

After the floods

Councillor John Webster reports back

Now that things are getting back to normal we need to look at what we can learn from the experience of the floods and the loss of our water supply.

Politics was suspended for the duration of the floods while we all worked to tackle the emergency, but now there are some questions that must be answered and our MP is on the case.

Prominent among these is why isn't Severn Trent paying the compensation it promised for the interruption in the water supply? We know the circumstances were unusual, but we also had to suffer the inconvenience and disruption - and so we should at least have a reduction in our water rates.

In St Marks we got off relatively lightly. There was no major flooding that we are aware of. The situation in other parts of the town was much worse. For most of us it was an inconvenience - but we'll get over it quickly. They won't. Those places that have flooded may be permanently devalued as a result.

If there is anyone who was flooded then they may be eligible for some help. This only applies if they weren't insured. They need to get an application form from:

Gloucestershire Flood Relief Fund
c/o Tewkesbury Borough Council
Council Offices
Gloucester Road
Tewkesbury
GL20 5TT
Tel: (01684) 295010
Email: glosflood@tewkesbury.gov.uk

We have to take this as a wake-up call and make sure we are prepared for emergencies in future, and so we are trying to identify things we need to learn from. The issues that have arisen in the ward are:

- Problems with drains that overflowed or were blocked up and the need for regular maintenance.
- The problem with the bowsers that ran out of water very quickly.
- The problems of vulnerable people who couldn't cope, and those who need a lot of water such as people with young children.

If you think there is anything else that needs consideration, please let us know about it.



- Hundreds of houses were flooded in Cheltenham during the recent floods - what can we do to prevent it in the future?

The state of our roads and drains

Last year the Cheltenham Borough Council decided to transfer its Highway function to the County Council. The roads continue to deteriorate even more quickly as the budgets have been transferred to repair and improve rural roads in Conservative areas. Also, the drains are cleared less frequently. We oppose this.



We got a better service when we looked after our own roads and drains. We'll continue to press for more funding for Cheltenham's roads.

The Tories are claiming that they are spending £5 million on improving the old A40. This isn't the whole truth. This money comes from the Government as a one-off payment to improve the A40 following its de-trunking and transfer to the County Council. **They have actually reduced the budget across the county.**

Local people want to see a pelican crossing opposite Benhall Gardens. This was supposed to happen 3 years ago. Why can't they just get on with it?

Your Lib Dem team is here to help

Councillor John Webster
01242 511424
webster.j@blueyonder.co.uk

Councillor Sandra Holliday
01242 700434
clr.sandra.holliday@cheltenham.gov.uk

County Councillor Mike Skinner
01242 510549
mike.skinner@gloucestershire.gov.uk

County Councillor Charmian Sheppard
01242 511971
Charmian.sheppard@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Martin Horwood
Member of Parliament for Cheltenham
16 Hewlett Road, GL52 6AA
01242 224889
martin@martinhorwood.net



6 questions that must be answered

Following the floods and the catastrophic loss of the town's water supply, Cheltenham's MP Martin Horwood is demanding answers to six key questions.

Martin, who has visited homes and businesses across the town to see the devastation at first hand, said:

"1. Why did critical facilities such as the Mythe pumping station and the Walham electricity substation not have adequate flood defences in place?"

"2. Why, when we had nearly a week's notice of the rains, were those homes and businesses at risk of flash flooding still not protected with sandbags or diversionary trenches?"

"3. Why has so much damage in Cheltenham happened on uphill areas where culverts and drains seem to have been poorly maintained making brooks and streams normally a few inches deep rise up to 15 feet to inundate nearby homes?"

"4. Why have houses in the centre of Cheltenham been flooded twice in a month when our brand new flood alleviation scheme costing £23 million was supposed to protect against a once in 100 year flood?"

"5. How will the government and the insurance industry respond to those people whose houses have never flooded before but who now face falling house prices and spiralling insurance premiums?"

"6. With climate change promising many more events like this, will the government rethink its plans to plough ahead with hundreds of thousands of new homes on Greenfield sites in flood risk areas like Gloucestershire regardless of the environmental impact?"

Martin Horwood

Member of Parliament for Cheltenham

holds regular advice surgeries at his constituency office and at other locations around the town
Call 01242 224889 for an appointment



**ST. MARK'S WARD
COUNCILLOR'S SURGERY**

**LAST WEDNESDAY OF
EVERY MONTH**

**AT ST MARK'S
COMMUNITY CENTRE**

BROOKLYN ROAD

FROM 7PM UNTIL 8PM

ALL WELCOME



LIBERAL
DEMOCRATS
www.libdems.org.uk

A tribute to Bob Godfrey

Alderman Brian Cassin, former Councillor for St Mark's, writes:

"On behalf of the St Mark's Focus I Team would like to express our sorrow at the sad death of Bob Godfrey recently.

"Bob was well known in the local community and will be sadly missed by many organisations in the St Mark's and Hester's Way area.

"He was awarded the Cheltenham Medal of Honour for his work in the community with more than 40 years involvement in the St Mark's and Hester's Way Community Association where he was actively serving as chairman of the management Committee at the time of his death.

"He was also a member of the Hester's Way Partnership, the organization that spearheaded the improvement in our area.

"Bob's cool, calm and patient manner was always welcomed at and had a smoothing influence at many meetings I attended. We will all miss him greatly."

Single advice contract

The Conservative Cabinet on Cheltenham Borough Council recently agreed a policy that will drastically cut the areas of free advice provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau that Cheltonians currently have access to.

In future, if you want advice on divorce, employment matters, tax, inheritance, health, consumer affairs, family issues and so on you will have to go to a solicitor (at charges in excess of £100s an hour) or travel out of the borough to Tewkesbury or Cotswold to get it.

Only advice on housing, benefits and debt will be available in Cheltenham. A majority of the Council have expressed opposition to these cuts but the Cabinet has ignored them.

Police and Community Consultative Meeting

At the last meeting of the Police and Community Consultative Meeting at Arthur Dye School on Wednesday 18 July 2007, twenty three members of the public attended to hear Inspector Richard Boyles report that there has been a fall in overall crime in the area and an increase in detection rates. The public were encouraged to view the Hester's Way Safer Community Team website to see details of their local team:

www.gloucestershire.police.uk/neighbourhoodpolicing/31.html

Date & Time of Next Meeting:

Tuesday 30 October 2007, 7.30pm to be held at Swindon Village School, Church Road, Cheltenham, GL51 9QP

Tell us what you think

Use this space to tell us of any local issues or problems

How you can help our campaigns

Martin Horwood and the Lib Dems work hard all year round for our area. If you would like to help our campaigns, please complete and return this form.

I will vote Lib Dem at the next election

I would like to vote by post in future

I can display a poster at election time

I can deliver leaflets in my area

I can make a donation to the Lib Dems

£50 £20 £9 Other £

Please make cheques payable to the Liberal Democrats. A donation of £9 or more entitles you to become a member of the Lib Dems. Please tick here if you do not wish to be enrolled

Your name-

Your address-

Postcode-

Email-

Return to: Liberal Democrats, FREEPOST
SWC0744, Cheltenham, GL52 6ZZ

Title: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel: _____

Email: _____

Return to: FREEPOST SWC0744, Cheltenham, GL52 6ZZ.