

# LAND&LIBERTY

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## message from the honorary president

After launching Volume III of Henry George's *Annotated Works* last September a small group have been meeting on Friday evenings to study and consider *Social Problems* and ended the spring term on Chapter XVII - The Functions of Government. It begins:

*To prevent government from becoming corrupt and tyrannous, its organisation and methods should be as simple as possible, its functions be restricted to those necessary to the common welfare, and in all its parts it should be kept as close to the people and as directly within their control as may be.*

*We have ignored these principles in many ways, and the result has been corruption and demoralisation, the loss of control by the people, and the wresting of government to the advantage of the few and the spoliation of the many. The line of reform, on one side at least, lies in simplification.*

The Borough of Epsom and Ewell is unique throughout the UK in that since its formation 82 years ago it has been run by Residents Association Councillors despite being a very safe Conservative seat in Parliamentary Elections. The Borough Council with 38 Councillors in 13 Wards has thus been little influenced by any of the big political parties. Currently the Residents Associations hold 11 Wards with 31 Councillors. The Conservatives hold College Ward with three councillors and Labour, Court Ward with three councillors. In the last election (2015) Court Ward Labour won with 35% of votes cast, followed by Conservatives (33%), Residents Associations (15%) and Liberal Democrats (11%). I was asked to stand as a Residents Association candidate in Court Ward as it seems there is has little prospect of winning!

I was however very gratified to be asked to stand in Court Ward which is much more interesting and diverse than my own, 'safely residential' Nonsuch Ward, especially since it followed a clear declaration of my views regarding tax matters at recent 'Nonsuch Ward' Residents Association meetings. I was also encouraged as I remembered Henry George's comment "It matters not how people vote, its how they think that really matters" and how by merely standing and voicing some truths I might influence how some people think.

In canvassing I have drawn attention to how, when in power and over decades, each of the main political parties have allowed central government to strip more and more power away from local authorities so that local people get less of a say in what happens in their local area. I undertake to campaign to reverse this process and highlight how The Borough of Epsom and Ewell is in a unique position to champion this cause. Where appropriate, I advocate Localisation in place of Privatisation or Nationalisation.

I draw attention to how Council Tax represents less than 5% of all the taxes collected in the UK and how shockingly only 10% of that stays in the borough. Main party controlled Surrey County Council gets 77% and Surrey Police 13% of the remainder. I point out how over 90% the taxes local residents and businesses pay is levied by central Government on their earnings and what they spend their earnings on and how this increases their living costs and reduces the effective funding of local services.

I like to think Henry George would have approved.

**David Triggs**  
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