



Cambridgeshire County Council Election

Thursday, May 4th 2017

Peter Downes to stand for the Liberal Democrats in Cambridgeshire Council election



Dear Residents in The Offords,

I am pleased to have been asked to stand to represent The Offords, along with Buckden, Diddington, Brampton and Southoe, in the new Cambridgeshire County Council from May 2017.

I have been a County Councillor for the last 16 years and I have learnt a great deal about how local democracy works, what it can (and cannot!) achieve.

On side 2 you will find a summary of the main policy priorities of the Liberal Democrats in Cambridgeshire and a short cv.

In this letter, I want to spell out how I see the role of the County Councillor and what I would seek to do if elected.

* I would aim to keep you fully informed about the key issues facing the County Council as a provider of essential services, for example, care for the elderly, support for vulnerable young people, highways maintenance and road safety. I would do this through regular Focus newsletters as I have done in Brampton since I first became a councillor They have just received edition no. 126 !

* I would make myself as available as possible, in person and by telephone and e-mail, so that you can raise with me any specific concerns you may have about council services. I do **not** promise to be able to solve everybody's problems but I can usually provide guidance and a steer in the right direction, working constructively with council officers.

* I would work closely with the parish council, helping them to liaise with the County Council, representing local concerns and opinions on proposals coming forward. Over my time as a councillor I have had the chance to see at first hand how things work in 14 other villages in the local area. I know 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!)

* There can be no disguising the fact that, in the social and political life of this country, we are going through a very difficult period which many of us find unsettling. I am standing 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.

All this is challenging but if you elect me, I will do my best.

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, or by e-mail to peter.downes@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. If you would like to help, e.g. by joining the FOCUS delivery team or by displaying a poster, please let me know.)

Liberal Democrats - working for you and with you, keeping you informed, all year round

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.



The need for a better way of crossing the main line is frequently mentioned to me in conversations with local residents.

The Liberal Democrat priorities in difficult times

Cambridgeshire County Council is facing serious financial challenges. Government has cut financial support and intends to do so in future. It has also 'capped' 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. The Lib Dems do not make glib promises when financial resources are limited 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 government option 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.



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

Peter Downes was Head of Hinchingsbrooke School (1982-96). Many pupils came to the school from The Offords.

Peter got involved in local politics after he 'retired'. He was a District Councillor from 1997 to 2013 and has been a County Councillor since 2001. He is currently Lib Dem Spokesman for Children and Young People and is a Governor at Brampton Village Primary School.

His outside interests include the Hunts Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra and the Huntingdon Rotary Club.

He is married to Pamela. Their two sons, Michael and Chris, both went to Hinchingsbrooke School. Peter and Pamela have seven grandchildren and enjoy visiting them in Scotland and Brussels.

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

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).