



Issue 196

Richard Whitehouse 25 years

# FOCUS

Working Together

From your Liberal Democrat Focus Team  
Cllr Mike Heap  
Cllr Richard Whitehouse  
Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

May 2009

## Council over-staffing

Malcolm Gwinnett would like to know from you whether you agree with Wolverhampton Liberal Democrats who say that there are too many layers of bureaucracy and so over-staffing at the Civic Centre.

They say that there are TOO MANY CHIEFS and NOT ENOUGH FRONT LINE STAFF.

“Wolverhampton City Council employs many more people than a town/city of a comparable size and that all impacts on your level of Council Tax”, said Malcolm Gwinnett.

## levels of poor sickness absence

Levels of sickness absence at Wolverhampton Council are far higher than in the private sector. This could be because of over work - NOT ENOUGH FRONT LINE STAFF and poor management. A sickness culture does exist in certain areas where there is a view of ‘sick day leave entitlement’. Malcolm Gwinnett said, “These attitudes must be quickly changed because by our calculations if sick leave were halved it would save you the taxpayer about £5 million per year.”

# Our MEP Liz Lynne: A record of action, a promise of more!

Wolverhampton’s Lib Dem MEP for 10 years, Liz Lynne, has a powerful record of action and service.

Electing more Lib Dem MEPs as well as Liz Lynne such as farmer and green campaigner Phil Bennion would give us an even more powerful voice.

Tenacious and effective, Liz has a proud record of action locally and nationally, as well as on the European stage. Her efforts forced the UK to ban age discrimination in the workplace. She also:

- campaigned to win millions from the EU Solidarity Fund to help fund flood repairs.
- worked with top Police officers on a campaign against gangs trafficking people into Birmingham as sex slaves.
- fought moves by Labour MEPs to end Britain’s opt out of the 48 hour limit in the Working Time Directive, which would have limited voluntary overtime and threatened 18,000 retained firefighters.
- Won a rethink of safety laws which would have banned MRI scanners.
- Pushed for action to tackle ‘superbugs’ like MRSA with an EU code of best practice.



Liz Lynne with Vince Cable. The Lib Dems have been the only party to address the root causes of our economic mess and be honest about what we need to do to recover.

[www.lizlyne.org.uk](http://www.lizlyne.org.uk)

# The Council’s budget and Labour’s deceit

Labour have been reported in the press and in local literature saying some deceitful things about Wolverhampton’s budget. Focus does not, as a rule, rise to our opponents but sometimes it is necessary.

\* Labour made a budget last year with £5 million in it as an airport dividend that did not materialise. Leaving a black hole in the finances.

\* Labour had committed us to a disastrous union with a private firm Axon which soaked up another £2 million to add to the black hole and which will cost you even more to sever the contract.

\* Labour planned to use £9.5 million of reserves, making them disastrously low and probably unable to meet the Council’s commitments.

\* Labour planned a Council tax increase of 4.9% . The one delivered by the new administration is 3.49% a lower increase as promised. (the lowest for 15 years).

\* In order to make the budget balance in the next two years, because of Labour’s wasted reserves, savings of £40 million have to be made.

\* To make matters worse the Labour Government have given Wolverhampton, over

3 years, the second worst council tax grant of any authority in the West Midlands

\* We have found over £25 million from back room bureaucracy. The rest will come from reorganising services and some residents will unfortunately have to adjust to an altered service. However, this has all been brought on by Labour’s mismanagement of Wolverhampton City Council finances. Just as they have mismanaged Britain’s finances.

**NB** The fencing charge is to be levied by Wolverhampton Homes not the Council.

Which was the **only** Party to oppose setting up Wolverhampton Homes? - The Liberal Democrats!

## Your Liberal Democrat Focus Team working for you

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# Richard Whitehouse twenty five years as your local Councillor



For a quarter of a century Richard Whitehouse has had the privilege of being one of your elected Councillors. He has campaigned on numerous issues on your behalf. The photographs demonstrate some of these. From exposing the previous Labour administrations financial black hole prior to the elections that swept them out of control to combining with your other Focus Team Councillors to help preserve the future of Hilton Hall.

The whole adventure began back in 1981 with the introduction of Focus leaflets and just as now there was a lack of deliverers and Richard delivered most of the 5000 each issue himself. Residents started to warm to this new kind of politics but it wasn't until the campaign to get gas supplied to Ettingshall Park in 1983 that residents imaginations were fully



awakened. This culminated in Richard's first election in 1984. New people joined the crusade for a better politics and Tony Pye & Kay Morgan enlisted into the campaign team and they themselves were subsequently elected to represent you. Tony had to move for work reasons and it was then that Malcolm Gwinnett joined and he has been your Councillor for the last nineteen years. Kay retired and subsequently Mike Heap brought your Lib Dem Councillors back up to full strength.

Numerous campaigns have been pursued over the years. Who can



remember the 1300 plus signature for speed measures on Dovedale Road? This eventually resulted in the small refuges and the road lining. We now have regular speed check



cameras placed there to be supplemented by a residents speed watch in the near future.

When Richard was first elected most of the pavements were of paving slabs. Many cracked and uneven, frankly quite dangerous. Richards first major campaign was to have these all replaced with tarmac. He then moved onto the street lights. These were in the main the old bulb type and really most ineffective. He managed to get all these replaced with the neon type (the first ward in the town). The Focus team are now busy pressing for these to be upgraded to the new halogen lights. It was the team that achieved the goal of being the first ward to have all its Council property



with UPVc windows and was nearly one of the first to have all its council properties with central Heating. We are now pressing for much of this to be upgraded. There is still much more to be done. Richard does not expect to be

around for another twenty five years but knows that there are a number of community minded residents who would be willing to carry on the campaigns for such things as the bus service, gully gating and roads and pavements.

## Advice Centres

The next Advice Centres are:

### Cllr Mike Heap

Saturday 18th April 10am to 11am

**Manor school Ettingshall Road**

### Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

Monday 11th May 5pm to 6pm and

Monday 15th June 5pm to 6pm

**Lanesfield Community Centre Ward Grove**

### Cllr Richard Whitehouse

Tuesday 8 April 6pm to 7pm

Monday 8 July 6pm to 7pm

**Springvale school Hateley Drive**

### No problem too small

If you spot something that needs attention contact  
Cllr Whitehouse,  
Cllr Heap or  
Cllr Gwinnett.

### If you have a problem

you can always write free of charge to:

**Liberal Democrats**  
**Freepost RRXR-REST-TCZE**  
**14 Broxwood Park**  
**Wolverhampton WV6 8LZ**

My problem is: \_\_\_\_\_

My Name. \_\_\_\_\_

My Address. \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a separate sheet if necessary

### Phone your Focus Team

M. Gwinnett 398800  
R.F.Whitehouse 659835/07796341647  
Mike Heap 754030  
Office 555005  
24 hour answer phone at our office  
**Email:**  
richard.whitehouse@wolverhampton.gov.uk  
michael.heap@wolverhampton.gov.uk  
malcolm.gwinnett@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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