



From your Lib Dem team: /

Photo, L-R: Jill Brinkworth, Cllr Graham Snell, Cllr Tom Wren, Neil Brinkworth, Cllr Robin Parker CC, Cllr Andy McGuinness, Julie Ashley-Wren, Cllr Stephen Booth

Labour's parking grab will hurt our High Street



Residents and traders are dismayed that several free parking spaces in the High Street have been removed - **without consulting the public or local councillors** - and left unused, hurting local businesses already impacted by Covid-19.

The spaces were removed by the Labour Council on the initial pretext that room was needed **temporarily** for outdoor dining.

Then it was said they were for social distancing during the pandemic. There is no guarantee that they will ever be restored, with some areas having already been paved over, so valuable parking spaces are lost forever.

Neil Brinkworth, Lib Dem candidate for neighbouring Woodfield Ward and St Nicholas Division, says "Even before this outrage, there were not enough parking spaces to serve people who wanted to visit the popular shops, restaurants and pubs of this unique part of Stevenage. This **pedestrianisation by stealth** by the Labour Council will seriously harm High Street businesses who are already struggling due to Covid-19."



Controversial Gresley Park development delayed

The start of building works at the Gresley Park development has been delayed, possibly until late 2021.

There were delays in completing the outline planning application and the site will now be sold in parcels to housing developers, who will submit detailed planning applications for houses. Works to the spine roads within the development will probably start then, causing significant delays on Gresley Way.

Your local Lib Dem Team have been very vocally against this development from the start and have campaigned strongly to stop the development. But both the Labour-dominated Stevenage Council and Tory-dominated East Herts Council were both in favour of the development, so it was only a matter of time that this went through.

Councillor Graham Snell says "Your hard-working Lib Dem Team have kept local people up to date with news about Gresley Park. People are concerned about this development so we will ensure we stick up for the best interests of local people whose lives will be affected."



Cllrs Snell, McGuinness and Parker dismayed at decision

Can you help preserve rights of way?

Box Wood, an ancient replanted woodland with historic earthworks designated an ancient monument, has been used by



residents of Stevenage for many years for recreation and enjoyment. The wood has now been sold with a new owner selling smaller plots, though any housing development in Box Wood is extremely unlikely.

Councillor Tom Wren is trying to get the paths within Box Wood recognised as Public

Rights of Way so they can continue to be used by Stevenage residents. Cllr Wren needs witness statements from people who have used the paths through the wood in the last 20 years or more. If you can help, please get a form from Tom Wren (tel.: 07786 517 218 or email tom.wren@stevenage.gov.uk.)

Lib Dem Councillors fund life-enhancing projects

Councillors in Stevenage get a small budget they can spend locally in their community. Here are some of the important projects that the five Lib Dem Councillors have funded recently:

- Six **defibrillators** to be installed this spring in Chells and Manor Wards. Further details will be given soon
- Many additional **laptops** bought and lent out to disadvantaged students at Nobel School during the pandemic
- Improvements to local **parking**
- Planting of **daffodils** and other spring flowering plants in public spaces.



Councillor Robin Parker says: "Lib Dems believe that allowing local councillors a budget they can spend in their area is important for strengthening links between residents and the Council. The budgets are being slashed this year whereas they should be increased."

Planning not enforced



The Borough Council's planning department is very good at imposing a long list of restrictions on developers, but not so good at enforcing them. One small street in Chells has endured months of late evening and weekend working along with excessive rubbish from a two-house development. Despite constant

reporting of these failings to the Planning Department by both residents and local Chells councillors it has taken months for any action to be taken. **Julie Ashley-Wren**, candidate for Chells Ward, says "Liberal Democrats will ensure planning conditions are applied rigorously with the full backing of the law."



Who's delivered your leaflets?

This newsletter has either been delivered to your door by one of our hard-working volunteers or by paid deliverers. Both take care to follow the same Covid-safe practices as your local postman. Volunteer delivery has now been permitted by the Government, in a U-turn from their previous prohibition, which of course favoured the Tory party with their wealthy donors.



We are now also allowed to call at your door to discuss your needs and help you decide how to vote in the coming local elections. You can be confident that we will do this in a safe way, wearing masks and maintaining social distance. However, if you'd prefer to talk to us by telephone, just text us on **07395 194 864** and we'll get someone to call you back – just say when would be convenient.

Stay safe when voting

On 6 May this year there are three elections taking place: elections for the **Borough Council** and the **Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner**, both carried over from last year, and also the **County Council** elections.



So what will you be doing on **6 May**? Not sure? We're all getting used to the "new normal" and with

ever-changing rules about almost everything it's even more difficult to plan ahead.

Postal votes are safe, convenient and secure way of voting. What's more, with three choices to be made, postal votes let you take your time to think about the candidates who really care about your needs, rather than making a swift decision in a voting booth.

You can get an application form from www.libdems.org.uk/postal-vote, which you can print out at home and send to Stevenage Borough Council. Alternatively, call or phone us on **07395 194 864** and we'll drop a form in to you.

This simple step will mean that whatever is happening in May you'll be able to have your say in the elections, free of any worries about the virus.

For over 20 years you have received our local calendar in early January. Our apologies that this year Covid caused delays in getting it to you.



Tory pandemic response costs lives and money



The Tories' response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been appalling.

Jill Brinkworth, Lib Dem candidate for Martins Wood, says "The Government failed to ensure the NHS was prepared for a pandemic, failed to control our borders, failed to lock down quickly enough and failed to use local council environmental and public health teams experienced in disease tracking and tracing. Instead, they gave billions of pounds to their friends running consultancies or businesses with zero public health experience."



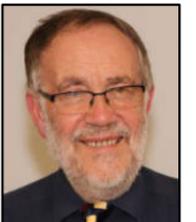
Remember, the Tories:

- Were unprepared with adequate PPE for care homes and hospitals, despite dire warnings from exercises back in 2016;
- Were slow to act when the virus was first discovered;
- Failed to notice what was happening in other countries (which ultimately suffered much lower death rates);
- Repeatedly failed to be guided by the scientists on when to come out of or go into lock-down;
- Spent billions of our money on failed track & trace contracts run by friends of the Conservative Party.

Lib Dem councillor gets welcome for new residents

Whenever you move into a new property almost the first thing that happens is the arrival of an officious letter demanding Council Tax payment. Wouldn't it be nice if along with it came a welcoming note from the Council with information about local services, where to go for help and other useful contacts?

Lib Dem Chells Councillor **Stephen Booth** managed to persuade Stevenage Borough Council to do just that at a recent council meeting. "I've been advocating this for years" said Stephen, "Local councils often don't have a very good image amongst residents, with many confused over which council does what. This idea takes me back to when I first came to Stevenage 50 years ago when indeed the first piece of mail through the door when we moved in was a demand for rates. I thought then, when we knew little about the town, how much nicer and more useful it would have been to get information about the area we were in and the town's facilities."



Modernising car parking

Car parking is a town-wide problem and particularly bad in the so-called Radburn estates – those where front doors don't access a street, with parking compounds to the rear. With the increasing demand for re-charging points for **electric cars**, your Lib Dem Councillors have already helped with plans for these at our local neighbourhood centres and are pushing the government to provide them for residents who do not have a private drive.

We want to hear from you...

You can get in touch by telephone: 07395 194 864 or **email:** contact@stevenagelibdems.org.uk
Website: stevenagelibdems.org.uk. **For individual candidates or councillors, see the details above.**

The Liberal Democrats will use your contact details to send you information on the topics you have requested. Any data we gather will be used in accordance with our privacy policy at libdems.org.uk/privacy. To exercise your legal data rights, email: data.protection@libdems.org.uk.