

Spring 2009

FOCUS

On Barham Downs Ward

www.cantlibdems.com

GOING TO POT-HOLES!



The state of our roads has been getting worse for years. There are more and more cracks and holes and Kent Highways are falling further and further behind the necessary rate for repairs.

Then it only takes a cold and icy winter to really break up road surfaces and that is just what we have had in recent weeks. The Highways teams are struggling manfully to fill up the holes, but these are only temporary repairs and another period of bad weather will undo all their efforts.

"This just isn't good enough" says FOCUS Team leader **Nigel Whitburn**. "Tory run Kent County Council is continually reorganising the Highways Department. The money being wasted on office moves and staff changes would be better spent trying to bring our roads up to scratch."

"All along our rural roads there are massive holes that could rip open tyres and cause an accident. It is widely recognised that Kent's rural roads are unfit for purpose" added Nigel. "High time they became a priority for this county council. Let's invest in our roads rather than pet schemes like Kent TV."



Covet Lane, Kingston



Covet Lane, Kingston



Rabbit Hole, Barham



Station Road, Adisham



The Street, Adisham

An embarrassing collection of potholes in the area.

Freedom Pass Doesn't Go Far Enough

Nigel Whitburn says " I welcome the county council Freedom Pass, which makes it possible for young people aged 11 to 16 to use the buses to get to school, or to get into town in their leisure time.

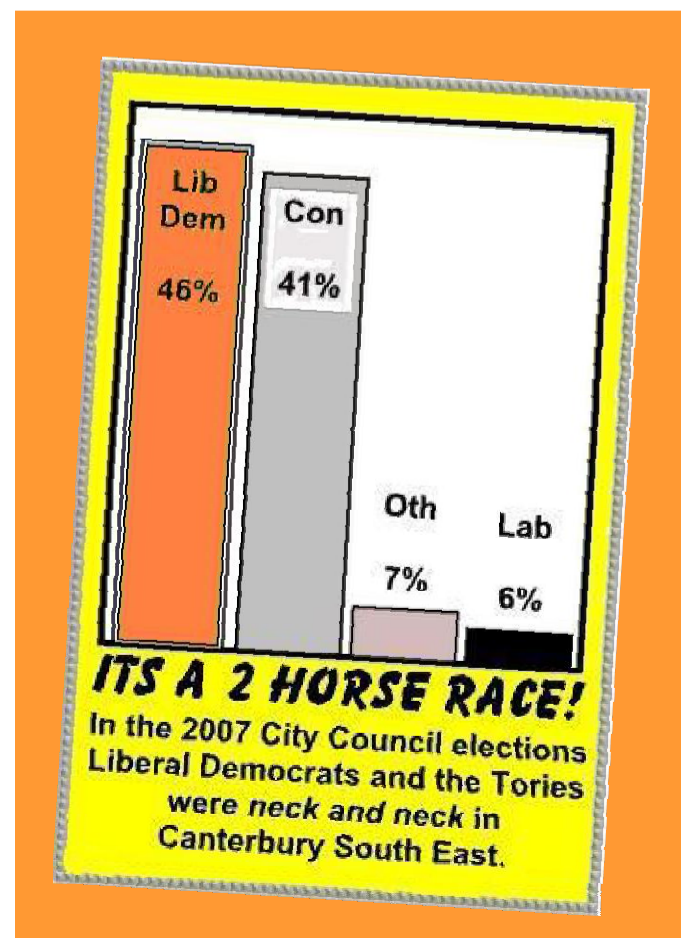


Further work needs to be done, though. The pass isn't much use if you don't have a bus service!

The county council should do more to ensure that bus services do exist from our villages. They should also plan to extend the scheme to young people aged 16 to 19 as this would encourage more students to stay in full-time education.

Southeastern Railway should accept the pass on trains, for example from Adisham or Bekesbourne to Canterbury.

There are not enough things for young people to do in the villages, and they need to be able to get into and out of town easily and safely."



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Kent County Council "Negligent"

The Conservative administration at Kent County Council has been branded 'negligent' by the Audit Commission for failing to take action three years ago to protect council taxpayers' money.



Guy Voizey

Guy Voizey, parliamentary spokesman for Canterbury and Whitstable Liberal Democrats, said, "The Audit Commission's criticism of Kent County Council is valid. Kent County Council was effectively gambling with council taxpayers' money, seeking high interest rates when investing this cash without paying sufficient regard to the associated risk. The first responsibility of the council is to ensure the money they collect from taxpayers remains available to spend in our schools, on social services and to repair our roads and pavements. By failing to ensure adequate internal controls were in place and by failing to understand the risks associated with investments in the Icelandic banks, the Conservative administration at Kent County Council has put badly needed services at risk."

Find out more at
www.guyvoizey.org.uk

Aylesham Expansion

The plans for major housing developments in Aylesham have caused concern for residents in Adisham and Womenswold for some time now. The FOCUS Team is keeping a close eye on the situation. We, along with parish councils and local residents say that the developers must pay for road improvements in the neighbouring villages. The extra traffic on our roads will be substantial. The county council must put pressure on Dover District Council to ensure the developer pays for safety measures on the B2046, along Station Road and Adisham Downs Road.

No Flooding This Year?

Residents along the Nailbourne are always a little apprehensive when there is prolonged heavy rain. They remember the damaging floods of 2000/01.

The FOCUS Team keep in close touch with the Environment Agency, who are responsible for flood management.

"After Christmas we asked whether there was any likelihood of the Nailbourne flooding," reports **Martin Vye**. "We received a reassuring reply. There was higher than average rainfall in most winter months, and groundwater levels rose sharply, resulting in some flow in the Nailbourne. However, the Environment Agency said that it had not reached the level experienced in 2000, and they did not anticipate flooding."



Cllr Martin Vye (right) shows the new Valley Road culvert in Barham to Parliamentary Spokesman Guy Voizey and Nigel Whitburn

Nevertheless we all need to be vigilant, and report any debris that might block the stream. It is good to see the expansion of the culvert on Valley Road, Barham completed---the old bridge caused flooding in 2001. However we will keep up pressure on the county council to do the work planned on the bridge at the bottom of the Street.

No Double Taxation

There are some services for local people which the City Council carries out in the urban areas, and which parish councils carry out in our villages. Recreation grounds and play areas for example.

A few years back it was established that village residents should not have to pay twice - through Council Tax for work done in the city, and through the Parish precept for work done by the parish Council. It was agreed that Parish Councils should be reimbursed for the money they used to provide these services.

However, for the second year running the Conservative administration in Canterbury tried to reduce the amount paid to parish councils for the coming year.

We told them we were not having it - and we are glad to say they have backed down, and are paying for services in full after all!

Pedestrian Bridge A Step Closer?

At long last it seems a pedestrian bridge might soon be built over the A2 at Kingston. Lib Dem County Council Spokesman **Nigel Whitburn** has learnt that the Department for Transport has allocated funding for this project during 2009-10.

Discussions about the design of the bridge are taking place between contractors and Kent Downs A.O.N.B. and the K.C.C. Public Rights of Way team. It is important that any construction is designed in a sensitive and attractive manner as it will be located in a sensitive spot.

It must be hoped that this funding is not clawed back by the Treasury as a means of reducing public expenditure during the recession and that work will soon be under way.

More news when we get it!

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* A donation of £10 or more entitles you to membership of the Lib Dems. Please tick the box if you do not wish to become a member.

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