

FOCUS on Godmanchester

Winter 2017 - 18



Update on County Council Conservatives continue to slash services – and it will hit children’s services and the vulnerable the most

Budget News

Cambridgeshire County Council needs to make at least £30m of savings next year because of Tory government policies for local government including cutting its grants. Demand for services is growing here as the population rises and people are living longer, often with more acute care needs. Now there is a Tory majority on the County Council, we are seeing a more strident approach to making cuts – previously as the County was more politically balanced we had been able to reign in some of the more extreme ideas.

The Conservatives are also looking at ways to increase contributions from people receiving disability benefits. The Lib Dems are concerned about this as it would be taking money away from some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in society.

As Lib Dems, we believe that we should be doing more to join up services with the health service and look seriously at merging county and district council services. Independent surveys also show most people would be prepared to pay slightly more for their council services if they knew the money would go to help the most vulnerable in society and maintain essential infrastructure.

Funding to support the young cut by 19%

The Conservative led County Council have cut £0.9m out of the current budget of £5m for the Children’s Centres across the county. They justified this proposal by saying that they can use fewer buildings and cut over £700k on ‘management and business support’ whilst providing a small increase in ‘front-line services’.

This sounds great, but we are worried that in reality it will mean less services are available. Godmanchester’s Children’s Centre is going to be shut, and services will ‘pop up’ here and in Huntingdon.

We sincerely hope that doesn't mean less is offered but it will mean there is no longer a focused location in Godmanchester for help, support and to access services.

County Councillor Graham Wilson is concerned 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.

From your local Lib Dem Team

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 funding for infrastructure in our area i.e. as we live not far from the Cambridge-Oxford corridor, but then you look at the timescales and wonder if it will ever really happen.

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, 2018 brings you and many others good fortune and happiness. Enclosed with this FOCUS is a calendar with telephone numbers we hope you find useful.

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



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News from Huntingdonshire District Council

Parking enforcement

Parking, or rather poor and dangerous parking, is an ongoing problem. The District Council are developing a Parking Strategy, but we worry that unless it deals with parking enforcement we won't see any real difference. The only bodies that have the legal powers to issue tickets are the Police and the District Council. The Police don't have the time to deal with nuisance parking but will enforce dangerous parking. The District Council have so far chosen only to enforce its own car parks. We continue to lobby for the powers to be enforced by the District Council or to be given to the Town Council.

We are pleased to see shoppers flocking to Huntingdon, drawn in by the new shops, but like you have been fed up by the new queues to get in to and out of the "Sainsbury's" car park. HDC assure us they are working to improve the traffic flows and signage. And remember there is a lot of spare capacity in the multi-storey car park.

Case work updates Some good news!

You will have noticed that there has been some patching of the worst pot-holes in the town. Now we are trying to get the lines replaced. If you notice potholes that need repairing or lines that need painting please report them on the Cambridgeshire County Council web site. We are also working with County Highways to see what might be done to address the worst pavement surfaces: again, please report these online too.

Pigeons under A14

We started working on this three years ago! In the last Focus we told you that work was agreed, and we had been told it would be done before Christmas. A change in personnel at Highways England has put us back, with a new officer starting the process from scratch. We are deeply frustrated by this but are working hard to do all we can to get the project back on track. In the meantime, HDC's street cleaning team are now cleaning every three weeks- but the sheer number of birds means it's not making much of a difference. We haven't given up and hope this work will be done very soon.

Your Local Councillors Facebook Page

We know that not everyone is on Facebook but we also know it works well for those who are. It's a useful way to find out what's going on and to tell us what we should be worrying about. David, who set up the successful and much appreciated "Godmanchester Living" page, has now set up a "Godmanchester Councillors" page. You can contact us there and let us know about issues you think we might be able to help you with. To find it simply type "Godmanchester Councillors" into the search bar on the Facebook page and click the 'follow' button.

Calendars

Along with the delivery of this Focus you should find a handy calendar to keep. It has a list of useful contacts on the reverse. Feedback from the last two years tells us that you think these are a useful, so we have provided one again this year.

We are the only political group that has a year-round presence, who knock on doors and deliver regular updates to you. We're not just around when its election time. We also believe that being part of a bigger team is key to offering you an effective local councillor service. We are pleased to welcome Mike Grice to the team here.

Why not help Godmanchester's Liberal Democrats

You can help here by getting involved in practical ways: delivering these FOCUS leaflets, assisting the elected councillors and helping us as we move towards next year's elections. Given us a call or drop us a line – our details are on the other side.