

Ashtead Independents

NEWSLETTER

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MOLE VALLEY ELECTIONS 2024 -- THANK-YOU ASHTEAD! *Ashtead Independents win both seats.*

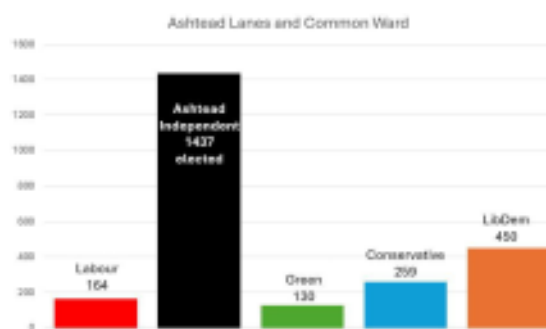
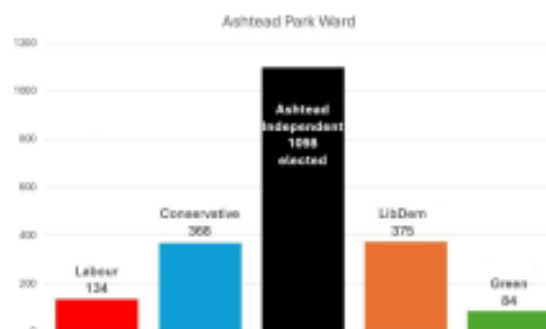
A big **“thank-you”** to all Ashtead residents who voted for Ashtead Independent candidates in the Mole Valley Council elections on 2 May. Both of our candidates were successful and were elected with significant majorities.

Gerry Sevenoaks was re-elected for Ashtead Park Ward and Andy Smith was elected for Ashtead Lanes and Common. We are gratified that the people of Ashtead have, once again, put their trust and confidence in us to represent their views and to continue working for the local community. Ashtead Independents secured 56.3% of the total number of votes cast in the two Ashtead wards.

Mole Valley District Council now comprises 31 Liberal Democrat Councillors, six Ashtead Independents and two Conservatives. This means that the Informal Independent Group remains the official opposition. Whilst this puts a great deal of responsibility on Ashtead Independent Councillors, we will intensify our efforts to consult residents widely to ensure that their voice is heard loud and clear.

Remember that while the Ashtead Independents are registered with the Electoral Commission, our Constitution and Rules make clear that each Councillor can vote independently with no political whip. It is therefore important that your Ward Councillors are made aware of your views.

During the 2nd May election many different local issues were raised by residents, and we will be pursuing and reporting back on all these matters. If you wish to get in touch with us, please use the contact form on our website www.ashteadindependents.org or find your Ward Councillors' email addresses at www.molevalley.gov.uk



LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Residents are justifiably concerned about the state-of-play with the Mole Valley Local Plan and its consequences for Ashtead. The current position is that the Main Modifications Consultation (whereby residents could make comments) is now closed and all those comments have been forwarded to the Planning Inspector. The Inspector will review the comments and any other information and, if no further information is required, produce a report which would recommend MVDC to adopt the new Local Plan. It is anticipated that this will be determined at a meeting of the Full Council in September/October 2024.

Regarding the land South of Ermyrn Way, the Council has been approached by Lichfields, who are agents for Countryside Properties and Wates Development, to submit a Planning Performance Agreement. This is an agreed project management framework for pre-application advice and the planning application. Clearly, we can expect a planning application from the developers once the Local Plan has been formally adopted by MVDC. “Residents can be assured that Ashtead Independent Councillors, working with residents, will fight to mitigate and minimise the impact upon the local community from any planning application,” says Cllr Gerry Sevenoaks.



Unnecessary Cycle Scheme

Surrey County Council, backed by Mole Valley Council, are proposing a cycle corridor from Epsom to Leatherhead. This affects us in Ashtead as it will go from the A24 down Craddocks Avenue and all along Barnett Wood Lane to Leatherhead. If this scheme goes ahead, it will mean months of disruption, with trees being cut down, verges destroyed and pavements 'reconfigured' so that they can be 'shared' by cyclists and pedestrians. It will fundamentally alter the appearance of this area.

Ashtead Independent councillors pledge to represent the views of local residents and make sure everyone is properly consulted. Cllr Andy Smith says: "There must surely be better ways to promote cycling and walking than with this inappropriate and environmentally damaging scheme."

Ashtead Pond

Your Independent Councillors fought hard to get Ashtead Pond dredged and cleared and as a result it is now a much deeper and more stable body of water for wildfowl and other animals. Cllr Patricia Wilshire explains: "Some dead trees have been removed, some have fallen down, and many have been pollarded to reduce their canopies. This all ensures that less water is extracted by foliage and more light is able to get to the water. Some areas around the pond edge have been cleared to allow more access for people, while some of the edge has been left somewhat unkempt to allow birds to hide away during nesting."

The Council now has a five year management plan in place. Ashtead Independent Councillors will continue to work closely with MVDC Officers to make sure the pond remains a treasure and asset.

Woodfield Flooding

In recent winters, many residents have been dismayed and inconvenienced by the large area of flooding in the north-west corner of the Woodfield. In recent years, the pathway to the station and much of the grassy field have been under water for long periods, and your Ashtead Independent Councillors have been discussing with Council Officers how the flooding may be alleviated.

It is hoped to construct a shallow temporary pond, where the original one was situated, and dig a ditch at the edge of the field to run parallel with the station carpark boundary, perhaps with a culvert from the field into the ditch. There is little opportunity for the ditch to carry the winter water away, but it could collect that water and be allowed to dry out naturally. A similar ditch runs along the road edge in front of the Scout Hut.

Let us hope that funding will be forthcoming so that next winter will be easier for all those wanting to access the station via the Woodfield. We will certainly keep up the pressure for improvements.

Alley Action

The day after the votes were counted and local election results announced, Ashtead's Independent Councillors resumed work as usual, with Cllr Chris Hunt leading the other Ashtead Independent Alley Action Volunteers and helping to remove overgrown vegetation from an alleyway off Skinners Lane. The group collected 23 sacks of vegetation.

"Thanks to the team," says Chris, "we managed to cut back areas along the footpath as well as around the post box and the bench." To join our group of volunteers please contact us via our website www.ashteadindependents.org



Your Mole Valley Councillors Ashtead Lanes and Common Ward



Andy Smith



Patricia Wilshire



Chris Hunt

Your Mole Valley Councillors Ashtead Park Ward



Mary Cooper



Gerry Sevenoaks



Garry Stansfield

Surrey County Councillor Chris Townsend



Ashtead Independents
website

Surrey Highways

County Councillor Chris Townsend reports that St Giles and Greville schools now have 20mph speed limits outside, as promised by Ashtead Independents, and the areas around West Ashtead, St Peter's, St Andrew's and Downsland schools are all introducing 20mph later this year. SCC has made improvements to various local roads and pavements including Park Lane, The Street, Beechcroft, and Cray Avenue, while both Woodfield Lane and Barnett Wood Lane will be next on the list for work. "Also, please continue to log potholes on the Surrey County Council website - it does work!" says Chris. The web address for that is surreycc.gov.uk/do-it-online/report-it-online

Improving the Car Park Toilets

Your Ashtead Independent Councillors have been pressing MVDC to repair and refurbish the public toilets in the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall car park as they are in a very poor condition. In conjunction with Ashtead Traders, we have applied for funding for a complete overhaul of these facilities to improve their external and internal appearance and make them safer and more secure for all users. We are hopeful that the funding will be approved and that the work can take place this year, during the APMH Centenary Year. We will keep you updated on progress.