



# Ashtead Independents

Keep national party politics out of local government

## **Ashtead Village Ward election result**

8th May 2015 by Simon Ling

The result of the District Council election in Village Ward was:

Chris Hunt (Conservative) 1857

David Hawksworth (Ashtead Independent) 1142

Clive Scott (Labour) 248

Matthew Berry (Liberal Democrat) 171

Tony Cooper (Green Party) 148

So Chris Hunt is elected for a further four years. This is sad for David who worked very hard for the seat at his first attempt, but Chris Hunt probably benefited from the larger turnout at the General Election and the National trend which has brought a majority Conservative Government. This trend was repeated in Mole Valley as a whole where the Liberal Democrats lost four seats to the Conservatives, including that of their Leader, David Preedy. The Council has lost a number of hard working and respected Councillors and it remains to be seen how their replacements will perform. The Conservatives now have an overall majority with 23 members out of a total of 41 of which two remain vacant. Chris Townsend is expected to resign as Leader at the Annual Council meeting on 17th May, and Simon Ling and John Northcott to step down as members of the Executive.

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## **Mole Valley DC Election – Ashtead Village – Resident views**

5th May 2015 by Chris Townsend

Following a recent Leaflet from the Conservative candidate, there has been concerns expressed by local residents on the content. We have been contacted by a number of residents supporting Ashtead Independents following this particular leaflet. We publish just one resident's comments on the questionable Tory leaflet :-

I am offended by yet another leaflet recently sent out by Chris Hunt. In last week's Leatherhead Advertiser he said that "Ashtead doesn't need any more ARA backed Independents." Well, actually, each Independent candidate has no financial backing and has to finance the whole exercise themselves, unlike the Conservatives who get money from their party. Having to pay for one's own election expenses indicates commitment. Surely Mr Hunt also realises that the ARA represents all those in Ashtead who choose to join the Association, irrespective of politics. As a group, it is the public good that is at the heart of their ethos. In my opinion, he has insulted a lot of people.

In his leaflet sent out recently, he says that an Independent might be a bombastic Socialist or a closet Far Right fan. He is intimating that any of us with socialistic leanings are, by default bombastic. That certainly shows unreasonable and biased thinking. Much of the UK is socialist, by the way.



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By likening the Independents of Ashtead to the SNP party in being “isolationist and insular”, he is suggesting that the Independents care only about Ashtead. Their performance suggests otherwise and he misses the point that people in Ashtead want their councillors to be concerned about Ashtead affairs. Does he honestly think that councillors in Leatherhead would put Ashtead’s interests before those of Leatherhead? If he does, then he is being naive or disingenuous. In any event, all elected councillors must follow a code of accepted ethics otherwise they are not fit for the job. The Conservatives certainly cannot claim the moral high ground here.

He claims that he agrees with the Ashtead electors on many things, such as the Parson’s Mead funding money should be spent on the area around Ottways Lane/Maple Road/Ottways Avenue. Why does he assume that the Independent candidate doesn’t also agree with this, or other points he raises? The present candidate will have his own views and cannot be branded by those of other Independents, especially over events that have already happened.

He claims that he will resolve the Tesco site. I would ask him... how? He would have little power to do anything at all. He says he will ENSURE that Council Tax is spent wisely? Again... how? He is only one voice in many, and does he honestly think that the Independent Councillor would favour wasting money and increasing council tax?

He claims that he will defend the Green Belt around Ashtead. Oh come on Mr Hunt. I understand that you voted for destruction of Cherkely Court Chalk Grassland and for the destruction of Poors Allotments. It was clear from your brief interlude with Ashtead Community Vision that you don’t have a clue about the Green Belt or the nature of what is in it. And, if you are so keen to defend the Green Belt, this doesn’t sit well with your claim that you will work to secure affordable housing.

Your comment in small print hints at someone grasping at straws. Of course, the Independent candidate would work hard to ensure the good of Ashtead. At least, as someone who has worked in environmental science all his working life, he has a deep understanding of the Green Belt and the implications of bad planning decisions. He also understands that there is a demand for adequate and appropriate housing in the village, but is also able to give sound advice to the Planning Department. And then you claim that you will fight to retain our local hospitals. I think you will find that no-one locally would want them to be diminished or disappear. The Conservative MP and local councillors will only be able to express their opinions. The final word will be the result of discussions between Central Government, the plethora of Clinical Commissioning Boards that were set up by the Conservatives, and the Trusts themselves.

Please don’t insult us any more. Your Independent rival has many positive attributes and, when it comes to voting for local councillors, it is the Individual that matters, not party politics. It is such a shame that people do, actually, confuse central government and local government when the election comes around. It is true that Chris Grayling has been a good constituency MP and people may well vote for him to remain in Parliament. Your literature always seems to include his name. His popularity will not necessarily rub off on you.

This has also been posted on STREETLIFE.