

Lib Dem budget freezes council tax



Chris Ward welcomes the news that there will be no increase in Cheltenham's Council Tax for a second year in a row.

It's good news for Cheltenham residents. The Liberal Democrat administration on Cheltenham Borough Council has announced that there will be no increase in its council tax precept this year, meaning that council tax for Cheltenham residents will be **FROZEN** for the second year running. Car park charges will also be frozen for the second year in a row. At the same time, frontline council services will be protected.

This very positive result for Cheltenham taxpayers has not been easy to achieve. Although the Government has provided some one-off financial help to keep council tax down, it has cut its on-going support to the council by a further £534,000 in 2012/13. The Council has responded by making big savings in bureaucracy, and radical changes to the way some services are managed, in order to balance the books.

Focus editor **Chris Ward** says: "I know only too well that many people are struggling to make ends meet in the current economic climate. It is right that the council should avoid adding to their burdens."

Albert Road

Albert Road is not safe and something must be done about safety, before a serious accident occurs. That is the view of a large amount of local residents and Pittville Liberal Democrat campaigner Chris Ward.

Several local residents first raised the issue with the Liberal Democrat Focus team, and after finding out residents' opinions on the issue through a survey, it is clear there are some major issues regarding safety on Albert Road. The two most pressing issues being, the **speed** some vehicles travel down Albert Road and the **poorly designed build outs** at the top of the road, which can cause dangerous driving decisions and put the safety of many young people at risk during school hours.

Chris Ward said, "It is clear that many residents of Albert road and roads off feel the safety situation has to be improved before a nasty accident takes place".

The Liberal Democrat focus team will be continuing to campaign on this issue for the foreseeable future in the hope that the safety on Albert road remains a priority.

The two faces of Labour

Most people will remember Labour's deception over the war in Iraq. But Labour's behaviour since going into opposition has been equally deceitful.

They've spent the last two years denying responsibility for the mess they left behind and opposed nearly every measure being taken to rebuild our nation's finances.

And now, as you will have seen in the news, Labour have admitted that they don't have a 'Plan B' for the economy. They now accept the cuts, the public sector pay freeze and more. They have gone from being **in the wrong place** to being **all over the place**.

Against the cuts Labour



For the cuts Labour

- The last Labour Government left Britain's finances in ruins.
- But that hasn't stopped them opposing every measure needed to clean up their mess.
- They've fought election after election telling voters there's an easy way out, but won't say what it is!

- Ed Miliband and Ed Balls have come out and said they accept the cuts and won't reverse them.
- They have called for public sector workers to take pay cuts too.
- Even Labour MPs don't know what to think - no wonder people feel cheated by Labour.



Safety on Albert Road is a major concern for local residents

Gloucestershire Warm and Well

– Keep your home warm and stay well

Gloucestershire Warm and Well offers the opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of your home, reduce the cost of your fuel bills and to reduce associated health problems caused by the cold, meaning you are more comfortable in your home this winter and can stay warm during the cold winter months.

Focus editor Chris Ward said “The Warm and Well scheme offers free advice on saving energy and can help you claim a grant towards the cost of insulation.

If you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit, on a low income or aged over 70, it may be FREE.

If you do not fall into these categories, cavity wall insulation can now be installed from £99 and loft insulation from £149. The total cost of a job for a typical 3 bed semi is £400-£450, so it represents a 75% reduction through grant funding”

For free, impartial advice about this and other energy saving grants and offers call on **0800 512 012**.

The Gloucestershire Warm and Well scheme is funded and managed separately from the Energy Saving Trust Advice Service by the Severn Wye Energy Agency. To apply online visit: www.warmandwell.co.uk.

Tories keep their incinerator plans burning

Lib Dem Councillors from Cheltenham are stepping up opposition to the County Tories ill thought out and expensive plans to build a **£500M** (yes half a billion) incinerator.

At a recent meeting Cheltenham Borough Council agreed a Lib Dem motion asking the county to pause and reconsider the proposals.

The motion asked the County Council to pause and **reconsider their mass waste incinerator proposals.**

We understand the importance of getting the economics of any waste strategy correct, but there is also a need to protect public health and the environment.

There are alternative, smarter UK technologies available. **Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT)** is a fraction of the cost and is now operating at four plants across the South West. Use of MBT technology would push our recycling rates to **over 80%**.



Brown bin garden waste collections

Have you signed up for your brown garden waste bin yet? If not, now is a great time to do so as the Borough Council recently agreed a discount for new users and for those renewing their membership to the scheme within a certain timescale.



If you are a new customer, or if you renew before your renewal date, you will be able to use the scheme for a year for the price of **£34** instead of £36. New sign ups and renewals to the scheme can be done via the council's website, by telephone or by visiting the Municipal Officers.

Also for those living in areas like **Fairview** where there is limited storage for the brown bins, a new bag scheme is being launched where you will be able to buy a roll of disposable bags costing **£1.25 a bag.**

For more information please visit Cheltenham Borough Council website: www.cheltenham.gov.uk or telephone them on **01242 262626**.

Local news in brief

Starvehall Farm

No decision has yet been made on this application, we are still waiting to hear back from the County Council on a number of requests that have been put forward to them by Lib Dem councillors. We will keep you informed of progress.

Sherborne Street

Cheltenham Borough Council's planning committee recently turned down an application to demolish the Sherborne Arms and replace it with seven homes.

The planning committee voted unanimously to refuse the application as it included a lack of parking facilities meaning that any new vehicles would have to park in surrounding streets.

It is likely that the applicant will come back with amended plans which could address the parking concerns and we will update you if this happens.

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



Printed by CLD Print, 16 Hewlett Road, Cheltenham. Published and promoted by Alistair Cameron on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, all at 16 Hewlett, Road, Cheltenham, GL52 6AA.

How to contact us



Martin Horwood MP
T: 01242 224889
martin@martinhorwood.net



Chris Ward
07913 008770
pittvillefocus@gmail.com

Can you help us?

Would you consider delivering the Focus newsletter near your home every couple of months? If so please contact Chris Ward for more details.



The Liberal Democrats are committed to working with local people to improve local neighbourhoods.

If there is a problem you want to see sorted out, have a good idea for improving our area, or just want to get more involved with the local community yourself, please contact any of the team above or write to:

Liberal Democrats, FREEPOST SWC 0744, 16 Hewlett Road, GL52 6AA