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

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EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

We are very very sorry for hustings hosting hash

27 April 2023



The Epsom and Ewell Times accepts full responsibility for last night's farce and failure over the promised Stamford Ward election hustings. We apologise unreservedly to the public.

Residents Association candidates **Steve Bridger** and **Martin Olney** had been prepared to answer your questions and debate with **Alison Kelly** (who cycled to three churches in her quest for the hustings – see below) and **David Buxton** of the Liberal Democrats and **Andrew Bailey** of the Green Party.

The candidates who did *not* register to attend the hustings were **Karen Landle** and **Richard Chinn** (Labour) and **Aaron Persand** and **Stephen Pontin** (Conservative).

The Gods seemed to be determined that this hustings would not take place. Firstly, we wrongly assumed a hall we had booked was the Scout Hall at the rear of Epsom Methodist Church in Ashley Road. An eagle eyed scout-leader spotted our error Tuesday and pointed out that we had booked the St Martins Scout troop hall. We then wrongly assumed their hall was beside St Martin's Church in Church Street and re-directed people there. Then on the night we discovered the scout hall is in fact at the rear of the former St. John Chandler Church in Church Road.

To cap it all Church Road was closed for access at the East Street junction.

Two determined electors of Stamford Ward managed to work this out and turned up but agreed the abandonment of proceedings. But nevertheless they had the chance to engage with Cllr **Steve McCormick** (RA candidate for Woodcote and Langley Vale) who had attended as a spectator. As had **Janice Baker** of the Green Party standing in Nonsuch.

Lionel Blackman, who was to chair the event said: "It's all my fault. I am sorry. We will get it right in 2027. Plenty of time to continue our mission to inject new life into our local democracy. You know, in the global struggle against authoritarianism not only must we nurse democracy at the micro-local level, if conducted with personal respect democracy can be fun. And we did have a bit of fun last night, albeit at my expense."

Epsom and Ewell Times is very confident, however, that the next hustings for the new ward of Horton will take place on Tuesday 2nd May at Southfield Park Primary School, Long Grove Rd, Epsom KT19 8TF at 7pm. There is only one such school isn't there?

The candidates willing to face the public standing in Stamford Ward:

Steve **Bridger** – Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell



I took up the challenge of being a Councillor when I retired to put something back into the area that I have lived for the majority of my life. I have secured 3 successful CIL bids for my Ward – 2 for Epsom Common and 1 for Horton Country Park. I am a believer in sustainability and any way that we can recycle, use power and resources more efficiently and generally be more careful about what we buy.
I became part of the RA due to the non-political stance that it takes – I am not told what to do or how to vote (I have voted

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against items that could affect my Ward and residents). I enjoy meeting residents, helping them out not only with matters concerning the Council but giving my life experiences to assist in some civil matters. I have assisted in fighting inappropriate planning matters (Kingswood House School, Clayhill Lodge etc.)
Party Politics should not come into local 'politics', promises of changing things that are outside our realm are matters that are decided by the politicians and outside our control – they have no place here.
I am proud to be part of the Borough that is known throughout the world, just mention Epsom and everyone knows or has heard of it, so lets keep it non-political and a great place to live, work and enjoy!

David **Buxton** – Liberal Democrat Focus Team



David has lived in Epsom for 18 years and worked as CEO for one of Londons leading Disabled Peoples Organisations.
David was previously an Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillor for four years. For 10 years David was a Committee Member and Chair of Livingstone Park Association leading the campaign to pull down the derelict Water Tower, and the campaign for the dilapidated Horton Chapel to become a charitable trust, enabling its transformation to its former glory as a listed building – the now new Horton Chapel Arts Centre! David was formerly Chair of the British Deaf Association and is a current Board Member of the European Union of the Deaf. David led the British Sign Language (BSL) Act Campaign nationally, he has won several national campaign awards and has been named as one of Britain's most influential disabled people. David is keen to protect wildlife, parks and the Green Belt.

Alison **Kelly** – Liberal Democrat Focus Team

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Alison has lived in Epsom since 1986 and was a Borough Councillor for 8 years serving on planning and finance committees. From 2007 to 2015, Alison was the main opposition spokesperson on budgetary and financial policy. Alison became involved in local politics to protect our open areas and gardens because of her dismay at the number of planning decisions that were changing the landscape. Alison welcomes this opportunity to be directly involved in deciding local planning issues. Alison is particularly interested in promoting energy efficiency and recycling and is keen to ensure that the borough exceeds targets and meets residents' expectations. Alison also enjoys fitness, gardening and volunteering locally.

Alison Kelly outside the final destination of St John Chandlers Church of her cycle-quest to find the hustings.

Epsom and Ewell Times can confirm her bicycle was there – just out of view of the photo.

Andrew **Bailey** – Green Party

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Andrew Bailey says:
“I will help build a sustainable future where our greenbelt is fully protected. I strongly believe in community engagement and consensus politics. My aim is for Epsom council to provide better tools so people can recognise positive change – increases in recycling, downturn in pollution, engage in development plans and tell the council where they don’t feel safe. A community exists only when people feel their voices are heard.”
Andrew Bailey – Stamford Ward and Green candidate Janice Baker, who is standing in Nonsuch Ward, in eager attendance at the second of the wrong venues – St Martins Church Hall.

Martin **Olney** – Residents’ Associations of Epsom and Ewell

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The RA has not cut any services in the last four years and the auditors have complimented them on their sound management of ever-dwindling financial resources. I want to help maintain the Borough's efficiency and continue to provide what local people want. I was a Councillor in 2015 -2019, my main interest was planning and planning policy. I also looked after Veterans in the Borough as well as maintained our heritage assets.

The results of the consultation on the Local Plan have made the RA pause the plan. I will work for a new plan that meets the needs of the residents.

Surrey County Council is failing to maintain our roads, deliver enough schools places or provide adequate transport. Ofsted gave a 'requires improvement' for their Child Service, one of many dismal performances. I will pressure them to meet their obligations as they take 76% of your Council Tax.

The RA is focused on issues, within their responsibilities, that impact the people in the Ward. The National political parties have a wider agenda and are influenced by a central office. A vote for the RA is a vote for local decisions being taken after consultation with local people.

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