EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

Current

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

Green signals from prospective parliamentary candidate

30 April 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

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd.
Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

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.

he 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, Ashtead 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 Ashtead 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.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd.
Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY