

# 'Health maps' show Elmbridge as fit as a fiddle

by Adam Zacharias

GOVERNMENT 'health maps' have shown Elmbridge and its residents to be as fit as a fiddle, compared to national averages — although discrepancies exist within different income brackets.

According to the Department of Health's Elmbridge Health Profile 2007, published on Friday June 22, people living in the borough can expect low levels of cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

This means that residents' life expectancy is above the English average, and is on the increase for both men and women.

Only 17% of Elmbridge adults smoke, which is 9% below the national average. However, deaths from smoking still account for 170 lives each year in the borough.

Likewise, although residents tend to lead healthier lifestyles than people living in other parts of England, it is still estimated that one in six adults in the borough is obese, and one in seven is a binge drinker.

At least 3,500 people in Elmbridge have diabetes, although this is a relatively low number, and the rate of people claiming sickness benefit due to mental health problems is also below the national average.

Within Elmbridge itself, there is no ward in the 40% lowest-income areas in

England. However, the top 20% lowest-income areas within the local authority are listed as Hershams South, Molesey South, Walton North and one half of Hershams North.

Residents in the 20% lowest income region for the borough can expect several years' shorter life expectancy than their counterparts in the highest income bracket.

In the top earners, the average lifespan for a man is around 80.4 years, and 84.6 for a woman. Yet in the lowest percentile, the averages reduce to approximately 76.1 and 82.0 respectively.

In the overall health summary for Elmbridge, the borough was found to be "significantly better than the England average" in 20 of the 26 indica-

tors listed. These included GCSE achievement, healthy eating in adults, children's tooth decay, road injuries and deaths, hospital stays due to alcohol, teenage pregnancy and children in poverty.

Dr Ruth Milton, director of public health at Surrey PCT said: "This is good news for local residents but there is still a great deal of work to be done, especially around reducing health inequalities."

"As part of our ongoing commitment to improving the health of our local population, we will be continuing to work closely with our local partners to raise awareness about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle, which can significantly reduce the risk of health complications later on in life."



Len Lapwood, with his 'shed of shame'.

## Len's 'shed of shame' is a winner

A SEVENTY-seven-year-old gardener who has had the same allotment since he was a teenage boy has landed the dubious accolade of owning Britain's worst shed.

Former nurseryman Len Lapwood, from Addlestone, decided to send off a photograph of his shed after spotting a competition to find the worst shed in the nation in *Garden News*.

He said: "I've been gardening for 60-odd years and all I

can win is a shed of shame. It seems rather peculiar, but never mind, I'm excited about winning it, but what a thing to win after a lifetime of gardening."

Marshalls, the Cambridge-based seed company, launched the hunt to find Britain's worst shed earlier in the year, to help form a blueprint for its display at the *Gardeners' World Live* exhibition at the NEC.

Managing director Martin

Harvey said: "Len's wasn't really the worst shed, but it had the most character. We were looking for an authentic British shed and Len's fitted the bill."

Mr Lapwood inherited the 10ft by 6ft shack from a gardener in Weybridge in the early 1970s.

He said: "Goodness knows how old it really is. I know every inch of that shed. I know where everything rake and spade is. I've replaced the roof and propped it up with

an iron prop. It might not have a door but it's bone dry, you could sleep in that shed."

Despite being awarded a new shed worth £500, Len is unable to part with his old shack. He said: "I'm 77 now and couldn't get used to a new shed. Besides that, I really couldn't part with it, so I'm going to give the new one to my daughter, Jackie."

He added: "I still love it, we love each other — that's the end of it."

## Hospice founder retires as chairman of the trustees

RHOD Lofting, founder of Woking Hospice and chairman of trustees since 1991, is to retire.

During his last year as chairman, he oversaw the setting up of a second unit, the Sam Beare Hospice at Weybridge, which Woking Hospice staff now run.

David Perry, who joined the board in 2004, has been nominated chairman-elect, and will take over from Mr Lofting after the annual meeting in September.

Mr Lofting launched the appeal to build the hospice during his year as mayor of Woking Borough Council in 1990/91.

After taking early retirement in 1992, he set about raising sufficient funds to build and



Rhod Lofting

then commission the hospice in 1996, during which time further funds were raised to secure its first-year running costs, before opening the hospice in December 1996.

With bed space now effectively doubled to 20 beds, the two hospices serve a catch-

ment area of almost half a million.

Mr Lofting said: "We have successfully integrated the Sam Beare Hospice within our existing management and medical structure."

"Our fundraising capability has been enhanced and we have also increased our warehousing capacity to cope with the additional shops we are opening, giving us 11 in all."

"The board needs refreshing to meet these and other challenges, so why not start at the top?"

"To have been entrusted to secure the long-term viability of the hospice, to meet and be helped and encouraged by so many in the community, was the experience and privilege of a lifetime."

He added: "I will enjoy working closely with David during this hand-over period. He will bring a fresh perspective and dimension to the role that will benefit both hospices. I plan to remain a trustee for the foreseeable future."

Mr Perry spent his career working in one of the large international accounting firms in London and the Thames Valley and also had two years in Russia.

He said: "I feel greatly privileged to be asked to succeed Rhod Lofting as chairman of Woking and Sam Beare hospices. I am also fortunate to be inheriting such a strong and committed group of trustees, staff and volunteers at what is a challenging time for all hospices."



Taking aim at Imber Court.

## Club competition on target

THE first national archery competition organised by a Walton club hit the target with more than 50 archers participating.

Rivernook Bowmen Archery Club, which operates from a base in Apps Court Farm, Hurst

Road, invited archers to compete to be the best in their class at Imber Court sports ground on Saturday and Sunday June 16 and 17.

Classes included the recurve, compound ladies, gentlemen and disabled.

Mark Franklin of the Rivernook club took top prize in the gentlemen's competition.

The event was judged to be a huge success with archers of all ages taking part.

## Borough council named one of best in country

ELMBRIDGE Borough Council (EBC) has been named by its residents as one of the best councils in the country for overall customer satisfaction.

In a public survey by the Audit Commission, EBC was listed as the seventh in the top ten best performing borough councils in England.

In addition to this accolade, Elmbridge has also been independently recognised as one of the most improving borough councils in the country, in a separate survey by Market and Opinion and Research International (MORI).

Chief executive, Rob Moran said: "This is excellent news for Elmbridge Borough Council.

"It is very encouraging that our residents feel that we are performing well."

"It means two things — firstly that the hard work of our staff and members is being recognised in real improvements, and secondly that our residents feel they are getting better services."

Leader of the council, Roy Taylor added: "We are really pleased that our residents are some of the most satisfied in the country."

"We will continue to work hard to ensure we are providing cost effective, high quality services that our residents can be proud of."

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## Overgrown bushes are becoming a major danger for motorists

HERSHAM North ward councillor Ian Donaldson has called upon Surrey County Council (SCC) to fix a "dangerous" problem for Hershams drivers.

He said basal growth from bushes on Molesey Road, Hershams, had grown to the extent that it was blocking motorists' views and becoming a hazard to road users.

At the Elmbridge environmental affairs overview and scrutiny committee, it was revealed that just £189,720 from a £2.74 million annual budget went towards tree works along 4,000 kilometres of roads in East Surrey.

After the meeting on Thursday June 21, Cllr Donaldson said: "There has been a lack of money allocated towards tree works in East Surrey, although it is understandable that potholes are the priority."

"Most of Molesey Road is



Cllr Ian Donaldson says a lack of money allocated for tree works by Surrey County Council is leading to overgrown kerbs and verges blocking motorists' views and causing a hazard.

they were worried about it."

Roger Archer-Reeves, SCC East Area highways services transportation manager, defended his decision to spend almost half of his budget on potholes, claiming safety for road users was his priority.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Donaldson said he was nonetheless surprised about the lack of money put towards natural upkeep.

But he added: "Mr Archer-Reeves is a very knowledgeable man. He has a hard job, and he does it to the best of his abilities."

"But we do have to look at the tree situation — if you can't come out of a turning safely then there is a problem."

"So we have asked the council's community gang to cut the growth down as soon as possible."

covered in this growth, beginning at Coronation Road — I attended a panel meeting in Hershams the night before, and residents were saying

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Looking good.

## 'Aware' Elvis flies in to school

YOUNGSTERS at a West Molesey School certainly know how to look after themselves.

As part of the recent Surrey Food Awareness Week, pupils from Chandlers Field Primary School combined exercise with a healthy snack to help them feel on top of the world.

Joined by Elmbridge Borough Council's (EBC) health development team and Elvis the Eagle — the Elmbridge mascot — the youngsters selected fruits, which they then blended into their own nutritious drinks by peddling on a special "smoothie bike".

The activity, which took place on June 15, was part of a health initiative between the school and the borough council.

The week also included sessions of rugby and tennis, a visit from Chelsea Football Club coaches, and an educational session about healthy eating for parents.



Chandlers Field pupils Chloe and Charlie, both seven, with Elvis the Elmbridge Eagle.

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