

Reform candidate for Epsom and Ewell

10 June 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 first from **Reform** candidate **Mayuran Senthilnathan**.

An overwhelming Labour majority is set to be announced on July 4th. If Sunak's promises of a quadruple lock on pensions and more tax cuts sound enticing, rest assured none of us will be experiencing them. As I write this, average polling suggests Reform UK is neck and neck with the Conservatives, with Reform about to overtake any day now. The pressing question is not who we want in power, but rather who is going to be an effective opposition?

While Reform UK's success can be largely attributed to the 'Farage effect' it is rooted in the abject failure of the Tories. When my parents came to this country from Sri Lanka in the early 1980s, net immigration was in the tens of thousands. They invested heavily in my education which led to me study dentistry at King's College. I went on to get my own practice, working within the NHS for almost twenty years. No doubt my success is due to the hard work of my parents, but it was also due to the systems which were in place in this great country. I am a product of the British dream. A dream which I believe no longer exists for the people of this country. In short nothing works anymore.

From police turning a blind eye to petty crime, to record waiting lists on the NHS. From the highest tax burden since the 1940s, to soaring rents and house prices, Britain is definitively broken. This is without addressing the elephant in the room which all other parties refuse to properly acknowledge.

Net immigration by December 2022 was three quarters of a million, 2023 saw a figure of 685,000 (likely to be revised up). We are effectively importing a city larger than Manchester every year, all under successive Conservative governments which promised to slash numbers to the tens of thousands. People are now starting to draw a link between the strain on public services, roads, schools, GPs, hospitals and the amount of people in this country. Yes, birth rates are falling, everybody understands workers are needed in the NHS and social care as well as other sectors, but these numbers are simply breathtaking. While GDP figures go up as a whole, GDP per capita is declining. In other words the economy is growing but we are getting poorer. Within the British psyche is the deeper issue of culture. George Galloway has aptly highlighted obvious sectarian divides, by successively campaigning exclusively on the Gaza conflict. There is a growing sense that we no longer live in a cohesive society. This is hardly surprising. The influx of this many people in such a short time makes the prospect of integration an impossibility. It is well worth noting - it takes centuries to build a culture but it takes just a couple of decades to destroy it.

In addition under the management of both Labour and Tories we have increasingly seen the ideological capture of politics. Nowhere is this best illustrated than in the pursuit of net zero carbon emissions. While China churns out two new coal power stations per week and pumps out nearly 30% of the world's emissions, the UK is responsible for just 1%. Which means even if the UK reaches its net zero target, it would have almost no impact on the planet. In the pursuit of this ideological goal we are forcing the nation to pay more for its energy. Renewables are unreliable which is why fossil fuelled energy is imported to meet our country's needs. Industries which would have flourished on our shores have been forced abroad. But absurdly we end up buying back the products they make at higher prices- all so our government can wear the net zero badge of honour.

All this and I still have not mentioned the 'boats'.

What is the Answer?

Reform UK's manifesto sounds revolutionary but is actually a set of sane policies amidst an insane political landscape.

The national debt is eye-watering (£2.7 trillion). To raise funds we would action things like stopping the Bank of England paying voluntary interest payments on quantitative easing reserves (£35 billion), scrap net zero subsidies (£30 billion), cut government waste and

quangos (£50 billion) and introduce the employer's immigration tax (£4 billion). This would allow us to raise the tax threshold to £20,000, making work pay. It would also grant space to further cut corporation tax and VAT. The approach would permit the implementation of a French-style health service that slashes waiting times and delivers better outcomes for all. A net-zero immigration model would be introduced that weans the economy off the addiction to cheap unskilled labour from abroad, to a high-skilled, high wage work force. This would bring the numbers down to an acceptable level tailored to the needs of the country. Finally we have a targeted six point plan to stop the boats which includes leaving the ECHR.

Once again we can become a serious country.

If you agree with the case, a vote for the Conservatives or Liberal Democrats is a wasted one. Let me explain. Labour have won, which will leave a decimated Tory party. Once Nigel Farage gets a seat into Parliament, he will naturally become the voice against Labour. The country is behind him and the party (just see what he has achieved in a week). The more Reform UK seats we win or indeed the more we rise in the polls, the quicker centre-right politics will realign. Over the next parliament, more and more of the remaining Conservative MPs will be compelled to defect to Reform UK. By 2029 our party will be the opposition ready to govern the nation. This is the 6-year master plan.

This is how we break the Tory-Labour deadlock. This is how we rally against a failed establishment. This is how we can get our country back. Join the people's revolt.

Vote Reform UK.

The other candidates:

Conservative who promises to serve "with integrity"

The Green promises

A True and Fair view of the world

Lib Dems' Helen Maguire - "Getting Things Done"

Mark my words for Labour candidate

Surrey seats to watch in the election

10 June 2024



The BBC's Local Democracy reporter Emily Dalton analyses prospects for Conservative candidates in some Surrey constituencies:

There is a chance of a seismic shift in the Surrey political landscape at the upcoming General Election. Multiple long-standing MPs are standing down, and there have been reports looking into alleged severe misconduct all with the backdrop of heavy Local Election losses for the Conservatives in the county in May.

With a General Election on the cards for July 4, Rishi Sunak will be hoping to remain Prime Minister to show 'the plan is working' for economic growth. With many of these hoped for economic benefits not yet reaching people's pockets, it's too soon to say if the public will be persuaded.

Epsom and Ewell Times will be staging a local HUSTINGS for the Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Candidates at the Adrian Mann Theatre, NEScot, Reigate Road in Ewell at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June. All welcome.

Will Labour leader Keir Starmer (born and raised in Surrey's Oxshott) be able to break into the traditional Conservative Surrey heartlands and turn some blue seats red? Ed Davey's Liberal Democrats have been eying up Surrey seats for years and hope to play their part in removing the Conservatives from office.

Surrey has been a Tory stronghold for decades, at borough, county and parliamentary level. But recent local election

results showed all parties benefiting from a fall in Conservative support. The results meant that none of Surrey's 11 boroughs and districts now has a Tory majority. Although there is a narrow Conservative majority on the county council

Six Surrey MPs have announced they won't be standing for reelection, Conservative MPs Michael Gove (Surrey Heath), Dominic Raab (Esher and Walton), Kwasi Kwarteng (Spelthorne), **Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell)**, and Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley) are not seeking reelection alongside Reigate MP Crispin Blunt, who was elected as a Conservative but now sits as an independent.

With familiar faces gone and a raft of boundary changes meaning new constituencies in the county there is much uncertainty. Below are five seats to keep an eye on in the upcoming election.

1: Godalming and Ash

Contesting MP: **Jeremy Hunt** - Conservative (53.3% votes in 2019).

While many of his cabinet colleagues have fallen away, the Chancellor of the Exchequer is clearly not ready to leave his position or constituents. An MP since 2010, Mr Hunt won an 8,827 majority in the 2019 elections. A prominent figure in the cabinet, Mr Hunt has held numerous positions and is well-known.

Due to constituency boundary changes, Mr Hunt's West Surrey constituency no longer exists with the seats of Godalming and Ash and Farnham and Borden being created to replace it.

Running as the Lib Dem candidate in Godalming and Ash is Cllr Paul Follows. He is leader of Waverley Borough Council, leader of Godalming Town Council and a Surrey County councillor. Safe to say Mr Follows knows the depths of local government, can he make it to the national level?

Polls from The New Statesman and on Election Maps UK predict a Lib Dem victory, with between 36%-41% of the vote, and Conservatives at 30-33% - perhaps depending on how many votes Reform UK secures. This looks like a close race and surely one to watch- the Chancellor of the Exchequer could be about to have his own Portillo moment.

2: Guildford

Contesting MP: **Angela Richardson** - Conservative (44.9% votes in 2019).

Deputy chair of the Conservative Party, Angela Richardson won a narrow victory last election with only a 3,000 vote majority. She voted against PM Boris Johnson in the 2022 no confidence vote, arguing he had lost the public's trust.

Hot on her heels is Zoe Franklin, for the Liberal Democrats, who came second in 2019 with 39.2% of the vote. Hoping for third time lucky, Ms Franklin's votes have jumped from around 13,000 in 2017, to nearly 23,000 in 2019.

The Lib Dems have controlled the council since May 2019, with just 10 Conservative councillors

Water is likely to be a main talking point, with the Lib Dems' national campaign to stop sewage dumping and tackle water reform. Meanwhile, Ms Richardson is campaigning to reduce flooding in Guildford and the surrounds.

3: Esher and Walton

Previous MP: **Dominic Raab** - Conservative (49.4% of votes in 2019).

Dominic Raab has been the MP for Esher and Walton since 2010, but after bullying allegations emerged and a subsequent report found him "unreasonably aggressive" in 2022 he decided to step down at the next election. Mr Raab denied all wrongdoing.

Campaigning in a 'Remain' constituency, Brexiteer Mr Raab secured a narrow 3,000 majority ahead of his Lib Dem opponent, Monica Harding in the 2019 election. Tactical voting may have played a heavy hand as locals sent a message to the Conservatives. With Brexit less of a core issue this time round will the vote be as close again?

Opposition leader for Elmbridge Council, Cllr John Cope is running as the Conservative candidate. He narrowly kept his ward seat in the May council elections with just 129 votes more than his Lib Dem rival. Will this be replicated in the wider constituency?

Contesting the seat for the second time, Ms Harding is hoping to make it. Running her campaign in 2019 based on no political experience, Ms Harding decided to stop 'shouting at the tv' and went on to achieve 28,389 votes.

4: Runnymede and Weybridge

Contesting MP: **Ben Spencer** - Conservative (54.9% of votes in 2019).

Securing a strong majority of 18,270 votes in the 2019 elections, Dr Ben Spencer achieved a similar percentage to his predecessor Philip Hammond. Dr Spencer might not be so lucky this time. Recent polling from The New Statesman and Election Maps UK show a close race forecast between the Conservatives and Labour, taking around 30% of the vote each.

After being a Conservative stronghold seat since its creation in 1997, Runnymede and Weybridge could be the first brick of the Surrey wall to turn red for Labour. The Reform Party, although unlikely to win a seat here, could take important votes away from the Conservatives as it is predicted to absorb 11.7% of the vote.

Giving it a second chance, Robert King (Labour) is running again. Leader of the Labour Party in the Runnymede council, he had a successful May local elections as his party won four seats. The Conservatives lost seven seats, including the deputy council leader.

5: Reigate

Previous MP: **Crispin Blunt** - Independent (53.9% of votes in 2019 as a Conservative).

After over 25 years of public service as an MP (1997), Mr Blunt announced he would step down at the next election in

May 2022. In October 2023, he was arrested on suspicion of rape and possession of controlled substances, and had the Conservative Party whip removed. Mr Blunt was released under investigation in April 2024 and denies any wrongdoing.

After Mr Blunt won a massive majority of 18,310 in 2019, can the Conservatives inherit his popularity? Labour and Lib Dems came neck and neck at the 2019 election with around 10,000 votes each, showing a strong sense of feeling between the two. Current polling suggests either a close run between Conservatives and Lib Dems (New Statesman) or Conservatives and Labour (Election Maps UK).

With new candidates standing from the three main parties, it could be a toss up between them. Rebecca Paul (Conservative), Mark Johnston (Lib Dem) and Stuart Brady (Labour) all seem to stick to the representative party policies, rather than designing a unique promise to Reigate.

May local elections saw all other parties gain from Conservative losses, with Labour gaining another councillor in Redhill.

Image: Scout outside a polling station Molesey (image: Chris Caulfield)

BBC Question Time Came to Epsom

10 June 2024



Last night, **Epsom College** played host to BBC's **Question Time**, with **Fiona Bruce** at the helm. She opened the programme by highlighting Epsom's famed salts and rich horse racing heritage.

Epsom and Ewell Times will be staging a local "Question Time" for the Epsom and Ewell Parliamentary Candidates at the Adrian Mann Theatre, NESCOL, Reigate Road in Ewell at 7pm on Wednesday 26th June. All welcome.

The Panel included **Damian Hinds** MP the Conservative School Minister, **Wes Streeting** MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, **Nigel Farage**, Reform UK President, **Rose Hudson-Wilkin**, Bishop of Dover and **Piers Morgan**, TV Presenter and Former Newspaper Editor.

Here is a summary of some of the questions and responses:

Question: "Is the idea of bringing back national service anything more than a political stunt?"

Damian Hinds: Defended the idea, suggesting it would broaden opportunities and foster a cohesive society, though Bruce noted criticism from senior military figures.

Wes Streeting: Highlighted existing opportunities like local cadets and questioned the government's track record over the past 14 years.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Cautioned against backdoor conscription, referencing existing youth programs.

Piers Morgan: Supported the idea for its potential to instill responsibility, but emphasized the need to address broader issues affecting young people.

Nigel Farage: Dismissed the policy as a focus group driven stunt, pointing out its limited scope.

Question: "Labour claims to reduce (NHS) waiting lists by extending working hours and asking doctors to work on weekends. Where will you find the staff?"

Wes Streeting: Explained plans for voluntary extra shifts, while acknowledging current pay and working condition issues.

Damian Hinds: Agreed on the need for more doctors and better technology, but noted industrial action worsened the backlog.

Piers Morgan: Criticized the system's inability to cope with population growth and increased life expectancy.

Nigel Farage: Called for a rethink of NHS funding.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Highlighted the delay in developing a workforce plan.

Question: "Regardless of people coming over on small boats, legal immigration is out of control. What is the solution?"

Nigel Farage: Blamed Labour for opening the door to high migration and called for using Brexit powers to control it.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Advocated for addressing global issues causing migration and warned against political scapegoating.

Damian Hinds: Emphasized the need to welcome contributing migrants but acknowledged current numbers were too high.

Piers Morgan: Warned about the rhetoric used in discussing migrants and criticized the lack of control postBrexit.

Question: "Is it morally right to impose a tax on parents' aspirations for their children?"

Wes Streeting: Defended Labour's plan to remove tax exemptions for private schools, arguing for better funding for state schools.

Piers Morgan: Condemned the policy as envy driven and harmful to aspirations.

Damian Hinds: Questioned the impact and minimal revenue from the tax.

Rose Hudson-Wilkin: Called for equitable resourcing of all schools.

Nigel Farage: Suggested more scholarships for working class children instead of taxing private schools.

The heated debate at Epsom College will be a night to remember for those lucky to get in and everyone at Epsom College who watched it.

Maraam Nusair

6 out of 11 Conservative MPs leaving Surrey

10 June 2024



Michael Gove MP for Surrey Heath has brought the total Conservative MP retirees in Surrey to **SIX** out of the **ELEVEN** all present Conservative held **Surrey** constituencies.

On 5th February **Kwasi Kwarteng** the Conservative MP for Spelthorne announced he will not stand at the upcoming General Election.

With Paul Beresford MP for Mole Valley, Dominic Raab MP for Esher and Walton, Crispin Blunt MP for Reigate and Banstead and our own **Chris Grayling** MP for **Epsom and Ewell**, all having confirmed they are not going to run, this leaves 5 Surrey Conservative MPs still standing.

One can expect Jeremy Hunt MP for South-West Surrey, who serves in the Cabinet, to seek re-election. Jonathan Lord MP for Woking, Ben Spencer MP for Runnymede and Weybridge, Angela Richardson MP for Guildford and Claire Coutinho MP for East Surrey are assumed to be still up for the fight.

Epsom and Ewell Conservatives have already put in place their new prospective Parliamentary Candidate, **Mhairi Fraser**, an anti-corruption lawyer.

She will be challenged by **Helen Maguire** of the Liberal Democrats, **Gina Miller** of the True and Fair Party and **Steve Mckenna** of the Green Party and **Mark Todd** for Labour. It is understood a Reform Party candidate will stand but despite asking one of the Party's street canvassers to get in touch with Epsom and Ewell Times, we have heard nothing to confirm.

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10 June 2024



With the date of the General Election confirmed to be the 4th of July 2024 Epsom and Ewell's Member of Parliament since 7th June 2001, **Chris Grayling**, who is not standing for Parliament this time, writes to his constituents.

Dear constituent

As you will know, the Prime Minister has called a general election for 4th July. All Parliamentary activity is now ceasing and there will be no new debates or Parliamentary motions before the election.

I am not standing for re-election and so cease to be an MP when Parliament is dissolved on 29th May. I will, though, remain responsible for urgent constituency case work in Epsom and Ewell until polling day and until my successor is elected.

As the campaign has now started, I will no longer be responding to emails about party or policy issues. However if you have an urgent personal problem which requires my help during the campaign period, please feel free to raise it with me at chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk, which will remain operational until polling day.

Once Parliament has been dissolved my constituency data records will be destroyed, as is required legally. If you contact me for help with an urgent matter please let me know at the same time if you are happy for your issue and data to be passed on to my successor if the your case is still outstanding at the time of the election.

It has been a great honour to represent this constituency, and I send my good wishes to everyone locally for the future.

With best wishes

Chris Grayling

Out of the starting gates in Epsom and Ewell's political Derby

10 June 2024



Today British Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** announced a General Election will take place on July 4th.

Epsom and Ewell Times asked all the known candidates for their reaction to the news:

Mhairi Fraser, standing for the **Conservative Party** responded: "Epsom has been my family home for almost twenty years. The day after the election, it still will be. I have lived here, I have worked here, I have commuted from here; I have a personal interest in the success of Epsom, Ewell, Ashted and Leatherhead, and I know what it takes to deliver that success.

From protecting the Green Belt, to tackling crime by securing a more visible police presence, to regenerating our high streets, to improving our transport links - I have a plan, and I have the commitment to deliver on it. And throughout it all, I promise to run a clean campaign, as I have from day one. I have built my career over the last decade as an anti-corruption lawyer, and I will bring the same integrity to our politics. That is the first of many promises I will make to you,

but not the last I will deliver on.”

Helen Maguire PPC for the **Liberal Democrats** said: “Hard-working families in Epsom, Ewell, Ashted, and Leatherhead are sick of the same old unfair and divisive two-party politics which is currently tearing our nation apart. They are looking for real change and a positive future, which I am committed to working to bring. Our community have had enough of this Conservative government refusing to help them through the cost-of-living crisis, whilst also allowing our local NHS hospital and local schools to crumble, and sewage to be poured into our rivers.

This Conservative government is out of touch and out of time, and this announcement is long overdue. I am honoured to be fighting on behalf of my local community to rid Epsom, Ewell, Ashted and Leatherhead of the Conservatives, who have taken us for granted for years. In Epsom & Ewell, it’s a clear choice between a fair deal with the Liberal Democrats or more chaos with the conservatives. Enough is enough, this community needs change now.”

Gina Miller, leader of the **True & Fair Party**, said: “The decision to call a general election on 4th July is a concession to the inevitable, acknowledging that the time has come to face the electorate’s scrutiny. This summer, we are casting our votes to end this dismal chapter of our nation’s history and begin a new era with leaders who truly represent us. As I stand for election in Epsom and Ewell, I am ready to bring the voices of our community to the forefront and demanding a government that prioritises the wellbeing of its people above all else.”

Mark Todd, Chair of the **Labour Party** (a Labour candidate is yet to be confirmed) said: “At last, the country has got what it wants. Now it’s time to choose between more decline under the Tories or a greener, brighter future with Labour. Your local Labour party is here to serve you and we promise that if our candidate is elected they will serve the community with all their heart. They’ll be open, accessible and always try to help.”

Stephen McKenna of the **Green Party** said: “Like the vast majority of the population I am delighted that the official end date of this Conservative Government has been announced!

Greens everywhere are hoping for a transformation of national politics in this election, a turning point which will resolve the cost of living crisis, introduce innovative new policies for the environment, for a new greener economy, for net zero retrofitting of our homes and a programme of new social housing as well as better public services. This is a time for real change in our society.”

In the run up to the election the Epsom and Ewell Times will be interviewing the candidates and staging hustings.

Candidate seeks health and happiness for all

10 June 2024



A healthy population is the foundation stone of a prospering economy, writes Gina Miller.

Amidst economic and social turbulence, politicians tend to fall back on ‘growth’ as the route to salvation. But too many forget that growth is not an abstract economic concept - it is real people doing real work - building businesses and keeping our public services alive.

If people are the currency of growth - and they are - then the foundation stone for economic wellbeing is the health and happiness of the population at large. And we know that 80 percent of an individual’s health outcomes are determined by the social and environmental position they find themselves in. These social determinants of health (SDH) concern conditions affecting how people are born, grow, work, live, and age. Outcomes that affect our financial, social, housing, education, employment and environmental systems, infrastructure, and sustainability.

Access to green space; reliable, rewarding work; and a sense of power over one’s own destiny are all critical to wellbeing, both mental and physical.

Politicians can no longer ignore these facts of life and must start incorporating health metrics in the national measurement of GDP, and from the bottom-up with radical investment and transformation of town centres and local communities.

To achieve that, local government needs far more power and resources. Keir Starmer, as aspiring prime minister, is talking a good talk on more local devolution in England - but as with so much else, gives us no real detail about how he would make it work in practice. With the public finances in such a mess, people want honesty about where the money to make a difference is coming from.

At the True & Fair Party, and as part of my campaign to be MP for Epsom, Ewell, Ashted and Leatherhead, we have a plan and vision of what to do with more local devolution. We propose a new, modest levy on online and physical retail transactions to replace business rates. This would have two effects: first, to create a more level playing field between

shops on the high street and the online giants such as Amazon, and second to raise funds for local services.

With 289 million online card transactions taking place every day, a charge of just a few pennies on each could raise billions and give a shot in the arm to local community funding.

My health and wealth plan would transform town centres into 'health and happiness environments' where high street settings would be used as WE Community Hubs to offer early medical intervention and screening, a range of alternative mental health services, respite services, clubs and facilities for young people, after school clubs, job search/accessing re-training, legal aid provision, debt/financial counselling and assistance to access state support such as pension credit and universal credit.

The Centre for Mental Health has recently recommended that government should routinely and systematically assess the impact of every new policy on people's mental health^[1]. I could not agree more.

I believe we - here in Epsom and Ewell - could be leaders in the country on this, using new powers to develop new partnerships between the business, charity and public sectors and pilot a Wellbeing economy in our community.

Wellbeing Economy models of this kind have already been successfully implemented in Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Costa Rica, and closer to home in Wales and Scotland. With a growing number of countries facing the similar issues to us such as an aging, increasingly unwell population, the impacts of the digital revolution and environmental changes, and global insecurity they are looking to a transformation agenda to promote growth, improve public health, shorten supply chains, and create more resilient communities and social fabrics.

After 14 years, the Conservative government is out of ideas. Here in Epsom, Ewell, Ashted, and Leatherhead, you can choose to be the change. To make a positive vote at the next election, and enact a plan that can put our whole country on a path to a brighter future.

1. https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CentreforMH_PoliciesForBetterMentalHealth.pdf

Two horse race coming to Epsom?

10 June 2024



The Liberal Democrats continue to tighten their grip on Epsom & Ewell's southern flank in Mole Valley, as the Party cements its position in Leatherhead. With two out of three seats in Leatherhead South now in the hands of the Lib Dems, the Conservatives are now down to just two seats in the whole of the Mole Valley district.

According to the Lib Dem PPC the general election stage in the wider Epsom & Ewell constituency is now set for a two horse race between the Liberal Democrat's **Helen Maguire** and the Conservative **Mhairi Fraser**.

Commenting on the recent Mole Valley Council elections results Helen Maguire said, "Each month we are knocking on 1000s of doors and hearing from residents who are understandably upset with the way this government is running this country. They are looking for a change. With the boundary changes, Labour declaring the seat a non-battleground seat and the Liberal Democrats now having more councillors than the Conservatives across the country, we know there is a good chance of change here in Epsom, Ewell, Ashted & Leatherhead."

Mhairi Fraser, the Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate responded: "Although the results were not what we had hoped or worked hard for, I am incredibly proud of the integrity our local Conservative candidates showed. We ran an honest campaign focusing on what the Conservatives will continue to fight for on behalf of local residents, without resorting to attacking our individual opponents on the doorsteps or in our literature. I wish the new and re-elected councillors well in the term ahead, but the Conservatives will continue to be the loudest voice against the Liberal Democrats' plans to forever destroy our Green Belt, and to plaster tower blocks over the green spaces in our towns."

Mark Todd, Chair of the Epsom and Ewell Labour Party said: "'As a rule of thumb, Epsom town centre and the north of Epsom and Ewell are strong for Labour, as you move South the areas become more Conservative. We were very heartened therefore by the results in Leatherhead at the local elections. It was the first year Leatherhead has been part of the Epsom and Ewell Constituency and we fielded fantastic local candidates who live and work in the area. We got really good feedback on the doorstep and the Labour vote across Leatherhead increased by 73%. A similar swing will see us win the Epsom and Ewell constituency in the upcoming General Election."

The Labour Party is yet to select a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for the constituency. Epsom and Ewell Times has been informed that National Labour Party managers are conducting due diligence on all prospective MPs. Once they have completed this, they will give the Epsom and Ewell Labour Party a shortlist for local member's consideration.

Local Council elections in Mole Valley in Leatherhead, which will be within the recently changed boundaries of the

Parliamentary Constituency of Epsom and Ewell, produced two Liberal Democrat victories on 2nd May. In Leatherhead North **Benjamin Wear** secured 671 votes with the Conservative candidate **Alan Gibbs** trailing with 327 votes. In Leatherhead South **Gareth Parsons** gained 970 votes against Conservative **Tim Hall** getting 714 votes.

Wards in Ashted also went to the polls and returned independent candidates with healthy majorities.

2019 General Election result:

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Conservative	Chris Grayling	31,819	53.5
Liberal Democrats	Stephen Gee	13,946	23.5
Labour	Ed Mayne	10,226	17.2
Green	Janice Baker	2,047	3.4
Independent	Clive Woodbridge	1,413	2.4
Majority		17,873	30.0
Turnout		59,451	73.3

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Background to Image: Gordon Ednie License details. Heads added by Epsom and Ewell Times.

Green signals from prospective parliamentary candidate

10 June 2024



The most important General Election for 40 years is rapidly approaching and as your prospective Member of Parliament for the Green Party I would like to introduce myself.

I joined the party in 2011, out of disgust for the mainstream parties. The Parliamentary expenses scandals and greed of well-off MPs during the 2008 financial crash, epitomised the gulf between the governors and the governed. The brazen double standards posed a threat to democracy and switched people off politics. I have always advocated that democratic values of fairness and equity should be front and centre of our politics, and it vital that we carry these values forward in tackling the related environmental and cost of living crises.

Its also always been a key issue for me that nature is not just respected but also restored as ultimately this is our life support system. The Green Party was the first to propose legislation against "ecocide" in 2017 for instance and this is now not only contained in our full policy but is increasingly adopted internationally.

I grew up in West London, in a street where all sorts of families lived alongside each other, in a balanced community where all types of occupations were present including teachers and doctors, builders and craftsmen and other workers on average pay. We believed in the value of education - my father was a train driver who studied and later became a college lecturer and author. In those days everything seemed possible, and in particular homes were affordable in my street for everyone.

Sadly those times have gone and today it would be impossible for a young family to buy a home there. I became a professional Chartered Surveyor and Planner after studying Town and Country Planning at Manchester University and have practised my profession in the public and private sectors for over 30 years.

Epsom and Ewell is a very special place, with its unique and ancient history and really important community and cultural assets that I appreciate which remind me in many ways of the place I grew up in. I know now that these assets cannot be taken for granted. Many of the psychiatric hospitals in the Borough were closed under the Care in the Community legislation years ago and redeveloped for housing. A lot of the precious spaces were lost forever, impacting Epsom's green character.

Throughout my career, even where it was sometimes difficult to do so, I have championed environmental, educational and community development in my work, protecting heritage, parks and countryside, biodiversity and other assets. I have also worked at several universities designing and delivering post graduate and degree apprenticeship courses as a visiting lecturer and acting as an external examiner. Following the pandemic we now recognise to a much greater extent the value to our mental and physical health of enjoying nature and outdoor recreation as well as that of Lifelong Learning.

I worked hard campaigning to become a Borough Councillor and in 2016 I was elected to the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, one of three elected Greens at that time. Since then we have built up our numbers across the Borough so with eleven councillors, we are now the official opposition on the Borough Council. We successfully saved substantial Green Belt from unnecessary development in and around Redhill and many of the issues we dealt with are similar to those in Epsom and Ewell.

My commitment to you and local priorities : If elected as your Member of Parliament as well as continuing to seek the best outcomes for protecting the constituency from the aforementioned pressures I would also focus on other local priorities, including investing in the NHS, social care and new apprenticeships, ensuring young people can get skills, good wages and a step onto the housing ladder, meeting safety and security concerns for all ages with more policing.

I would work to strengthen the vitality and viability of our High Streets and village centres, including reform of business rates so monies raised could be reinvested in the area, helping small businesses and maintaining a retail banking presence not just pushing everyone into online services. I would also support measures to help the farming community through targeted grants schemes, with more emphasis on horticulture and organics, including taxes on some imports.

The climate and cost of living crises demand parallel responses, so for example, retrofitting old homes for energy efficiency not only saves money but also creates green jobs, a win-win for both people and the planet. It is time to acknowledge that achieving net-zero emissions doesn't jeopardize our economy; it revitalizes it.

Politically Greens are making great strides up and down the country, taking control of or acting in coalition to administer some 39 District Councils and have over 700 plus councillors nationally. Our programme is to do the same in Parliament where we need Green MPs to hold the Government to account just as we are doing on local councils. We want to make a real contribution to changing people's lives and with new Green MPs we can do just that.

Money for change exists: The old chestnut of there being no funds in the coffer is selectively applied by those with vested interests. In the 1950s, despite economic turmoil and the country being on the verge of bankruptcy, governments forged ahead, creating the NHS, and building circa 150,000 Council homes every year as part of a new social contract. We are a wealthy country that can generate significant funds for the right priorities.

The Epsom and Ewell Constituency is a prosperous community, yet this success brings with it development pressure which threatens to encroach on the remaining areas of Green Belt and countryside not just in the Borough but also the other constituency areas, Ashted and Leatherhead.

Home ownership, once a tangible hope, has slipped from the grasp of many. Essential public services are faltering whether this is in the NHS, social care, education or policing. Without action our younger residents will be forced to move away to find cheaper places, we will lose our identity as places experience overdevelopment, leading to a loss of crucial biodiversity and a consequent increase in adverse effects such as traffic congestion in what was once a relatively tranquil district.

My vision is one where these cherished places are protected so our children can enjoy living and working in the area.

Due to the shortage of social housing locally, Epsom and Ewell Council spends a staggering £2m per year on emergency accommodation, with ratepayers footing the bill. The extraordinary high cost of housing is having a corrosive effect on our neighbourhoods, with the elderly unable to afford more suitable accommodation and, as a professional surveyor with a specialist background in urban planning, I know that building expensive unaffordable homes in the wrong place is not addressing need or fixing our broken housing market.

Apart from protecting the Green Belt from unnecessary speculative housing, I have also argued against houses with large gardens being redeveloped since this impacts the character of local towns. We need a balanced community to sustain the whole of this vibrant constituency and to avoid it becoming a run down retirement village with reduced access to a range of public services, boarded-up high streets and where younger people are forced to move away.

Ensuring a positive future for Epsom and Ewell : Local communities are rightly proud of the towns and villages of this constituency and I respect every ounce of hard work that has gone into their creation and upkeep. I want to complement this effort. Greens work with communities across Surrey, and our party is seen as more trustworthy based on the work we do and the increasing support we are getting from voters. We are working tirelessly to deliver Green councillors in Ashted and Leatherhead now and in Epsom and Ewell.

I believe there are a growing number of voters in Epsom and Ewell who feel taken advantage of and ignored, and I would greatly value the opportunity to champion their causes. While we don't have proportional representation in this country this election still represents a one-off opportunity to change the political landscape. The usual certainties no longer apply

as many voters are dissatisfied with the two main parties and, with so many candidates standing in Epsom and Ewell, a surprise result is entirely possible.

If you have concerns or are dissatisfied about how you have been represented in Parliament, can I ask that you trust me with your vote? It would be an honour and a privilege to become your Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell. I will bring fresh thinking not repackaged stale old ideas passed around between the main parties. I want to make a difference, I need your help, your vote most definitely counts.

PM confident of success in Woking

10 June 2024



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said he was “confident” that Conservatives will hold onto Woking in the upcoming local and general elections, when he was grilled about why people should vote for a party that allowed the local council to go bankrupt.

The PM was at Woking Community Hospital April 11th where he was grilled about the fate of the Conservative party by reporters.

The PM pointed to the UK economy in response to questions about why Woking residents should vote for a party that allowed the local council to go bankrupt.

Woking Council declared bankruptcy in June 2023 after it admitted a risky investment spree into hotels and skyscrapers by its former Conservative administration.

Calling Woking’s investments a “cross-party” decision, Rishi said local councils are “in control of their own finances”, and urged they run their budgets “in a sensible manner to deliver to their residents”.

Citing the national picture, Rishi said inflation has “more than halved” to 3.4% in February 2024, wages have increased ahead of inflation, taxes have been cut and free childcare has been expanded to working families.

He added: “While we have been through a tough few years as a country, that’s been difficult for families in Surrey, I do believe that the start of this year we have turned a corner and we’re now heading in the right direction.

“Our plan is working, if we stick to our plan we can give everyone in Surrey and Woking the peace of mind that there is a brighter future for them and their family.”

Woking is set to go to the polls on May 2 to vote for a third of the council (10 seats) in the local elections. Since news first emerged about the borough’s financial crisis, his party lost control of the council, and saw its share of councillors drop to four (from 17 in 2016).

MP Jonathan Lord won 48.9% of the vote in the 2019 election, with Liberal Democrat candidate Will Forster coming second at 30.8%. One poll from Electoral Calculus predicts Jonathan will win a narrow victory of just 30.8%, with Lib Dem and Labour closely at its heels with 27.6% and 23.6% respectively.

Although the Woking MP was present during the media pool, he made no further comment.

The PM argued central government has put more funding into councils, claiming local councils have on average 7.5% more funding than 2023. A further £600m has also been put into local authorities for 2024-25.

He said: “Central government is doing its bit to support [local councils] with considerably more funding.” Despite the added funding Woking Council said it has to make £8.4m savings for year one of its five-year financial strategy. Closing most public toilets, ending grants to voluntary and community groups, reducing dial-a-ride services and losing up to 60 staff are some of the cuts the council has made to make ends meet.

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