

# Climate change pledges crucial

The **STEPHEN HAMMOND** Column

MP for Wimbledon

I KNOW many of us have been enjoying the late summer sunshine over the last two weeks.

Owing to our unseasonably hot weather, I wanted to begin this week by talking about climate change, specifically our local environment. I am committed to our nation reaching its net zero target by 2050. I am pleased to support a government which has accelerated £2.2 billion in infrastructure investments for storm overflow management and drought resilience; confirmed our ban on single-use plastics such as plates, trays, bowls and cutlery from October; and is halting the decline in species abundance by 2030. Despite misleading political propaganda, no-one has voted for sewage to be dumped into our waterways.

The Mayor of London's blunt force ULEZ charge has now come into force, meaning anyone across Greater London driving an older vehicle will need to pay £12.50 a day. This policy was rejected at a consultation. We all want cleaner air; however the ULEZ expansion will not make a significant difference to our air quality. I am sure you will have seen the media reports that the air quality benefit of this policy is equivocal, and London's ten most polluted areas remain in the pre-expansion ULEZ zone.

Our local Labour council has decided to commit £1 million of your money to top up the mayor's inadequate scrappage scheme when it could, and I would argue should, be investing that money to support alternatives such as electric vehicle charging, local clean energy projects and removing some planning restrictions, such as on solar panels.

The Mayor of London raised his council tax take by 9.7 per cent this

year. He is still relying on Wimbledon taxpayers to cover the cost of his inadequacies at a time when I know we are all conscious of the effect of inflation on our household budgets this is simply not right.

**Motspur Park Step Free Access**  
I am pleased that after years of campaigning step free access is being installed at Motspur Park station.

However, a number of my constituents have written to me about the short-term disruption caused by the work to install step-free access to Motspur Park Station. I know the works and the closure of the existing footbridge have caused some people to miss trains and there have been instances of people jumping over the barriers onto the railway line to make their train on time. The latter is dangerous, and no one should take this action.

Network Rail and Southwestern Railways have updated me that they are providing additional security at the station and at the end of the platform to ensure that the trespassing is eliminated. The work will progress through the autumn and should be completed by April next year.

**Hospice visit**  
Last week, I visited the St Raphael's Hospice, whose work really benefits our community. I met with Nick Stevens, St Raphael's CEO, to discuss some of the current issues about the impact of inflation on funding and donations.

Whilst I am pleased that there is increasing awareness that prevention should be a major priority of our health care system, it is essential that palliative and end-of-life care are not forgotten.

# Council passes on park for £1

By **CHARLOTTE LILLYWHITE**  
Local Democracy Reporter

A SOUTH London council has been accused of failing to secure a new 32-acre public park for future generations after deciding not to buy it for £1.

Wandsworth Conservatives have raised concerns about the future of Springfield Park, in Tooting, following the decision. It has been dubbed the biggest park to open in the capital since the Olympic Games.

The park is opening to the public in phases, as part of a major revamp of Springfield Hospital to create Springfield Village.

The village will include more than 800 new homes, two mental health facilities, shops, a café, a care home and land for a new school when it is completed by 2026. The project is being carried out by South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, master developer STEP and other partners.

Wandsworth Council added that it will work with the partners to ensure the park is delivered and maintained at no extra cost to the authority.

But the council has come under fire for its decision not to adopt the park, which it said was partly due to the cost of maintaining it.

An agreement required the trust to serve the council with an adoption notice giving it 30 working days to



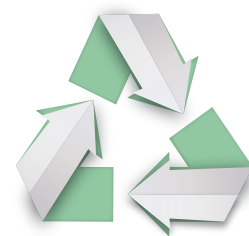
decide if it wished to adopt the park, including all management and maintenance costs. Freehold of the park would then have been transferred to the council for £1.

The council's overview and scrutiny committee voted to support officers' recommendations not to adopt the park, with six councillors voting in favour and three against. The decision was green-lit by the council's executive on July 17.

Wandsworth Conservatives said

the decision leaves the park "in some jeopardy".

Responding to the criticism, a Wandsworth Council spokesperson said: "Springfield Park is great news for the community and great news for Wandsworth – a place local families are already starting to enjoy. Wandsworth Council currently invests more than £3.2 million a year in looking after the borough's council-maintained parks and open spaces."



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