



BRISTOL LIB DEMS' PLAN TO TACKLE THE CITY'S HOUSING CRISIS

Soaring house prices have caused a decline in living standards: too many struggle with increasing rents, or large mortgage costs, but static wage levels. Sleeping on streets has become appallingly commonplace.

There is a lack of affordable housing and new social house building has almost stopped. Owning their own home is only a dream for many.

The government pursues a failed model, under which developers only build and landowners only sell, when they expect rising prices.

Bristol Lib Dems have set out a wide ranging plan to fix the affordability crisis. We need to encourage low cost homes for rent, but also give the renters the opportunity to purchase

their home. Lib Dem councils, like Eastleigh, have successfully built many "rent to own" homes.

The West of England Mayor should use his compulsory purchase powers to assemble sites for housing in a strategic way, and so de-risk them for developers.

The West of England and Bristol Mayors should:

- ◆ improve transparency and encourage competition, to allow smaller builders to compete with large land speculators and so drive down the prices of new homes.
- ◆ help small developers to navigate the planning process to take market power away from the big name house builders.

**DEMAND BETTER
for our city's housing**

◆ lease redundant council land to developers but impose covenants requiring the developer to only build homes to lease or sell at affordable prices

Finally, Bristol Lib Dems want to ensure there's a role for everyone (especially children and older people) in designing new developments. We want estates with an inclusive, intergenerational community spirit.

There is a lot our Councils and Mayors can do to tackle this crisis. The Lib Dems will hold them to account until they deliver far more affordable, secure, homes.



Mayor Rees stonewalls on "The Golden Goodbye"

The saga of a former Bristol City Council CEO's Golden Goodbye continued at December's full council meeting. Graham Donald questioned discrepancies between the mayor's previous account and the official position of the auditors.

City council auditors have stated that the payment was not required by contract. Auditors also revealed that the payment was higher than previously thought – £98k not £70k.

Graham asked the mayor to explain why, when questioned last March, Mayor Rees had said that the payment was required by the departing CEOs contract; while the auditors have stated that it was not.

The mayor's baffling response to Graham's question was that there was no

difference between his former statement and what the auditors had said – Mayor Rees then went on to attack the auditors. When Graham asked what lessons had been learnt, the mayor said how much he had improved management and governance and ignored Graham's question.

Graham was dissatisfied with this response, especially given council officers "forgot" the question at the previous council meeting, failed to provide copies of the question to the public gallery, and obscured the question failing to display it fully.

Given all this stonewalling and concealment, you wonder what else the Mayor has to hide!

BREXIT:

A NATIONAL EMBARRASSMENT
Over past months, the Conservative party have been unable to deliver on the promises made during the referendum.

Scared that her deal would not pass, Mrs May delayed the vote and has set about scaremongering with 'No-Deal' scenario preparations.

The Lib Dems think that you deserve the final say. If parliament can not find a way forward then the decision should be given back to the people. This is the only way to break this Brexit deadlock.

If you agree with us, then add your name to our national petition:
libdems.org.uk/exit-brexite

Focus

on Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze

Liberal Democrats
DEMAND BETTER

LOCAL COMMUNITY UPDATES | ISSUE 135 | JANUARY 2019

"We want to double the number of Bristol buses," say First Bus

BUT CAN THEY EVER GET THE NUMBER 2 TO RUN ON TIME?!

First Bus say they are aiming to double the number of Bristol bus passengers and double the number of bus services in the city.

This startling statement was made by First Bus boss James Freeman, at a meeting with local campaigners Graham Donald and Chris Harris.

Graham and Chris went to see Mr Freeman to discuss residents' complaints and concerns, and to pass along suggestions about local bus services.

First readily admitted that services had been performing poorly, blaming driver shortages and traffic congestion.

Worst in city

It will not surprise residents that Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze are served by two of the city's most poorly performing services, with the **number 2** route winning the dubious accolade of the city's worst, closely followed by **numbers 1, 75 and 76**.

First Bus plan to consult about the problems with the **number 2** in the New Year – they are likely to suggest splitting the route in two.

Passenger numbers rising

Despite all the problems, First say that passenger numbers are rising, and bus journeys now account for about 10% of all Bristol journeys. First Bus want to raise this to 20% in line with some other major UK cities – an ambitious aim given the current problems with reliability, punctuality and overcrowding, not to mention buses "hunting in packs".



Bristol campaigners petitioning the West of England & Bristol Mayors

Bristol's transport is in crisis. Congestion and pollution are on the rise, meanwhile our bus services continue to be poorly served by First Bus' near monopoly.

The Lib Dems have long supported a proper franchising scheme for our city. Under a franchise system, the regional authority can choose the routes,

timetables and fares that work for people, not those that maximise profits.

The invisible Conservative Metro Mayor's inaction leaves us stuck with an over-priced, dysfunctional system that especially harms the worst off in our city.

Demand better for Bristol, sign the petition to take back control.

TAKE BACK CONTROL OF BRISTOL'S BUSES
SIGN THE PETITION **tiny.cc/bristolbuses**

More in our eFocus

We gave a detailed account of our meeting with First Bus in our Christmas eFocus.

We discussed:

- services 1, 3 and 4, as well as the number 2 – and the action First Bus are taking to try to improve matters
- fast track services
- the failure of MYFIRSTMILE and lessons for future trials
- pollution caused by idling buses

Email us if you would like a copy of this eFocus:

weh-ward@bristollibdems.org



Successful legal action wins more Government cash for Special Educational Needs

The Government has made £350million of additional funding available for special education, following the High Court case brought by Bristol parents and a council motion by Liberal Democrat councillors.

In our autumn 2018 Focus, we reported that, an illegal cut of £5 million by Bristol's Labour Mayor to SEND funding, had been halted by a successful court case brought by Bristol parents. This was followed up by a council motion and agreement that the money which had been unlawfully cut would be restored.

Now the Tory Government has reacted to the court case by "finding" additional money for special needs –



Parents and campaigners force council to re-think SEND funding

an extra £250 million for schools' high needs budgets, with a further £100 million creating more specialist school places. However, the money will be distributed on the basis of population, not need, so areas with a high

proportion of students with special needs will lose out.

We estimate that Bristol will benefit by around £500k per year from this additional cash.

Introducing Lib Dem Campaigner Chris Harris



social policies and genuine commitment to the environmental agenda. He is particularly knowledgeable about, and interested in, housing and children's issues.

Chris worked as a Senior Housing Assessment Officer (Homelessness, Housing Advice & Housing Options) for Slough Borough Council. In Reading, he was a Liberal Democrat councillor for Tilehurst ward from 2007 to 2011 where he took a particular interest in housing, education and children's services. He was a member of Reading Borough's Education and Children's

Services Scrutiny Panel and of its Corporate Parenting Panel, which he chaired from 2010 to 2011.

Colleagues from Reading days describe Chris as someone who was assiduous in helping people with the problems they brought to him.

If you would like Chris to assist you with something, don't hesitate to contact him: christopherharris@talktalk.net or 07788 106 069

Chris was born and brought up in Bristol but lived in Berkshire from 1993 to 2011. Chris returned to Bristol in 2011. He joined the Liberal Democrats in 1992 because of their progressive

Graham wins national award for Transfusion Medicine

Graham Donald has been awarded the 2018 Percy Oliver award for Transfusion Medicine.

"He continues to tirelessly support the interests of patients," said Jo Martin, of the Royal College of Pathologists.

In response to the award Graham said, "My aim is to understand the aspirations of a community and enable them. I enjoyed being able to bring my skills, honed as a senior civil servant, to the role, and hope to bring the same to local politics."



Graham became a lay member of the National Blood Transfusion Committee (NBTC) in September 2008.

• Contact Us •

Graham Donald
07980 191 933
grahamdonald@blueyonder.co.uk

Chris Harris
07788 106 069
christopherharris@talktalk.net

Twitter
@WOTnHlibdems

Facebook
@WEHLibDems

Website
bristollibdems.org/weh

Email
weh-ward@bristollibdems.org

FixMyStreet update...

We promised an update on the problems which Graham had reported using "FixMyStreet" on the Bristol City Council website.



Automated emails from "FixMyStreet" are far from enlightening – back in October Graham was told that Canford Cemetery hedging had been "fixed" yet the ugly temporary fence is still in place.

Graham asked the Mayor how "FixMyStreet" reports are prioritised and actioned at the Full Council meeting in December, but we are none the wiser about why some reports are followed up and others appear to be ignored. Graham specifically asked the mayor about the missing hedging outside Canford Cemetery, and we have the following updates:

Epicormic growth on a tree in **Stoke Lane** (by the roundabout in the centre of Westbury Village) – fearing the council would never act, Graham and the Lib Dem Focus team took action to prune (and recycle) the excess growth.



The missing, flashing 30 mph sign - broken off the column by **Canford Cemetery** - had still not been repaired when Graham went to check, despite two city council emails saying that it had!



The missing hedging outside **Canford Cemetery**, damaged by a lorry – Graham asked the Mayor about this who said that he would "ask the Team to take a look".

We think the Mayor needs to fix FixMyStreet, so residents know what is going on. We understand that some reports can't be actioned immediately, but we do expect to be kept informed of progress.

STILL no coherent strategy for Bristol libraries

FURTHER DELAYS IN COUNCIL CONSULTATION CAUSE CONCERN

In a Statement to full Council in December, the **Bristol Libraries Forum** said:

"We believe that a city-wide Libraries strategy is required and this appears to conflict with the Council's approach of 'community-led development not council-led options.' ... Without this city-wide direction, the engagement promises to be an ad hoc series of meetings with little prospect of generating an adequate long term model for a sustainable Library Service in Bristol."

We strongly agree and feel total frustration – other Councils such as York can achieve such a model, so what is holding Bristol's Labour Mayor back on this issue?

The city council is organising libraries engagement meetings, the ones for our area are at the **Greenway Centre**:

Wed 6 March, 10am to 12pm
Sat 9 March, 10am 12pm

Places must be booked online: **tiny.cc/BristolLibraryConsult**

There will be an online consultation form for those who do not attend a meeting.

If you contact us, the Liberal Democrats, locally and nationally, may use information provided, including your political views, to further our objectives, share it with our elected representatives and/or contact you in future using any of the means provided. Some contacts may be automated. You may opt out of some or all contacts or exercise your other legal rights by contacting us. Further details are in our Privacy Policy at **www.libdems.org.uk/privacy**.

