

# FOCUS

*on Castle Ward*



**March 2008**

Edited by Cllr Richard Freeman (Tel. 525948)

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

## Tories Axe Plans For Market Square

**The Tory-controlled Town Council has abandoned plans to improve Walden's Market Square.**

The plans would have made the Square available for activities every day of the week with more and better parking for taxis and the disabled, whilst removing the option for motorists to drive round and round looking for a space.

The scheme was carefully thought out by the Saffron Walden Initiative, and approved by your Town, District and County Councils, Highways and the Department of Transport, and at that time received all-party support. It was also fully funded from Essex County Council. Instead of going ahead, the Tories controlling the Town Council have rubbished the scheme and put nothing in its place.



**DOOMED TO FAILURE**

The front page story of the Dunmow & Stansted Observer on 21st. February revealed that Uttlesford Conservatives' plans for new housing in this area are likely to be delayed by at least six months.

The Conservatives' plans for a new town in Elsenham - which emerged after a private meeting of Conservative councillors - have been condemned as poorly thought-out by many local residents, a local newspaper, Essex County Council and the Government Office for the East of England.

The County Council has pointed out that the Conservative plans will create a strain on local roads and deny more affordable housing to communities like ours.

The Liberal Democrats have long called for the housing consultation to be re-run with a properly thought-out set of proposals. The Conservatives' current proposals are unlikely to stand up in court.

The cost of trying to defend them would be a significant burden that a cash-strapped council would inevitably have to pass on to Council Taxpayers across the entire District.

## Radical NHS Plans Unveiled

**The Liberal Democrat Spring Conference backed plans to transform the NHS into a 'people's health service' by empowering individuals and giving control to local communities.**

The measures will set the NHS free from central government control, make it accountable to the people it serves through elected health boards and deliver high quality services to all, guaranteed in a 'Patient's Contract'.

The proposals put clinical need ahead of government targets. Patients would be entitled to be treated in a private hospital at the NHS's expense if their wait breached a defined period, giving the NHS a real incentive to treat patients on time.



- Every citizen guaranteed access to a high standard of core healthcare entitlements within maximum waiting times in a 'Patient's Contract'.
- A 'Care Guarantee' for all elderly people requiring care, based on need - not ability to pay.
- Unaccountable Primary Care Trusts replaced with local Health Boards, the majority of whose members are directly elected.
- Direct payments and individual budgets for people with chronic, long-term conditions and mental health services.

**Overleaf: More Potholes With The Tories**

## Here to Help You



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**Stephen Jones**  
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☎ 500194



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The Liberal Democrat Focus team are asking residents to list the worst three eyesores in our town that they would like removed.

We can't promise to sort out everything, but knowing what they are is the first step to tidying up our area. Please use the form below or contact us using the details above.

# £10 Million Highways Overspend: Bigger Potholes With The Tories

Get used to seeing bigger potholes for longer - that is the message from Conservatives at County Hall in Chelmsford, as the party's failure to finance highways properly continues. Just a few weeks ago, the Conservatives announced a £10 million overspend on the highways budget.

The latest proposals seem to be to wait until damage to road surfaces is really bad before the Council will even consider making repairs. In some cases, for example where there is a kerb that doesn't align with the road, the Tories have dropped any commitment to carry out repairs.

For residents in this area, it will be inconvenient, hazardous and frustrating, with no relief in sight.



*"Yes, but I'm afraid it still doesn't meet the new criteria for repair."*

Sign our on-line petition against cuts in road repairs at: [ourcampaign.org.uk/potholes](http://ourcampaign.org.uk/potholes)

## Recycling Scheme A Great Success



Our recycling is amongst the best in the land – thanks to the support given to the scheme by people like you! It was introduced by the Liberal Democrats last year, in the face of opposition from the Tories who had not one good thing to say about it.

The success of the scheme has been recognised in the annual local authority recycling league table, compiled by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It saves the district and county councils millions of pounds in landfill taxation and is great for the environment. This area regularly achieves recycling rates of over 50%.

Although the Tories vigorously opposed the scheme when it was introduced, now that they are running the District Council, they are happy to take all the credit!

## Mini Skate Park At Lord Butler Centre

The Skate Park at the Lord Butler Leisure Centre is a huge success, with dozens of youngsters making use of it. It soon became clear that there is a need for a simpler and less challenging version, where parents can take young children to play and learn under supervision.

Thanks to the hard work of the volunteers who look after the skate park, funds have been found to build a separate 'mini park' especially for young children. Next to the existing park, parents will be able to keep a close watch whilst their young ones can enjoy themselves in safety. The Skate Park has been fully supported by the Lib Dems over the years (Helen Baker made it her charity when she was Mayor)..



**The Tory-controlled Town Council has voted to save the Tourist Information Centre from closure, but it has no budget for this purpose. Instead, it intends to raid the playing fields fund, which was specifically to find more playing fields for the town.**

The Liberal Democrats are all in favour of saving the TIC, but it has to be properly funded. We would have left untouched the playing fields fund, raised half the money required from the Town Council precept (a small part of your Council Tax), and then reviewed the situation in a year's time.



## Can We Help You?

My comment/issue/problem is:

Name(s):  
Address:  
Tel.:  
E-mail:

Please return to: Liberal Democrats, FREEPOST CL2702, Stansted CM24 8BR.

The Liberal Democrats may contact you from time to time to keep you informed on issues we think you may find of interest. Please let us know if you do not wish the information below to be used for this purpose.  
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## Can You Help Us?

- I will be voting Lib Dem next time.
- I'd like to join the Lib Dems to help with their campaigns. Please contact me.
- I'd like a postal vote. Please contact me.
- I will display a garden/window poster at election time.
- I can deliver 50 or so leaflets. Please contact me.

Join on-line at [www.libdems.org.uk/join](http://www.libdems.org.uk/join)