

### From Cambridgeshire County Council

#### Reduced funding to support the youngest as children's services take a 19% cut

The most controversial decision taken at the last County Council meeting in October was to cut £900,000 out of the current budget of £5 million for the Children's Centres. The ruling Conservative group faces having to make huge savings in the light of central government's policies for local government (i.e. reduced grant and capping tax rises).

They justified this proposal by saying that they can save on using fewer buildings and cutting over £700k on 'management and business support', claiming that they would be able to make a small increase in 'front-line services'. The Opposition groups were not convinced by this argument but were out-voted.

#### *Comment from County Councillor Peter Downes:*

'My concern is that, if we fail to provide the support that some young children and their families need while the children are still young, life will be much more difficult later on for them and the costs to taxpayers will be much greater. Here in Brampton I am working to negotiate an arrangement between the County Council, the primary school and the 'Village Hub' to see if we can keep some provision in our village.'

### From Huntingdonshire District Council

#### Local Plan due to be published soon

HDC's building development plans through to 2036 will soon be open to the public and will be accessible on the HDC web-site in December. There is a desperate need for more houses in our district with the number of homeless increasing every year. At the same time, residents are understandably concerned about the impact on traffic, and public services such as doctors and schools.

#### Parking enforcement in Huntingdon

Many Brampton residents shop in Huntingdon where parking has become more difficult as the centre of gravity of the town moves away from the High Street and towards the re-built area near Sainsbury's. Lib Dem councillors are calling for better enforcement of parking regulations while encouraging people to use the available public parking areas, especially the controversial and under-used multi-storey facility.

### From your Liberal Democrat councillors

As each week passes, the national political scene gets more confusing as the country appears to teeter from crisis to crisis. We struggle to clutch at straws of good news: for example, the recent Budget appeared to offer some development funding for infrastructure in our area i.e. as we live not far from the Cambridge-Oxford corridor, but then you look at the time-scales and wonder if it will ever really happen.

At the same time, we realise how fortunate we are when we see what is happening elsewhere in the world, either through natural disasters or human cruelty, stupidity or selfishness.

On a day-to-day basis we try to respond to the local issues you bring to us, sometimes by lodging a complaint with the councils we serve on, sometimes finding other 'self-help ways' to resolve problems.

Alas, we cannot disguise the current shortage of funding available to do all the things you would like to see happen.

However, we hope that, on a personal and family level, you have a good Christmas break and that 2018 brings you and many others good fortune and happiness.

*Patricia, John, Peter*

We are available on the first Saturday of alternate months, July, September, November, January, March and May, from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Scout HQ behind the shops. At other times, please contact us directly:

Your two District Councillors

Your County Councillor



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## Local events and news

### 'Village Hub' makes progress

It is very encouraging to see improvements to the social and communal life of Brampton from activities supported by the newly-formed 'village hub' (which sprang out of the recent community-led plan consultation).

The Village Events group put on the Christmas lights event a few days ago. This brought together more villagers than we have ever seen before at one event. We also have the Good Neighbour scheme, the Community Library, the IT mentoring scheme and are liaising with the Albram surgery to help patients in getting to see the doctor.

All these activities are reported in full in the excellent Brampton Magazine. Our thanks are due to all those who have volunteered to support this innovation, adding to the invaluable work of existing support groups from the churches,

### A14 progressing on schedule

Highways England are pleased with the progress made so far with this huge project. Local councillors have been working with them to try to minimise the disruption caused, reduce the mud deposit on the local roads and keep access to Brampton Hut for young people working there.

### Traffic round The Green

Many concerns about traffic jams and dangerous driving as parents drop children off at school. The school governors are working with the parish council and local county councillor to try and make improvements. Car-sharing would help but the best thing would be for more children to walk, cycle or scoot to school. That would be good for their health too!

### Some good news !

You will have noticed that there has been some patching of the worst pot-holes in the village. Now we are trying to get the lines replaced.

During the next few weeks the Brampton Brook is going to be dredged at least partially. This is welcome but long overdue.

## The national scene

### Labour

The Labour party has been enjoying a resurgence based on the left-wing policies and popular appeal of Jeremy Corbyn.

This is entirely understandable.

At a time of national political upheaval and confusion, simple and radical measures seem to offer a way out.

Unfortunately, it is unclear where all the money would come from to pay for the attractive ideas.

On 'Brexit', the biggest challenge we have faced for many years, Labour is muddled, with a leader who supported Leave while many Labour MPs and members now see it would be wiser to remain in the single market and customs union.



The Liberal Democrats, often derided for being 'in the centre', believe strongly that we need to work together in the best interests of the country. A central position, avoiding the extremes of both other parties, is surely what the country needs.

This means investing to grow the economy but also protecting public services and supporting the police, the NHS, social services and education. The tax burden falls too heavily on the poorest.

In 2010 the Lib Dems went into coalition with the Cons as that was in the best interests of the country at that time. We had five years of 'strong and stable' government! The country needs more Lib Dems at all levels of government.

### Conservatives

The present fiasco started when David Cameron called the EU referendum to silence the anti-EU wing in his political party. He failed and then left Downing Street within hours.

Theresa May took over with a working majority but, sensing party political advantage, called a snap election which backfired on her, leaving us where we now are, a minority Tory government propped up by the DUP.

The shambolic Brexit negotiations reflect the deep divisions within her own party.

Many former UKIP supporters now vote Tory, dragging the party ever further to the right.

All this shows that the Tories seem to be more concerned with doing what they think is best for their political party and not for the country as a whole.

## Why not help the Liberal Democrats to improve our country?

This country needs the Lib Dems more than ever before. You can help by joining and by getting involved in practical ways: delivering FOCUS, and/or coming to social events and political discussions, and/or assisting the elected councillors, or perhaps becoming a councillor yourself one day. You can join via the party website [www.libdems.org.uk](http://www.libdems.org.uk) or contact one of your local Lib Dem councillors.