

FOCUS on Godmanchester

February 2017



County Council Budget Update

Tories raise taxes and slash services

The County Council needs to make £101 million of savings over the next few years as central government funds are cut and demands for services increase.

Social care services for children and adults are already at crisis point; and vulnerable young people and the frail elderly could suffer most.

This month the Conservatives, supported by the Independents on Cambridgeshire County Council pushed through a budget based on a 2% rise in the council tax for adult social care.

Cambridgeshire's health and education services are already under funded by national standards. The Conservative decision will mean Cambridgeshire must make harsher and deeper cuts to services.

Last year, all county councils except Cambridgeshire and Suffolk county councils accepted the government's view that council taxes should go up by 4%. It looks as though this year Cambridgeshire will again be one of a few which cuts more services than it needs to.

The Lib Dem group on the County Council argued that, in difficult times for local government caused by increased demands on services and reducing support from central government, it would be better to prioritise services for the most vulnerable rather than keep council taxes as low as possible.

Lib Dem Priorities

Lib Dems urged councillors to consider additional investment which would cost an average household just 42p per week:

Children's services

- Increase services supporting parents and their babies
- Maintain special needs support in schools
- Increase support for the local social care teams
- Keep more Children's Centres open

Services for Vulnerable Adults

- Increase the hourly rate for the staff providing home care
- Increase services to help people leave hospital as soon as they are well enough
- Reverse cuts to voluntary sector contracts for mental health services

Roads and Transport

- Remove the charge for parking at Park and Ride sites in Cambridge
- Subsidise bus routes and community transport
- Improve maintenance of roads, pavements and cycle-ways

If you would like to see the detailed reasons for these proposals and what they would cost, please look at the Huntingdon Lib Dems website: www.huntingdonlibdems.org.uk

From your Lib Dem Focus Team

We have always tried to keep you honestly and clearly informed about the pressures felt by the councils on which we represent you. We work collaboratively with officers and other councillors to make sure that services are provided as efficiently and economically as possible.

In this area and across the whole country, we are reaching breaking point in social care and health services. The government allows local county councils to put up taxes by 2% for social care and a further 2% for other services. If you go above that, you have to have a referendum.

We are heartened by the fact that in Godmanchester more and more people are coming forward to volunteer to do things for the community and to look after others. That is going to be even more vital in future. It's a challenge we have to face together.

The Godmanchester Team – contact any of us if you have a problem we can help with



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We have been working on:

Gritting – we are pleased that CCC have extended the network of roads to be gritted and replaced the grit bin for the footbridge by the Bridge Hotel. However, currently CCC won't grit the footbridge although they promised to review that policy.

Street Lights – good news that the new lights are now brighter but there are still dangerous gaps and work to be finished around the town.

New development plans – HDC's publication of their new Local Plan to 2036 showing where new development will be allocated has been delayed until the summer. This is partly due to delays with identifying options to deal with the extra traffic. We continue to lobby to stop a new road across the Ouse Valley down Cow lane at every opportunity.

Potholes and paint – a continuing problem but the more we report the more get fixed – the white lines on the disabled bay by One Stop should be repainted in March.

Pigeon poo – after years of lobbying, Highways England have a permanent solution to prevent the pigeon poo under the A14 bridge on Cambridge Road.

And two polite requests:

Dog Poo – please clear up after you dog ...

Pavements – please see if your bushes or hedges are narrowing the path for wheelchair users and pram-pushers. It is the responsibility of landowners to keep their hedges trimmed back. If they don't, the county council will have to step in and do the work, sending the bill to the house owner.

Huntingdonshire District Council

Changes to the waste bin collections

These will come into effect on Monday February 27, so please make sure you check the letters sent you by HDC and look at the on-line calendar. These changes, the first since 2001, are aimed to provide the same service at a lower cost. The estimated saving is £180,000 per year.

Proposed increase in District Council Tax

The reduction in grant from central government and the rising cost of providing services mean that HDC will be raising its council tax by 5p per week for a Band D house.

Will you be here to vote?

Thursday, May 4th is the election date this year.

If you think that you may be away on business, or on holiday, or if getting to the polling station is physically difficult, you can register to vote by post. Forms can be obtained from the Electoral Services Officer at Pathfinder House, St. Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN.

You can make contact by phone on 01480 388388 or via the HDC web-site.

ROD
for MAYOR
www.rod.org.uk



Rod Cantrill for Mayor

Although we disagree with the 'Devolution Deal with a compulsory 'Mayor' for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, we believe it is not an option to disengage from the process. Rather, we believe in working to create the best outcomes, working for change from within the system we will have.

The Liberal Democrats have selected Rod Cantrill to be their candidate for Mayor. Rod is a respected and experienced councillor, businessman and campaigner who has lived in the county for over 30 years.

Rod has vowed to ensure everyone prospers from our area's economic success. Recently Rod commented: "Like so many people, I think it's time to do politics differently. I'm fed up of politicians from all parties taking residents for granted. That's why, as a candidate and the Mayor, I will make listening to residents in every corner of Cambridgeshire my absolute priority."

"Too many parts of the county feel let down by successive governments who have neglected them and allowed serious decline. Our area has many opportunities for growth that I am eager to exploit in the future."

You will be hearing more from Rod soon and will have the chance to meet him in the coming weeks. You can also find out about his ideas on-line: www.rod.org

National perspectives

We live in a time of great national and international uncertainty. At a time when other political parties are divided, you can see why more and more people are joining the Liberal Democrats, attracted by our clear policies: working for an open, tolerant and united country, making society fairer but building a stronger economy which benefits everybody, not just the wealthy.

Visit our local website: www.huntingdonlibdems.org.uk or our national web-site www.libdems.org.uk where you can join the Liberal Democrats and support our fight back and make a real difference for our country.

