

Say no to Parkway



If Parkway goes ahead then services to and from Cheltenham Spa Station will be drastically reduced.

Martin Horwood MP backs opposition to Gloucester Parkway Station

Cheltenham's Member of Parliament, Martin Horwood has voiced his opposition to Gloucestershire County Council's proposal to build a new railway station at Elmbridge Court near Gloucester.

Martin has written to the transport minister to urge the government not to back the Council's bid for funds. Cheltenham's Chamber of Commerce is also opposing the scheme.

In his letter to the minister, Martin says:

"People must not be obliged to travel to Elmbridge Court to catch their train. It adds unnecessarily to CO2 emissions, cost and inconvenience.

"Cheltenham has a cost effective alternative to Parkway that will bring major investment in the station and sustainable transport to the town. Its contribution to better rail services will be felt county wide. It should be vigorously pursued and supported.

"We should not be swayed by the mirage of regional funding for Cheltenham; the business case for the railway has little credibility amongst informed observers because it is seriously flawed.

" We should reject Parkway outright. We should work with Gloucester to find a real sustainable solution. If we do nothing and Parkway goes ahead, there is a clear long-term threat to the future of both Cheltenham and Gloucester stations."

If Parkway goes ahead

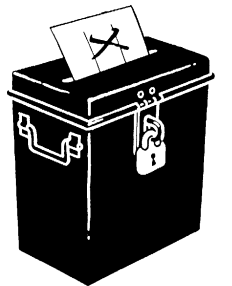
- Immediately, the cross country services to long distance destinations e.g. Plymouth will be halved, alternating every other hour between Parkway and Cheltenham – a 2 hourly service:
- Confusion will reign for passengers who will have to choose the right station for their destination or connecting train, the right station for the return time, at alternating hours and depending upon the direction of travel:
- Once the new franchises are let, the Train Operating Companies will take commercial decisions about which station to use and will accelerate change:
- As soon as the new Cross Country franchise is in place the service into Cheltenham Spa will cease: this will also affect the number of services available for shorter distances such as Bristol:
- Passengers for the Cross Country services will have no choice but to go via Parkway; walking and cycling there will be impossible; car journeys, congestion and CO₂ emissions at Parkway will increase;
- The Department for Transport will not fund major improvements with the result that Cheltenham Spa, already in need of investment, will be downgraded and become the poor relation:
- The town, commuters, tourists and shoppers and will have only a dilapidated third rate station; the prestige of Cheltenham will be at stake:

We need your support - please sign the petition overleaf or online at www.campaigns.libdems.org.uk/saynotoparkway

Parish Council by-election

We're very pleased to note that, for once, there is going to be a democratic election for Parish

Councillors in Up Hatherley, instead of it being left to the Parish Council to co-opt the one person willing to do it, as so often is the case.



When more than one person puts themselves forward in that way, it helps to ensure that the people of Up Hatherley have full representation on the Parish Council.

We have two excellent local candidates who are ready, willing, and able to do their bit for Up Hatherley. Neither of them are members of any political party.

Paul Smith has been actively leading the campaign to retain the willow trees on the greens, and Sheila Marsh actively supports a number of causes in Hatherley. They have both lived in the Parish for some years and are known to care passionately about how things are done in this area of town.

Whoever you support, we'd just like to encourage you to vote, to make this piece of local democracy work.

Polling Day is Thursday 11th January. You will get details of your polling station through your door shortly from the Municipal Offices.

Conservative and PAB councillors in Cheltenham support Parkway Station

Conservative budget is half-baked and erratic



The Conservative's latest attack on the Lib Dems accuses us of leaving the books in a mess of virtual reality, so we would like to set the record straight.

The Conservative budget is a half-baked budget. The proposals for capital investment are incomplete, and there are no detailed proposals for spending the £500,000 of Government money which the Council expects to receive from the business growth incentive scheme.

Last June the Conservative cabinet splashed out around £250,000 of extra spending on everything from Town Hall crockery to taxi marshals. Now they are complaining there isn't enough money and are proposing cutting back, especially on grants to voluntary organisations.

There are a number of other penny-pinching cuts, from cutting money for a charity which works to equip disadvantaged young people with life skills, through a cut in maintenance of parks, gardens open spaces and sports pitches. It seems extremely foolish to cut in this area when there are already problems with the maintenance and cleanliness of parks and open spaces.

Then there is a reduction in grants for housing advice to voluntary organisations. This will have a devastating effect on several voluntary organisations and could lead to more of Cheltenham's most vulnerable people sleeping on the streets - not to mention a cut in the funding available to voluntary organisations to support the summer play scheme.

Liberal Democrats are concerned about the effects of this budget on the most vulnerable members of the community. Cuts in the grants for organisations that work with disadvantaged young people and people with housing problems are particularly damaging. So is the whopping 10% increase in cemetery and crematorium charges. This will hit bereaved people at a very vulnerable time in their lives, when they have high expenses to meet. The previous Liberal Democrat cabinet held these charges down to inflation last year. None of this would be necessary if the cabinet had looked after its money better when it first came into office."

Martin tells MPs: charity should mean charity

Member of Parliament for Cheltenham and Liberal Democrat charities spokesman **Martin Horwood** has told the House of Commons 'charity should mean charity'. The Cheltenham MP, who has worked himself for charities like **Oxfam** and the **Alzheimer's Society**, was speaking on the final stages of the Charities Bill which includes measures to make life more straightforward for charity treasurers and administrators. He told MPs about local charities including the **National Star College** and **Cheltenham Community Projects** and said many measures in the bill would help them when it became law.



Martin supporting CHILDREN IN NEED with Pudsey Bear in Cheltenham.



Martin helping out the Gloucestershire County Association for the Blind.

But he also called for more action to defend the public against charity scams and a tightening of the 'public benefit' test which will now apply to all charities.

"Charitable status is very valuable to the organisations concerned and a real badge of confidence that the public can trust" said Martin after the debate.

"We must make sure it stays that way. **Charity should mean charity.**"

Local Advice Centre

For those of you who live in the Cheltenham constituency, Martin Horwood M.P. will be holding an advice surgery from **5pm to 7pm** in **St. Margaret's Hall, Coniston Road**, off Windermere Road on **Friday 19th January**.

If you have issues which you need to speak to your M.P. about, do come along at that time.

Martin also holds regular advice surgeries at his office in Hewlett Road. Call **01242 224889** for an appointment.

How to contact your local team

Focus editor Roger Whyborn: 231458 42 Fernleigh Crescent Up Hatherley Cheltenham GL51 3QL whyborns@blueyonder.co.uk	County Councillor Simon Wheeler: 705943 swheeler2@blueyonder.co.uk Member of Parliament (Cheltenham) Martin Horwood: 224889 martin@martinhorwood.net
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Local news in brief

Willow trees on Fernleigh and Long Mynd greens

This has been a long running saga, but the story has reached a conclusion.

The Parish Council originally wanted to cut them down, but Borough Council officers placed a tree preservation order on them in response to local residents' pleas to save the trees.

The Parish Council subsequently agreed a maintenance regime instead of felling the trees, in the light of numerous demands from members of the public.

The planning committee have now determined unanimously to make the preservation orders on the trees permanent, and a regime of pollarding the trees will be put in place. Let's hope it works and they are well maintained.

Max Seaton Award

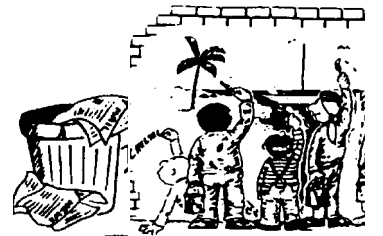
Betty Bushell of **Windermere Road** was highly commended in the Cheltenham Federation of Tenants and Leaseholders "**Max Seaton Award**". Betty ran the **Up Hatherley Over 50's group** for a great many years, until the end of this year

Cabaret Evening

St Margaret's Hall group are running a Cabaret Evening with The Bachelors on **3rd March** at £12 per ticket. Details Clive Taylor, **01242 695387**

Graffiti and fly-tipping

If you have problems with graffiti on your outside walls, fences or garages, the Borough Council will remove it if you ask them. They will need your permission if it is private property. If you have access to the internet you can go to **www.cheltenham.gov.uk** and then click on "Report it", otherwise write or phone (264244). You can report other things on "Report it", such as noisy neighbours, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, pollution, potholes, loose manhole covers etc.



Bill Nawton

Hatherley Residents' Association have arranged for a plaque to be etched and erected in memory of **Bill "Skip" Nawton**, next to the tree on the Scout Hut Grounds. Many thanks to all those who donated towards it.

Penrith Road

We are hoping to get a children's playground in **Penrith Road**. **Hatherley Residents' Association** are in continuing discussions with the Council and with CBH about this.



I/We call on Gloucestershire County Council to re-think it's plans for the Parkway Station at Elmbridge Court.

If Parkway goes ahead then services to and from Cheltenham Spa Station will be drastically reduced.

Name(s)

Address

Postcode

Tel email

or sign on line at: **www.campaigns.libdems.org.uk/saynotoparkway**

Return to:
Liberal Democrats, FREEPOST, SWC 0744 Cheltenham, GL52 6ZZ

The Liberal Democrats would like to use the information above to contact you from time to time to keep you informed of campaigns we may think of interest to you. Please write to us if you do not wish to be contacted in this way.