

# Esher Matters

Spring 2021 No:102

Covering Esher, Hersham Riverside,  
Lower Green and West End

**“ I want a clean,  
green and vibrant  
Esher...”**



**says our guest editor  
David Young  
ERA prospective  
Councillor**

Our Green Belt is under threat from developers; traffic and air pollution could climb to even higher levels when the lockdown ends; shops are closing in the High Street as Esher fails to keep up with neighbouring towns; and climate change marches on.

But it isn't all doom and gloom. We have had some major successes over the past year and, with your support, we can tackle the challenges and shape a future for Esher that our children can be proud of.



**Inside:  
Esher Air Pollution  
worst in Elmbridge**

**ERA pledges to  
protect the Green  
Belt**

**What does  
Elmbridge Borough  
Council actually do?**

**Coal Posts.  
What are they?**

# Our survey says you want a...



**I am David Young, ERA Committee member and the candidate in this May's local elections.**

I recently ran a survey amongst local residents to find out what their concerns were. This will help the ERA to ensure we focus on the right topics in our campaigns and in Council business. Here are the results:

## **Protect and improve our green spaces**

Consistently the biggest concern of most residents is the protection of our Green Belt. The ERA has pledged to protect the Green Belt and fight the central government

algorithm which is trying to more than double the number of houses built each year in Elmbridge.

We have challenged the plans for 318 apartments and a hotel on Sandown Park and the appeal is now pending ministerial review.

We are geared up to battle plans to build 600 dwellings on Hersham Golf Course and 260 on Moore Place Golf Course. And we are successfully opposing applications by speculators to build mass apartment blocks in the place of existing single houses.

We do not want to become another London suburb!

## **Reduce the impact of traffic**

Esher High Street and the A244 have the worst air pollution in Elmbridge.

The roads which originally gave life to Esher as a stagecoach stop are now choking it and chopping up the town centre – primarily to serve the huge volume of ‘through traffic’ not the local residents. There are no easy answers – whilst a wholesale switch to electric vehicles would reduce NO<sub>2</sub> pollution, particulate matter is produced by the brakes, tyres and road wear of all vehicles.

Elmbridge BC will be running a public consultation about air pollution – see our e-briefing article on page 3 - Air Pollution in Esher is the worst in Elmbridge.

How far would you be prepared to go to tackle the problem?

Please have your say by responding to the consultation.

## **Improve the High Street**

Esher High Street was already struggling and the pandemic has accelerated the decline. We have whole sections of shops which are closed – some for many years. The survey respondents be-moaned the poor range of shops in Esher.



# clean, green, vibrant Esher

Why do Cobham, Weybridge and even villages such as Claygate have butchers, greengrocers, gift shops and hardware stores whilst Esher has none?

Part of the reason is that retailers in the other towns have worked together to provide a single voice and get support and investment. The ERA will explore ways to raise the profile of Esher and look for opportunities to support the existing businesses as well as encouraging new ones.

## Improve pedestrian access

As health and fitness have become front and centre over the past year, the challenges for pedestrians have become more noticeable. The ERA is pushing both Elmbridge Borough Council and Surrey County Council to improve pedestrian access: for example, supporting local campaigns for a Pegasus crossing on the A244; pushing for a faster review of the Esher Transport Study which is reviewing several pedestrian danger points; and standing up for public rights of way.

There are challenges on many fronts, but we have had success as you will see on the following pages.

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## Our new e-briefings

In this newsletter you will find QR codes that take you to specific articles on our website where we have space to enlarge upon a subject. Hold your smartphone camera over the code and it will take you direct to the article.



### **Air Pollution in Esher is the worst in Elmbridge.**

What type of pollution do we have?  
Why is it so bad?  
What can we do about it?



### **A244 (Copsem Lane) Road Safety Improvements Needed!**

Safety improvements at two key points on Copsem Lane are being considered. Is it all too slow?



# May 6th elections explained

## You will be voting in three elections for:

- A third councillor for 'Esher Ward' to sit on Elmbridge Borough Council.
- A new councillor to sit for the 'East Molesey and Esher Division' on Surrey County Council.
- A new Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner.

## Elmbridge Borough Council

The current Elmbridge BC Administration is run by a coalition of Residents' Association councillors (including our own Cllr. Richard Williams), independents and LibDems. Councillors are elected for 4 year terms.

EBC is one of 11 Surrey district & borough councils, responsible for the smooth running of local matters:

**Planning** Deciding what buildings are built and where

**Rubbish and waste collection**

**Countryside** Tending our green spaces, eg Esher Common and Hersham Riverside Park

**Car parks** (not on-street parking and CPZs - they are run by Surrey CC)

**Community support services** Meals on wheels, funding and running day centres for the elderly and other vulnerable residents

**Environmental health**

**Sports and health** Sports facilities, pools and funding sporting activities

**Leisure and culture** Arts and culture and our village halls

## Surrey County Council

A more remote body, but with huge influence over your lives since it runs:

**Highways** Everything to do with roads, including changed layouts, traffic management and potholes

**Schools and learning**

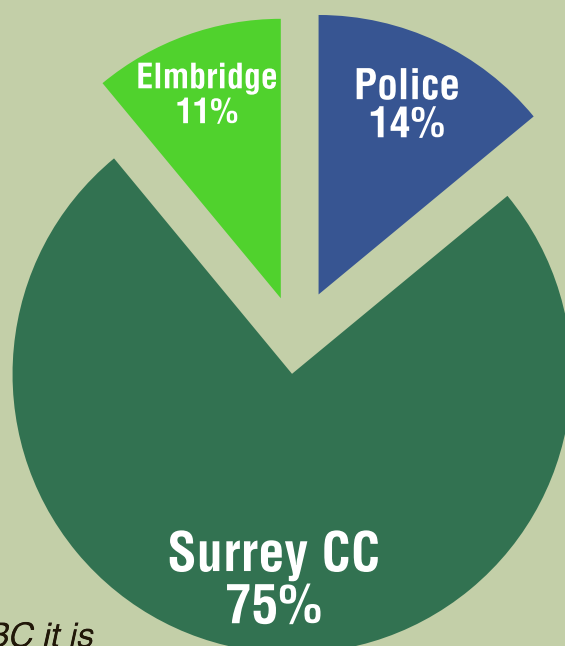
**Social care and health**

**Recycling centres**

**Libraries**

**Footpaths and Bridleways**

*Although your Council Tax is collected by Elmbridge BC it is then distributed as our pie chart shows*



# From our new e-briefing

## New ways of staying in touch

Since we've been unable to deliver our newsletters by hand during lockdown, we have created an online newsletter which is emailed to supporters who have registered with us. However, we would like to reach more of you, so please register at [esher-residents.com/register](https://esher-residents.com/register).

A selection of the e-briefing articles are summarised here. To see the full e-briefings go to [esher-residents.com/newsletters](https://esher-residents.com/newsletters) or scan the QR code with your smartphone camera and it will take you there.



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## From our e-briefing March 2021



**ERA Pledge to protect the Green Belt.** The ERA and other residents' groups have pledged to protect the Green Belt and oppose excessive housing targets being imposed by Whitehall.



**Postal Voting** The local election is on May 6th and many more people will want to vote by post this year. We provide guidance on how to register for a postal vote.

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## From our e-briefing February 2021



At the end of 2020, **ERA Councillor, Richard Williams**, was instrumental in getting the planning applications for Esher Place House rejected, comprehensively.



**ERA's Councillor, Richard Williams**, was elected in May 2019 for a four year term. In a short interview he talks about his experiences so far.



# Local landmarks

## Coal posts

On a walk or maybe in slow traffic along the roads nearby, you may have wondered what are the white metal posts with the shield shaped City of London coat of arms. These are coal and wine tax posts (erected in the 19th century and restored in 1997) marking the point and giving due notice at the place when duty became payable on coal and wine being transported into the City of London.

There are over 200 located around London in a boundary that was set in 1845 at a radius of 20 miles from the City of London General Post Office in St. Martin's le Grand.



Type 1

In Elmbridge there are 23 publicly accessible surviving coal and tax posts consisting of four different types made of either cast iron or stone. Most are Grade II listed and they can be found in Walton-on-Thames, Molesey, Esher, Claygate and Oxshott.

The post shown in the photo alongside is known as a Type 1, made of cast iron. It is the most common and the one you are likely to have noticed. They are the most obvious as they are usually sited next to roads and are painted white. These were cast by Henry Grissell at the Regents Canal Ironworks and were cast 1.8m tall but with about 1m showing above ground.

Type 2 is 4.2 metres high and made for the railways. Other types can be found by canals and railways.

An example of a stone Type 2 post is shown lower left.



Type 2

In our area of Esher, Lower Green and Hersham Riverside, there are 8 posts but only 7 can be readily be seen and these are at:

- Arbrook Lane junction with Milbourne Lane
- Arbrook Farm Lane off Copsem Lane
- Douglas Road on the railway embankment opposite the junction with Blair Avenue (Type 2 in granite)
- Littleworth Lane north of the junction with Littleworth Road
- Littleworth Road junction with New Road
- Lower Green Road opposite the open space
- Portsmouth Road north side by the old Toll House, now a nursery
- River Ember north bank (sorry, no public access)

# Local landmarks

Although the posts were not erected until the 19th Century, it was the need to rebuild a destroyed London after the The Great Fire of 1666 that spurred a new era of coal tax legislation being enacted in 1667 to raise the funds. The coal levy then was set at one shilling/5p (around £12.25 now) per chaldron (25 cwt/1.27 tonnes metric). The revenue gained helped rebuild the likes of St Paul's Cathedral and 51 other churches that had been razed. Other structures such as Blackfriars Bridge and Holborn Viaduct were also built with the tax money.

Of course, it's all very well having all these unmanned warning posts but where did one pay the duty, how was it monitored? The obligation to pay the taxes was enacted under The Coal Duties (London, Westminster and adjacent counties) Act, 1851. The railway and canal companies or local coal merchants calculated the sums due and paid the money to the Clerk of the Coal Market (however wine duties were collected in the Port of London).

The taxes were particularly unpopular and were eventually abolished with the last tax collection occurring in 1890. A tax had been collected for over 300 years but was abandoned within 30 years of the posts going up. A 19th century example of eternal Government profligacy.

The Elmbridge guide can be found on their website at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/other-heritage-assets](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/planning/other-heritage-assets) and contains a map showing the location of all the posts in the Borough.

*Thanks to Elmbridge's own guide to Coal Posts, The Londonist and Maurice Bawtree's 1969 article, 'The City of London Coal Duties and their Boundary Markers' published in the 'London Archaeologist'.*

## In our next newsletter...



Sometime after the local election dust has settled, we will be delivering another newsletter through your doors. It will include more local landmarks. This time the subject will be those edifices in central Esher that we often pass, which are so familiar and about which we know little.

The wonders of technology mean that you can look at it already on our website. Just scan the QR code shown here and you can see it today.

We would be very happy for any suggestions of other local landmarks that you would like us to add.



# Stop press!

Check out [esher-residents.com/news](https://esher-residents.com/news) for the latest on:

- ◆ A244 Pegasus Crossing Petition – to be reviewed by Surrey/Elmbridge Councillors on 8<sup>th</sup> March
- ◆ Air Pollution public consultation – due out in March for 8 weeks
- ◆ Sandown Park appeal – Robert Jenrick due to decide by 12<sup>th</sup> May
- ◆ Lower Green Community Centre hopes to reopen April 2021

Scan the QR code to keep up to date.



## May 6th - Don't forget to vote...



## Support the ERA...join the ERA

We are run entirely by volunteers and our newsletters, website and all other activities are paid for by donations from residents. If you would like us to continue our work, please do contribute. We suggest £10, but if you prefer to give less, (or more!) that's fine too. To donate please go to [esher-residents.com/support-us](https://esher-residents.com/support-us). Alternatively, please scan this QR code...



We welcome residents who would like to join our Committee to run a campaign or represent a particular area. Please email us at [helloesher@esher-residents.com](mailto:helloesher@esher-residents.com).

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