

Horsham Society

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Put your questions to political parties

Horsham is expanding fast – and that means growing pains. Thousands of new homes are springing up around the town – more than a thousand every year – but will those homes have adequate community facilities and transport links?

The shape of retail is changing, with coffee shops and restaurants edging out many shops, so how can our local council make sure that we don't end up with rows of boarded up premises? What can be done to encourage more local businesses?

And what about protecting our environment, boosting air quality and nurturing wildlife, not to mention preserving the character of Horsham?

This is a good moment to pose those questions. Horsham District Council spends more than £10 million a year, as well as earning a healthy income from car parking in the town.

That means, even in an era when local councils are struggling for cash, that the way that money is spent can have a huge influence on the community.

On May 2nd, all the seats on the council will be up for election, so as the town's



civic society, a non-party organisation dedicated to protecting its character and environment, the Horsham Society is hosting a 'Question Time'-style hustings meeting, chaired by Mark D'Arcy, Parliamentary Correspondent with the BBC and member of Horsham Society, at 7pm on Monday April 1st at The Barn on the Causeway.

It will provide an opportunity to question

senior figures from all the main parties contesting the elections.

The council has powers which will shape the town for good or ill – on planning, conservation, design of new buildings, on affordable housing and transport.

We are keen to explore how those running for election intend to use those powers. We want to provide an opportunity to get beyond the slogans and allow the rival

political parties to lay out their ideas for the future of Horsham, and have those ideas tested by questions from local voters.

At a time when politics can seem pretty sterile, this is a chance to see if our local politicians have creative answers to the issues confronting the community.

So if you are worried about the Council Tax or Business Rates, if you want more social housing and affordable homes, if you would like to see more cycle lanes or more trees, if you think more community benefit should be squeezed out of the developers behind those lucrative new housing estates, if you want the bins emptied in a different way, or want to ask about anything else to do with local services and the future of Horsham, come along to the Barn and put your questions to the people who are asking for your vote.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns. For more information, visit the website www.horshamsociety.org or phone 01403 259038.