

# Alton FOCUS

Spring 2016



**The community newsletter for Alton paid for by donations, delivered by volunteers**

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## Savage cuts to Families & Children's Services!

Savage cuts to Families & Children's Services have been proposed by Hampshire County Council (HCC). Under the proposals, 43 out of 54 designated Children's Centres would close. Although Bushy Leaze would be one of only 11 remaining (the only one for the whole of East Hampshire), the services that they will be allowed to deliver will be significantly reduced.

Liberal Democrat County Council spokesperson for children Cllr Jackie Porter says, "All our Children's Centres are busy. Their services are essential, this proposal will cut services to the bone".



In a letter to Steve Crocker, Interim Director of Children's Services, at Hampshire County Council, all of the educational establishments in Alton have praised the work done by the professional and dedicated staff at Bushy Leaze. Let's hope that Alton's County Councillor, Cllr. Andrew Joy, will also speak out against these cuts.



**Cutting disability support - while giving extra tax breaks to the wealthy**

What were the Conservatives thinking of?

Decreasing the tax on capital gains and increasing the ISA allowance significantly - to be paid for by the disabled.

This really shows what the priorities of this government are. It also shows what Lib Dems were stopping while in coalition.

Although now suspended, these ideas should never have seen the light of day in the first place ....

... and George Osborne now has a big hole in his finances.

To take part in the "consultation", complete the questionnaire by 3 May 2016 online at: [www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services-consultation](http://www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services-consultation)

## JOB CUTS LIKELY TO HIT FIRE SERVICE IN ALTON



The number of retained firefighters is expected to be reduced from 20 to just 14, at Alton's Fire Station.

"Stop the Cuts" campaigners claim the reduced service will only be capable of handling 70% of calls, and may not be able to deal with the most serious.

According to a recent story in the Alton Herald, retired fireman Tony Morris commented,

"The half-truths and unfounded claims of improvements in the Hampshire proposals are very similar to the ones we saw in West Sussex. Assurances about response times, fire engine availability and fewer fires have all failed to materialise. Some response times have trebled, availability has got worse, and buildings, vehicles, and chimney fires all increased last year."

## Campaigning against wildlife crime

The European Commission has announced an Action Plan to crack down on the illegal wildlife trade and impose minimum sentences on wildlife traffickers, following a successful campaign led by Liberal Democrat MEP Catherine Bearder.

Catherine who wrote a letter in 2014 to the Commission co-signed by 81 MEPs calling for an Action Plan, commented:

"Today marks a huge step forward in the global fight against wildlife crime.

"We can only tackle this issue by taking a coordinated approach, tackling the root causes of poaching and cracking down on the criminal gangs making billions from this despicable trade.

"Together in Europe we can turn the tide and help save elephants and other treasured species for future generations."

[www.bearder.eu/eu\\_launches\\_crackdown\\_on](http://www.bearder.eu/eu_launches_crackdown_on)

# ALTON tip to close?

The Popular and much visited Household Waste Recycling Centre in Alton could be shut down unless a consultation forces Hampshire's Conservatives to rethink.

The County Tories want to look at closing all recycling centres one or two days a week, or closing nine of them around Hampshire, or only keeping one in each district. Our nearest recycling centre could be in Bordon! Utter madness!

The County Council has a duty "to provide places where local residents may put their household waste. The duty states that each waste disposal site should be reasonably accessible to residents in its area"

Cllr Graham Titterington says, "If these changes go through it will inevitably lead to less being recycled as people have to travel further afield to get rid of their waste. Liberal Democrats think we should be recycling more not less. I am also worried that these proposed closures will lead to more fly-tipping, ruining our local green spaces and causing more expense as councils have to tidy it up".

See [www3.hants.gov.uk/hwrc2016](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hwrc2016) for "supporting information document" and "HWRC consultation online questionnaire". The consultation will close at midday 25 May 2016.



## Shameful social housing sell-off

There is a huge crisis in housing with millions of people in desperate need of affordable homes to rent. However, George Osborne has extended 'Right to Buy' to Housing Association tenants which will result in a reduction in affordable homes for rent.

We say, "This is not the time to be selling off housing association homes. This policy provides a lottery ticket for the lucky few, but for the majority of people who can't afford a deposit, it makes things worse - by reducing homes available for rent and driving up prices." Instead the Lib Dems have demanded that every home sold off has a genuine "one for one replacement."

"Unfortunately the Government has a terrible track record of doing this and so the affordable housing stock will be further depleted"

# 30

## DEATHS ON HAMPSHIRE ROADS IN 2014

## OVER OUR DEAD BODIES

Hampshire's Conservative bosses have decided they want to only spend money fixing dangerous roads and junctions AFTER a major accident or death has occurred.

The Liberal Democrats say we should be trying to stop accidents before they happen. We know where near misses have happened before and should work to improve these areas too.

Since the General Election George Osborne's cuts have been passed on to local Councils to make, with the Conservatives now compromising all our safety.



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# Let our next FOCUS story be about helping you

Want to tell us something? Something you'd like us to help with? Let us know here!

If you return this form the Liberal Democrats and their elected representatives may use the information you've given to contact you. By providing your data to us, you are consenting to us making contact with you in the future by mail, email, telephone, text, website and apps, even though you may be registered with the Telephone Preference Service. You can always opt out of communications at any time by contacting us or visiting [www.libdems.org.uk/optout](http://www.libdems.org.uk/optout) for more information go to [www.libdems.org.uk/privacy](http://www.libdems.org.uk/privacy).

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- I will vote Liberal Democrat next time
- I can help deliver FOCUS in my area for 1-2 hours, three times per year
- I would like to join my local Lib Dems Please send me more information

Return free of charge to: East Hampshire Liberal Democrats, FREEPOST, RTBZ-ZTAR-ZREU, 26 Greenacres, Bordon, GU35 0EX

## Alton Neighbourhood Plan - approved

Many thanks to all those who voted by a very large majority for the Alton Neighbourhood Plan.

Now it will need EHDC and Alton Town Council to make sure it happens as the residents wish.

**Liberal Democrats - Working for You all year round**