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Hospital plans shelved



Have the protesters forced NHS bosses to think again?

...but for how long?

Local NHS Managers have agreed to put the plans to transfer maternity and childrens' services from Epsom Hospital to St Helier on hold until they know what the future is for St Helier.

The future of hospitals across London is under scrutiny in response to a report by Health Minister Lord Darzi, which said that London should have far fewer acute hospitals. That's expected to mean big changes at St Helier, which may lose many of its acute services to St George's in Tooting. The Board of

the Epsom and St Helier Trust had originally refused to delay their plans until the London review was completed – but have now changed their mind. The move follows a summer of protests about the future of Epsom Hospital, which included rallies at Epsom, St Helier and outside 10 Downing Street. Epsom and Ewell MP Chris Grayling said: "This may well be no more than a brief respite

for Epsom, but at least it means that services won't now be transferred to St Helier before we know if it has a future." "I am hugely grateful to all of those who joined the protests this summer. I have no doubt that the crowds at the Board Meeting that first agreed the changes, and then came along to the series of protest events, had a huge impact on the view of managers in the NHS." "The NHS needs to understand that the protests will start again if Epsom services are threatened once more."

FROM THE CLOCK TOWER



OCTOBER 2007

'From the Clock Tower' is a twice yearly update from your local MP Chris Grayling.

The Epsom and Ewell parliamentary constituency covers the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, Ashtead, Nork, Tattenhams and the Preston area of Tadworth.



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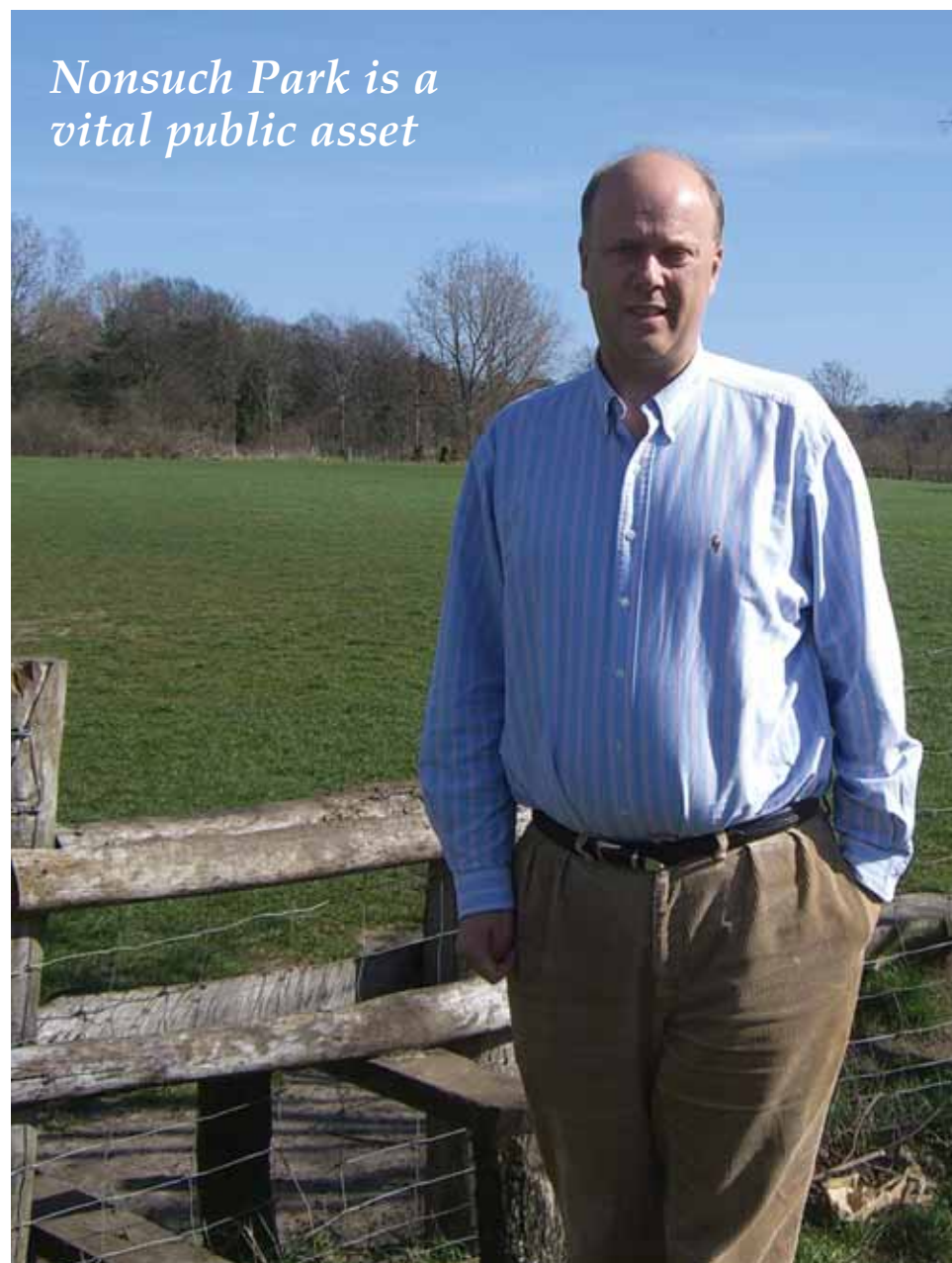
Nonsuch Mansion's future secured after MP's intervention

Epsom and Ewell MP Chris Grayling has brokered a solution to the future of Nonsuch Mansion which will secure public access to the building for the future. Under the agreement, Surrey County Council will offer Epsom and Ewell and Sutton Councils a 125 year lease on the Mansion and the Park, with a requirement that public access to the building should continue. The move will end speculation that the Mansion is set to be sold off.

The future of the Mansion has been under debate because it is now in a poor state of repair, and parts of it have been empty for years.

"I am delighted that this agreement has been reached," says Chris. "Whilst I believe that those parts of the mansion which are lying empty should

be used to provide an income to help restore it, there can be no question of the Mansion being sold off for other purposes. After all the hard work that has been done by the Friends, and by local volunteers, it is vital that public access is maintained for the future."



Nonsuch Park is a vital public asset

Chris in Nonsuch Park

A new role at Westminster



FROM THE CLOCK TOWER

Chris takes on pensions brief

Chris is spearheading the battle to get a better deal for people who have lost their pensions in recent years, after becoming Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in a summer reshuffle.

An estimated 125,000 people, some of them living locally, have lost most of their pensions after hundreds of pension schemes closed.

"These are people who saved for retirement, and then lost most or all of that money.

It's deeply worrying. How can we start to rebuild confidence in pension saving if we cannot even sort out the problems of the people who have little or nothing left to see them through retirement?" says Chris. "Something must be done."

in brief

Stables threat

Chris has promised to fight proposals to redevelop the historic racing stables next to the Durdans in Chalk Lane in Epsom. The current owner Lord Halifax is believed to be preparing a planning application to convert the site into homes and offices.

Scouts centenary

Chris has joined celebrations for the centenary of the Scouts movement. He attended the AGM of the Surrey Scouts in Epsom and has agreed to join their Council. He is already an ambassador for the local Guides. "The local Scout and Guide groups do a wonderful job for young people locally. We should be enormously grateful for the job that all the volunteers in the Scout and Guide movement do - and I'd like to congratulate everyone in the Scout movement locally in particular on the occasion of the centenary," says Chris.

Garden Grab

"must stop"

Chris is backing local residents who are preparing to battle yet more applications to knock down local houses and replace them with mini-estates, often in quiet side roads that can ill-afford the growth in local traffic.

Areas currently under particular threat from development include sites in Ashted, College Ward in Epsom and Nork.

"The Government has effectively given developers an open door to launch a garden grab in our area," he says. "By saying they want huge numbers of new houses in the South-East, and at the same time taking away the right of

local communities to decide housing issues, they have made it more difficult to resist these back-land applications."

"There are clearly places where new development is both appropriate and necessary. We have too many first-time buyers struggling to get onto the housing ladder. But concreting over gardens is the wrong way to tackle that problem."

Local communities need more say on planning



Small retailers at risk

Supermarket plans could threaten local shops

Chris is backing local shopkeepers in their battle against plans to build a new supermarket at the end of Ruxley Lane. The application, by Aldi, has been rejected by local councillors, but may now go to appeal.



Shops near the junction of Ruxley Lane

The development would involve knocking down part of the parade at the junction of Ruxley Lane and the A240.

"My big concern," says Chris, "is that this development would mean that many local shopkeepers would lose trade, and that we would see the loss of many more small shops from the area. Often the impact on local shopkeepers can be on businesses up to a mile away, and I think that the development would put pressure on businesses in both Stoneleigh and West Ewell. The area is well served for supermarkets already, and I don't want to see the pressures on local parades grow even more."

AROUND & ABOUT

Visiting local community, voluntary and charitable groups

With Epsom's oldest resident, Phyllis Brooksbank, at the 150th anniversary of Swail House



contact

A visit from your MP

If you would like Chris to attend an event or to visit your organisation, please contact the constituency office at 212 Barnett Wood Lane, Ashted, KT21 2DB or telephone 01372 271036.

Visits to the House of Commons

If you are part of a local school or organisation that would like to arrange a tour of the House of Commons, please contact Chris's office at Westminster. You can ring the office on 020 7219 8194 or write to Chris at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Surgeries

Chris holds surgeries every fortnight on a Friday afternoon. The venues rotate between the constituency office in Ashted, the Epsom Conservative Club, Stoneleigh Library and Tattenham Corner Library. For details of the next surgery date and to book an appointment, please ring the constituency office on 01372 271036.

Keep updated



Chris's website, www.chrisgrayling.net, contains information about the area, local news and details of how to contact him, as well as electronic copies of this newsletter. You can also leave your views on the special bulletin board.

At Epsom Downs Primary School's "Jive in the Drive"



Opening the new ball cage at Stamford Green Primary School

