



# Ashtead Independents

Keep national party politics out of local government

## **ASHTHEAD INDEPENDENTS GIVEN CABINET PORTFOLIOS IN MOLE VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

24th May 2018 by admin

The local government elections on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018 resulted in a hung Council in Mole Valley. The Conservatives secured 20 seats, the Liberal Democrats 14, and the Informal Independent Group seven. This meant that the Conservatives lacked one seat to gain an overall majority. There was a similar situation in the years 2012-2014 when Councillor Chris Townsend became Leader of a mixed Administration. Other Councillors who served at that time, both Independent and Conservative, remember that Administration as the best they had ever experienced.

After the election in May, the Independents had intense discussions with both the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Groups, during which, it was made clear that the current Conservative Leader, who appoints the Cabinet Members, would not have to stand down at least until 2020.

In 2012, the Conservatives were 11 short – this year they were down by a single seat. Even so, after the election, the Conservatives lacked an overall majority, and compromise was essential to avoid a minority Administration, with its possible negative impact on effective decision-making. Through challenging and strong negotiation, the Informal Independent Group has achieved the following:

1. Three of the seven portfolio-holding positions.
2. Inclusion of the Informal Group Leader in a new “top Executive Team” (with the Leader and Deputy Leader).
3. Recognition that all the Informal Independent Group members could continue to vote independently.

The Ashtead Independents have now achieved the same number of port-folio holders in the new Administration as when the Conservatives were in a much weaker position in 2012-2014.

The Annual Meeting of Mole Valley District Council yesterday evening (22 May 2018) formally appointed the three Ashtead Independent Councillors to the new Administration. While we will be working as a part of that new Administration (now referred to as a Cabinet rather than an Executive), this novel arrangement means that the Ashtead Independent Cabinet Members will have influence, yet all Independent Members retain their right to vote in the best interests of residents, and not on party political lines. Rather than be subsumed, the Independents will contribute to decision-making while retaining their unique status.

The three portfolio positions have responsibilities to oversee work on the Local Plan (Cllr David Harper), Environment (Cllr Patricia Wiltshire), and Well-being (Cllr David Hawksworth) – all matters of great concern to Ashtead Residents. The precise responsibilities with the last two broad areas will be determined in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader in the next few days.

We had pointed out that the Local Plan was of such high importance that it needed the singular attention of a Cabinet Member. We were pleased, therefore, that this was not only accepted, but that an Independent was entrusted with the task. The Local Plan will, amongst other issues, consider



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the type, location, and numbers of dwellings to be built in the District as well as critically evaluate any need to build on the Green Belt or other greenfield sites.

This is an opportunity for Ashtead Independents to have a major input into not only shaping the new Local Plan, but also formulating new initiatives in relation to environmental and well-being issues. All these are critically important to all of us in Ashtead and we find this an exciting opportunity to effect change for the good in Mole Valley, and Ashtead in particular.

Next year's election may bring further changes, and the Administration can be reorganised every year but, whatever the outcome in May 2019, our aim is to advance the interests of Ashtead residents. The Independents had a resounding success in Village Ward this year and we hope for a repeat success there next year when we will be fighting to take the last Conservative seat out of Ashtead. Such a result would continue to strengthen policies that put residents first and keep national politics out of local government.

Although three of your six Ashtead Independent Councillors have new responsibilities, be assured that all of them will continue, where they are able, to act on any issues brought to their attention. Being a local Councillor is a demanding and time-consuming task, but we are all aware that were elected to serve you, and to represent Residents' interests.

**Cllr David L Hawksworth CBE**

Leader, Informal Independent Group and Ashtead Independents

Councillor, Ashtead Common Ward

23 May 2018

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## **MVDC Local Elections 2018**

7th May 2018 by admin

The Council has moved from Conservative control to "No Overall Control" –

41 Seats: Conservative 20. LibDem 14. Ashtead Independents 7.

This situation represents a major and exciting opportunity for the Ashtead Independents to play a pivotal role in running Mole Valley at a crucial time in its history – when the new Local Plan to cover the years to 2035 has to be drafted and consulted on. We are currently unsure of the scenario that will emerge from separate discussions initiated between ourselves and the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups this week, but provided that the Conservatives do not go for a minority government, are confident that as a minimum Independents can expect to fill some key portfolio positions in the new Executive (the Leader of which is to be elected at the Annual Council Meeting on 22 May).



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## District Elections: May 2018 Results

Elections were held in 14 District Council Wards on Thursday 3 May 2018. The results are set out below.

### Ashtead Common

Candidate	Party	Votes
BRIDGEN, Marion Reswinder	Conservative	244
GILCHRIST, Caroline	Labour	117
WILTSHIRE, Patricia	Ashtead Independent	<b>836 (Elected)</b>
McDONALD, Steve	Green Party	31
VYVYAN-ROBINSON, Keira Rowena	Liberal Democrat	172
	Rejected ballot papers	4
	Turnout	43.3%

### Ashtead Park

Candidate	Party	Votes
GILCHRIST, Susan	Labour	47
KEUN, Hector Charles	Liberal Democrat	70
MCGRATH, Susan	Green Party	49
ST JOHN, Linda Bryett	Conservative	391
STANSFIELD, Garry Andrew Graham	Ashtead Independent	<b>875 (Elected)</b>
	Rejected ballot papers	3
	Turnout	40.8%



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## Ashtead Village

Candidate	Party	Votes
ANTONELLI, Rita	Liberal Democrat	141
BARFORD, Lucy Jane	Green Party	59
REILLY, Alan Victor	Ashtead Independent	<b>1232 (Elected)</b>
REYNOLDS, Fiona	Conservative	413
SCOTT, Clive George	Labour	115
	Rejected ballot papers	3
	Turnout	41.9%