

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS

**Fire crews took almost 12 hours to bring the fire under control:
Person missing after fire at Gibson Court, Surrey**

Would the Leader agree with me that it is with sadness that a life was lost at Gibson Court, Hinchley Wood on the 30 September. However, it is also with pride at the professionalism, and bravery of our Emergency Team. This is the second occasion in a little over a year that I have been able to observe the Team in action, the other being the Oxshott Rail Bridge Incident.

Firemen risked their lives helping residents evacuate the blazing building, one gentleman, who was hard of hearing, did not hear the alarm and the first he knew was when the fireman smashed his door down and rescued him. Others helped smooth the traumatic events that followed, when 26 residents arrived at the Claygate Centre, with nothing but nightwear. They had lost everything.

There are too many arms of the Emergency Services to mention them all, but here are some: - the Fire Service, the Medical Profession, the people who opened and ran the Rest Centre in Elm Road, Claygate, the Community Transport Team who mobilised at once going into action, the people who made arrangements to locate next of kin so that they could take some of the residents home, the arrangement of accommodation, both Elmbridge Borough Council and Surrey County Council who supplied transport for the residents to Claygate Centre, the people who sorted out medicines etc. and even down to the lady serving tea, biscuits and cornflakes.

I also understand that other voluntary organisations supplied clothes and shoes and we have housing staff on site and building control officers assessing the burnt building.

I am humbled by the calmness exhibited by all 26 residents, their main concern was the breaking up of residents circle of friends.



**Mike Bennison,
Local Member: Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott
11 October 2011**