

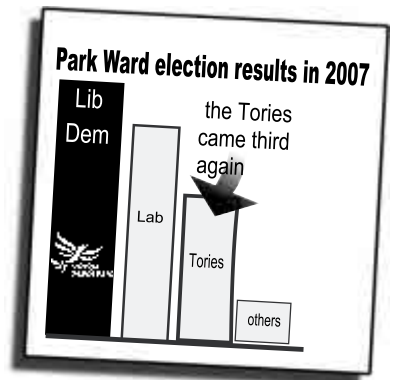


March 2008

FOCUS On Park Ward

Cllr Robin Lawrence, Claire Darke

and the Liberal Democrat Focus Team working for Park Ward



Massive tax hike as City faces ruin

Shocking documents seen by Wolverhampton Liberal Democrats, Claire Darke and Councillor Robin Lawrence show that Labour-controlled Wolverhampton City Council is facing financial ruin. Years of poor financial planning and lack of control from elected Labour councillors combined with lower than expected contributions from the Labour Government are likely to result in huge cuts in services and job losses.

Due to mismanagement of Wolverhampton's taxpayer's money there is a predicted shortfall in the budget for 2010 of a staggering £10.3 million. This gap could be much more if the savings hoped for from a soon to be signed partnership agreement between the Labour-controlled Council and a private service provider does not save the cash that the council is hoping for.

To make matters worse Wolverhampton Council is losing an extra £5 million pounds in direct government grants and has yet to receive a further £5 million promised in November 2007 from its holdings in Birmingham Airport.

To put Wolverhampton Council in an even worse position financial projections suggest that the £30 million allocated to cover the costs of equal pay settlements under the single status reviews is more than £5 million short of what will be needed. Claire Darke told Focus "I don't know how Labour councillors dare show their faces to the electorate. They must know that



Cllr Robin Lawrence and Claire Darke say, "The Labour run Council bleeds the poor old taxpayer dry."

due to successive years of their mismanagement they are continuing to cause real hardship for residents and users of council services. I am almost tempted to say that the Labour Councillors don't know what they are doing."

Councillor Robin Lawrence added, "Labour has presided over a complete mess. It will take years to clear up their mistakes. The sooner they are voted out then the sooner Wolverhampton can be put back on an even financial footing."

Cuts in Jobs and Services For tenants

Despite securing £288 million investment Wolverhampton Homes faces substantial cuts in front-line services according to plans seen by the Liberal Democrats. Labour-controlled Wolverhampton Council are planning to cut around £3 million worth of jobs and services from budget in the next three financial years. Services threatened include:- customer service jobs, housing operations jobs as well as plans to close the joinery shop and materials store. The plans also show that the out of hours service will be severely reduced.

Once again these proposals show an appalling lack of forward financial planning from Wolverhampton's Labour council. Claire Darke said "Tenants and leaseholders are having to witness the terrible sight of elected Labour councillors patting themselves on the back for the late arrival of government cash while at the same time planning to cut back vital Wolverhampton Homes services. These cuts will not only reduce services but will also reduce skill levels amount the remaining employees."



Claire Darke says, "Many tenants are dissatisfied with Wolverhampton Homes and yet they are now being asked to pay huge rent rises."

Claire Darke says "Tenants are tired of having to stomach huge rent increases."

Grass Verge Damage - Signs Ignored



Claire Darke and Cllr Robin Lawrence wonder if this driver can read? The sign is clear enough. The grass verge is now a muddy mess.

Considerable damage is being done to grass verges all round the West Park because of inconsiderate and inappropriate parking. The same problem occurs on York Avenue where new grassed patches were laid last year.

Under new powers coming into force at the end of March Wolverhampton Council will be able to fine drivers who park on the grassed areas and pavements. Residents can be assured that Claire Darke, Councillor Robin Lawrence and the Liberal Democrat Focus Team will be pressing the Council to use the new powers to prevent the continuing damage to grass verges around the West Park, York Avenue and everywhere else.

Traffic calming started

In December we reported that much needed road safety improvements in Park Ward were planned.

With more and more cars on the road traffic calming schemes are becoming vital parts of city planning. Newhampton Road East and West have suffered scores of accidents in recent years and Liberal Democrats have welcomed the traffic calming that is taking place in the area.

Claire Darke told Focus, "Narrowing junctions such as the one at Newbridge Street and Newhampton Road West should cut traffic speeds. Bringing out junction markings on Lloyd Street, Gibbs Street and other roads so that they are level with



Claire Darke tries to cross the busy junction of Newhampton Road East and Waterloo Road

parked cars will also make the roads safer for cyclists and cars drivers."

Councillor Robin Lawrence said "Newhampton Road is one of the busiest main roads in the Ward. Liberal Democrats welcome all measures that will make it and the roads off it safer for everyone to use."

Road and Grove as well as on Court Road and McBean Road which have been very successful in making sure that dog fouling is kept to a minimum. I am delighted with this mixed approach of enforcement and education."

Councillor Robin Lawrence told Focus, "This enforcement and education action shows that the Liberal Democrats are serious about helping to solve the nuisance of dog fouling. If residents notice dog mess that needs clearing up they should contact the Liberal Democrats who will then see to it that the mess is removed."



Clean up afterwards!

Dog Mess Menace

Residents of many areas have contacted Claire Darke, Councillor Robin Lawrence and the Liberal Democrat Focus Team with concerns about the increase in dog mess being left on pavements. Thanks to pressure from the Liberal Democrats, Claire Darke and Councillor Robin Lawrence have insisted that senior environmental health officers patrol the area to enforce the laws relating to dog mess and to educate dog owners about the need to clear up after their pets. Claire Darke said "Thanks to the Liberal Democrats there have been some early morning patrols in Gibbons Road and Grove, Crowther

Help Claire Darke win in Park Ward

I will Display a poster at the election on 1st May

I would like to vote by post in future

I would like to contribute to the cost of this Focus

£5 £10 £20 Other £

Please make cheques payable to "Wolverhampton South West Liberal Democrats".

(A donation of £10 or more entitles you to membership of the Liberal Democrats Please tick here if you do not want to become a member.)

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'DISABLED PEOPLE MUST NOT BE IGNORED BY EU' - MEP

A local Euro-MP's campaign to get more countries to sign up for greater rights for disabled people stepped up a gear when she met a delegation of leading disability organisations at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The UN Convention on Disabled People's Rights was enthusiastically backed by a number of countries at the launch last year but since then, far fewer have signed up than was hoped.

This prompted Wolverhampton's LibDem MEP Liz Lynne to launch a Written Declaration, which if signed by enough Euro-MPs will force a debate on the issue in the European Parliament.

MORE COUNTRIES MUST BACK CONVENTION

Liz is a longstanding disability rights campaigner and is Vice President of the all-party Disability Intergroup of MEPs. She said: "Achieving a legally binding UN convention was a milestone, but it is no use if countries do not sign and ratify it.

"The declaration needs the support of half the 785 MEPs to achieve a debate in the European Parliament. This will send a strong message on the importance of this Convention in the fight to secure fundamental human rights for all disabled people. "I encourage people to write to their MEPs of all parties asking them to sign, so this issue gets the attention it deserves across the EU and beyond."



Liz Lynne at the launch of the Declaration in Brussels with Christine Naughton (Christian Blind Mission), Isabella Wahedova (Light for the World), Lars Bosselman (Christian Blind Mission), Cecilia Cranfield, and Fiona Thornton (CORD, Christian Organisations in Relief and Development). So far, 185 MEPs have signed the declaration.

Your local LibDem Euro MP LIZ LYNNE

Tel: 01789 266354

www.lizlynnne.org.uk email:liz@lizlynnne.org.uk

55 Ely Street, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6LN

This panel published by Liz Lynne MEP and the ALDE Group, European Parliament, Rue Wiertz 60, Brussels 1047, Belgium.

Axe the Tax Petition

Please Sign and return to our Freepost address as shown above

To: The Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP, Department for Communities and Local Government

The Council Tax is an unfair tax, based simply on outdated valuations of property and with no link to ability to pay. It should be scrapped and replaced with a system based on people's ability to pay.

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