



FOCUS

Brampton

April 2017

Edition 126

Cambridgeshire County Council Election

Thursday, May 4th 2017

Peter Downes selected to stand for the Liberal Democrats in May 4th Council election

Dear Brampton residents,

It has been a privilege to be your County Councillor for last 16 years. I have learnt a great deal by meeting so many people from different walks of life.

Working with various District Councillor colleagues, (previously Elinor McNeill and Shirley Menczer, currently Patricia Jordan and John Morris), I have been able to support you in giving advice and sometimes solving problems, alas not always.

An important part of my activity over many years has been to keep you fully informed on council matters. I have done this, year in and year out, through FOCUS and I am very grateful for the help received from a loyal team of leaflet deliverers.

The County Council electoral division comprises more villages than just Brampton and over the years I have had the chance to see at first hand how things work in 14 other villages in the local area. I have come to realise just how important a parish council can be in shaping local life and this is why I always keep in close touch with them all (I have attended over 700 parish council meetings in the last 16 years!)

You will know from reading FOCUS that the County Council is going through an increasingly difficult time as funding is cut for local services at the same time as demand is growing. My personal approach is to work as collaboratively as possible with councillors from different political groups to find the best outcome.

The Liberal Democrat group on the County Council is a very able and experienced team of people from a range of backgrounds. My specialist contribution is, not surprisingly, related to education and young people. I hope that my experience and knowledge can be of help in a rapidly-changing world.

There can be no disguising the fact that, in the social and political life of this country, we are going through a very unsettled period which many of us find distressing. It would be tempting to give up but I have offered to stand again for election because I believe that, locally and nationally, the country needs the Liberal Democrats to speak up for policies which reject the extreme views expressed by some other parties, seeking to bring people together rather than divide them, aiming to make society fairer while recognising that we need to build a strong economy.

I hope you will re-elect me to allow me to continue with this challenging task.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Downes

(I hope to call on as many people as I can in the next few weeks but if I don't manage to see you and you have any specific issues you want to raise, please contact me on: 07765 833 486, peter.downes@cambridgeshire.gov.uk). If you would like to help, e.g. by joining the delivery team or by displaying a poster, please let me know .)



The Liberal Democrats in action on the County Council: constructive challenge, hard work

For the last four years, no one political party has had outright control. The Conservatives have been the largest group and the Lib Dems are the second largest. All the detailed work has been done in politically balanced committees. The Lib Dems have worked conscientiously and thoroughly to try to find the best solutions to the many challenges faced by the County Council.



Peter with his District Councillor colleagues, Patricia and John

The Liberal Democrat priorities in difficult times

Cambridgeshire County Council is facing serious financial challenges. Central government has been cutting financial support and capping council tax increases.

At the same time we have a fast-growing population, more people living longer and needing more care, more children needing school places. We do not intend to make glib promises but these are our main priorities:

Helping children from deprived backgrounds to get a good start in life and supporting their families

Supporting the elderly to live safely and happily in their own homes for as long as possible

Investing in public transport to reduce isolation in rural areas

Making local government more cost-effective by reducing the number of councils

Keeping our roads and pavements safe - well maintained, properly lit and gritted

The Cambridgeshire Conservatives have irresponsibly failed to take up the option (permitted by government) to raise council tax by 2% for general services. Our feedback suggests that people are prepared to pay slightly more to protect the essential services we all need and will need even more in future.

Peter Downes was Head of Hinchingsbrooke School. In 'retirement' he has been active in the Brampton community as a District Councillor (1997-2013) and as County Councillor since 2001. He has worked with the Community-Led Plan team and helped to promote the 'Good Neighbour Scheme'. He supported the creation of the Tidy Village Group and the Community Speed Watch. He is a Governor at the Village Primary School.

He and Pamela have two sons, Michael and Chris, (who both went to Hinchingsbrooke) and seven grandchildren.

Pamela worked with the CAB for many years and now helps with the Friends of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

They are both active in the 'Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House' charity.

Thursday, May 4th Will you be here to vote?

If you think that you may be away on business, or on holiday, or at university or college, 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 388388 or via the web-site: [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/More/Councils and Democracy/Elections/How to vote/postal vote](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/More/Councils%20and%20Democracy/Elections/How%20to%20vote/postal%20vote).



Rod Cantrill for Mayor

The new 'Combined Authority' of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough needs a competent and experienced Leader. You will be hearing from Rod separately. He is determined to make the best of this new development, for the good of the many, not just the few. www.rod.org.uk