



Minister set to rule on future of hospital

The Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt is expected to rule shortly on whether there should be a detailed Government investigation into the proposal to build a new hospital in Sutton to replace Epsom and St Helier.

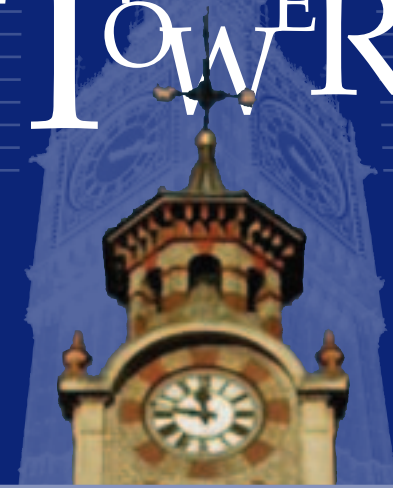
Several thousand people backed Chris Grayling's recent letter writing campaign urging the Government to think again about the scheme. The

Government has also received a formal protest from the London Borough of Merton. Meanwhile

rumours are growing that the NHS is poised to take the first step towards downgrading Epsom Hospital by closing its operating theatres outside office hours. This step is tantamount to a downgrading of the Accident and Emergency Department, since it will lose the ability to tackle serious cases overnight and at weekends.

"I will continue to do everything I can to challenge any attempts to downgrade Epsom while the future of our local hospital services remains uncertain. I have still to see any clear evidence that the NHS can cope with one hospital with 300 fewer beds than they have at present – and that they can afford the bill to build a new hospital. It would be madness to start downgrading Epsom when so many questions remain unanswered," says Chris.

FROM THE
**Clock
Tower**



AUTUMN 2005

'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.



You can write to

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NHS Financial Problems

threaten local services



Health Service deficits may lead to cutbacks

Chris is to hold discussions with senior NHS bosses in Surrey about the current financial problems locally. More than £8 million of cuts will have to be made in the next few months to close a substantial deficit. Already a number of community posts have been axed and more are expected to follow.

“Part of the problem is general to the NHS,” says Chris. “Trusts all over the country are in real financial difficulties, and many are closing wards, medical centres or are cutting back staff and services.”

“But I think we have a particular problem in this area. Many local doctors and NHS staff are thoroughly fed up with health service managers,

and think that the current situation is intolerable.”

“And to make matters worse, the NHS in Surrey and South West London is embarking on yet another reorganisation, which looks like it will end up re-establishing organisations that were scrapped a few years ago. So much money just seems to be wasted, rather than being spent on improvements for patients.”

Housing plan published

Surrey County Council has published a consultation document about new housing in the county. The Council has been successful in its efforts so far to resist the worse case for new housing locally. John Prescott and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister want substantial new development in Surrey and elsewhere in the South East in the next twenty years.

Surrey has also told the Government that it does not think there should be any significant new development without improvements to the infrastructure in the South East.

The latest proposals involve building 180 new houses per year in the Epsom and Ewell area. “This figure is still higher than I would want, but it is more manageable than the

What is your view on housing development in Surrey?

worse case put forward by the Government. There is, though, still a danger that the Government will step in and insist on a higher housing target. And the threat to green belt land has definitely not gone away,” says Chris.

“I would encourage people locally to look at the consultation document at www.surreycc.gov.uk”



in brief

Football return?

Chris is involved in discussions to try to find a way of bringing Epsom and Ewell Football Club back within the Borough. The Club has been ground sharing with Banstead Athletic in Tadworth for a number of years.

Fighting for our heritage

Chris has backed local residents trying to save a landmark local building, the White House in Worcester Park, from development. "We cannot afford to allow development pressures to change the character of the area," he says.

Town Centre Campaign

Chris is backing a campaign by local retailers to get improvements to traffic flows and to parking in Epsom town centre. "I think we need a smarter approach to traffic management in the town centre. We have parking in the wrong places, and the poor design of the main junction in the centre of the town means it snarls up unnecessarily." Retailers say the current arrangements are an important factor preventing new businesses moving into Epsom.

"No" to train changes at Stoneleigh

London Mayor Ken Livingstone and rail companies have blocked efforts by Chris to get local stations including Stoneleigh moved into a different travel zone. At the moment passengers from Stoneleigh pay more for their fares than other people a similar distance from Central London, because of the way zone maps are drawn.

New proposals

Development plans back on the drawing board

expected for Upper High Street

A new plan to develop the Upper High Street area in Epsom is expected from developers in the next few weeks. Plans for a giant supermarket have, at least for the time being, been withdrawn.

Chris joined local residents in campaigning against the proposal, which he said would be very damaging to Epsom and the surrounding area.

"There is no doubt that the Upper High Street area needs to be redeveloped. But the plans were much too big for the area and would have, in my view, have seriously damaged the quality of life for local residents. There would have been a big increase in traffic, and it is far from certain that the store would have helped improve business in Epsom town centre," he says.



Chris with protestors against the Upper High Street plans

"I hope the revised plans will reflect the needs of the area. I would be all in favour of a development that mixed office or residential space with a smaller store. But we must

not allow an inappropriate development that affects local residents and businesses in the wrong way. Let's hope the new plans will be more in tune with local feeling."

Residents complain about late night licences

The introduction of the new Licensing Act has prompted a furious response from many local residents, who face the prospect of local pubs staying open into the early hours of the morning.

A significant proportion of local pubs have either applied for the new extended licenses, or are reported to be planning to do so. Surrey Police have objected to some of the new licenses, particularly where there have been outbreaks of antisocial behaviour in the past.

"I think these new laws are madness," says Chris. "It should be perfectly obvious that having longer drinking hours is unlikely to mean less drinking. My concern is that it will lead to more late-night problems in the area, and that our already over-stretched local police may struggle to cope with the extra work."

Worries about longer pub opening hours



AROUND & ABOUT

Visiting local community, voluntary and charitable groups

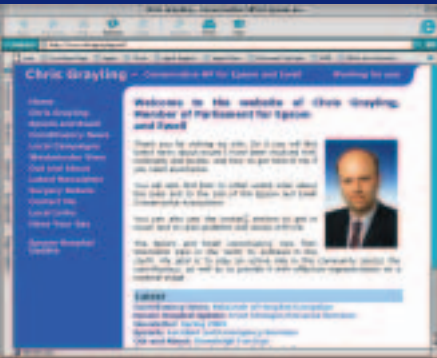


With local Make Poverty History campaigners



Opening the Nork Trim Trail

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 the presentation of new equipment to the Phab youth group in Epsom



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.

FROM THE
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