introduce free personal care based on the model we introduced in Scotland in 2002, so that provision is based on need, not ability to pay.

We also want to establish a Royal College of Care Workers to improve recognition and career progression and introduce a higher Carer's Minimum Wage. We want to establish a cross-party commission to forge a long-term agreement on sustainable funding for social care. A subject very close to our leader Ed Davey's heart is to give unpaid carers a fair deal so they get the support they so desperately need, including paid carer's leave and a statutory guarantee of regular respite breaks.

Everyone in Epsom and Ewell will benefit from better healthcare provision, but perhaps even more fundamentally is the need to build a stronger economy enabling us to shake off the cost-of-living crisis. One of the greatest opportunities is in the booming 'green economy' where the Liberal Democrats want to invest in renewable power and home insulation to drive a strong economic recovery, bring down energy bills, and create clean, secure, well-paid new jobs.

This means we need to develop an industrial strategy that will give businesses certainty and incentivise them to invest in new technologies to grow the economy, create good jobs, and tackle the climate crisis. In Epsom & Ewell we need to boost small businesses and empower them to create new local jobs, including abolishing business rates and replacing them with a Commercial Landowner Levy to help stimulate our high streets.

The mismanagement of our economy and public services by the Tories extends to the inability of government to sort out the water companies who have been for too long polluting our rivers and waterways with raw sewage. Instead, they have pandered to the water companies in whose interests are best served by doing nothing other than the bare minimum about pollution.

I, and my fellow Liberal democrats, will hold the water companies to account by giving them a duty to protect the environment, including banning water companies from dumping raw sewage into rivers, lakes and coastal areas. Trashing our environment is totally unacceptable.

We want to make homes warmer and cheaper to heat. We will introduce a ten-year emergency upgrade programme, starting with free insulation and providing low-cost heating – heat pumps for those on low incomes.

We want to extend this to solar generation by expanding incentives for households to install solar panels. We will invest in renewable power so that 90% of the UK's electricity is generated from renewables by 2030.

All these issues can be resolved providing we plan well for the future and elect politicians whose life experiences are about taking on problems and solving them, this is what I have been trained to do, and I wish to do so to the benefit of everyone who lives in Epsom, Ewell, Ashted & Leatherhead.

The other candidates:

Conservative who promises to serve “with integrity”

The Green promises

A True and Fair view of the world

Reform candidate for Epsom and Ewell

Mark my words for Labour candidate

LibDem PPC awarded Medal by the King

30 September 2024



Epsom & Ewell Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate **Helen Maguire** received a British Empire Medal (BEM) in The King's Birthday Honours list announced in June.

The honour was given for the contribution Helen has made for services to the community of Claygate, Surrey, where she lives with her family.

Helen, a former Captain in the Royal Military Police who served in Bosnia and Iraq said, “I am absolutely delighted to have had the work that I and others in my local community have undertaken in recent years recognised.

“Our efforts to establish wider facilities for the community to support all ages and particularly young people and sport in the immediate area, while providing new options for others came to fruition with the opening of the Claygate Pavilion. It's therefore humbling to have received such recognition for what was a team effort, so I therefore congratulate those who supported me in establishing our community centre in Claygate.

“My ambition in standing as Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom & Ewell, Ashted and Leatherhead, is to extend the sort of work that we have been engaged in in Claygate to this constituency so that all can benefit from the sort of improvements that are needed in the area”.

Helen served in Bosnia on a NATO multinational peacekeeping mission and Iraq, to help rebuild the Iraqi Police Service while providing on-the-ground counter- insurgency policing support to front line infantry.

She is a nationally recognised fundraiser having secured over £1 million for UK charities since leaving the Army.

Epsom politician backs UK nuclear deterrent

30 September 2024



Epsom & Ewell's LibDem prospective Parliamentary candidate and former Army Captain **Helen Maguire** supports a permanent at sea UK nuclear deterrent. Making a Party conference maiden speech in York she said that while LibDems supported a nuclear free world, the current actions by Vladimir Putin in Ukraine meant that the LibDems position had to change. She said:

"When we last considered the situation (in 2017), the world was in a very different place - there was war but there hadn't been the veiled threats around the use of nuclear weapons nor the potential for World War Three".

"We have now entered an age when a nation, Russia, believes it's ok to invade another country - completely defying the rule of International Law. It's not just Russia, in this volatile age, there are other countries whose intentions we don't yet fully understand - China.

"We want to deter any country/group/enemy from ever considering invading/attacking the UK. It sends a powerful message to those who would do us harm- don't you dare try!

"If we continued the course of medium responsiveness with no continuous deployment then this wouldn't achieve our mission to protect the UK. This would leave us exposed to very real threats and it would weaken our credibility amongst our allies.

"The continuous at sea deterrent provides a 24/7 365 days a year effective defence mechanism for the UK and we need it NOW more than ever before," said Helen Maguire.

The Liberal Democrat's York conference motion to maintain the current UK defence strategy of continuous at-sea deterrence was then passed by the delegates.

Hard-hitting critique from new LibDem PPC

30 September 2024



On 17th November, we saw the Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, give his Autumn Statement. We waited with bated breath to see how it might help us and our families as we try to work out how we're going to pay the bills. The catastrophic verdict was plain to see in newspaper headlines the following day: 'Carnage'- the Mirror; 'Years of tax pain ahead' - The Times; 'From Bad to Worse' - the Guardian. Even the usual Tory safe haven, the Mail, couldn't hold back their view: 'Tories Soak the Strivers'. It was never going to be an easy statement to make after Liz Truss dug a £30 billion hole in the public finances after her disastrous mini budget, but now the Treasury puts the fiscal hole at an eye-watering £60 billion!

This blistering verdict confirms the British public's worst fears. We are being made to suffer increases in tax, bills, and mortgage payments because of this Conservative government's mistakes. Living standards are falling off a cliff and public services are suffocating under the weight of this Conservative chaos and incompetence.

What is the cost to you, the hard-working residents of Epsom and Ewell? Two million more people will move into the 40% tax bracket, families paying the price for Tory incompetence. Struggling families who have worked hard for years have had their security stolen. Hunt's Statement confirmed the Bank Surcharge cut from 8% to 3% from April 2023, while increasing taxes on millions of struggling families by extending the freeze in the Income Tax

personal allowance and higher-rate threshold. While non-doms and big banks got off lightly, the already squeezed middle are being pushed to the brink, having to choose between food or heating, mortgage payments or fuel for their car.

The squeezed middle will continue to work as hard as before, but their efforts will be worth significantly less as disposable income shrinks. Every single Conservative MP should be ashamed of this cost of chaos budget, which will leave a legacy of economic turmoil and tax misery as mortgage rates spiral.

OBR Budget documents forecast that mortgage interest payments will double over the next year, rising by 100.5% in the year to September 2023. Lib Dem analysis shows that a typical household with an outstanding mortgage of £236,000 will see their interest payments double to £5,689, or an increase of £2,851 a year. We're calling for a Mortgage Protection Fund for homeowners seeing payments skyrocket now!

In addition, reform of adult social care has once again been kicked into the long grass. Bedding blockages will continue in the unresolved chaos of the understaffed, under-resourced NHS. Boris Johnson came to power on a mandate to reform social care. Where is it? The dementia tax is back!

Other horrors you may not have seen in the budget are:

1. Police cuts: Home Office spending is set to be slashed by £100m in real terms by 2024-25.
2. Crumbling schools: There will be a £1 billion (14%) real terms cut in capital spending on education in 2024-25.
3. Social Housing: New stealth tax on social housing providers will mean lower investment in existing and new social housing.

Hunt is hoping economic growth will save his bacon but the shortage of workers, trading challenges because of Brexit and the lack of investment in renewable energy may not make this a reality. Hunt talks now about investment in green infrastructure and education and skills yet where has this been for 12 years? Schools are on their knees; parents are having to pay for books and children are going hungry.

We have now entered a recession, a spiralling cost-of-living crisis, the biggest decline in living standards in history. The gulf between rich and poor is growing, foodbanks have more demand than supply for the first time ever, nurses have voted to strike, barristers have been on strike, we have the highest rates of taxation in 70 years and a longer recession than we will likely have ever seen.

Since September, we have had three Prime Ministers, and four Chancellors. The Conservatives say they provide stability and continuity. The people are calling for CHANGE! Stability and continuity from this government has delivered a broken economy and made us poorer. Our crumbling hospitals and run-down classrooms are facing savage cuts because the Conservative party crashed the economy to fund tax cuts for the richest companies. The country will never forgive them for this.

This government is putting off tough decisions with a general election around the corner. This isn't leadership! We are reaping the costs of a long-term failure to grow the economy and a lack of long-term strategy. We all just got a lot poorer and we're in for a long and unpleasant journey on the way back to a sound and stable economy.

Helen Maguire- Liberal Democrat Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom and Ewell