

What happened to our improvement money?

When Queen Elizabeth Park was given planning permission, a sum of money was made available for environmental improvements in the area. Several years later, we are still waiting. Focus tracks our money...

1) Wooden Bridge (A3 Footbridge)

The plans developed by Guildford Borough Council and approved by local councillors were rejected by the Highways Agency. New plans are being worked on which will hopefully be more acceptable.

2) Worplesdon Road Shopping Parade

Designs for upgrading the pedestrian area whilst trying to retain some parking are being worked on but have yet to be completed.

3) Worplesdon Road (South Section)

This project has been incorporated into a wider project to resurface the entire road and insert a cycle lane. Joining the projects together makes them more cost effective, although it means that the environmental improvements cannot start until after the County Council has completed their roadworks.

Wait

Local Liberal Democrat councillors are unhappy about the amount of time it has taken for the improvements to take place.

Cllr **Jayne Marks** said, "We will keep pressing both councils to get on with the work which Stoughton has been promised and is now long overdue."

Cllr **Pauline Searle** added, "It has taken far too long for the people of Stoughton to see the benefit of this money that they are owed."



Lib Dem Cllr **Pauline Searle** at the wooden bridge. Stoughton is still waiting to see the new plans.

Latest News:

Stoughton

Community Centre

Your local Liberal Democrat councillors want to hear your views on the latest plans for Stoughton Community Centre.

The saga continues unresolved and a new planning application was submitted just before Christmas. This time the application comprises a two floor community centre alongside office space - as opposed to residential flats.



The planning officers are now considering the application, which should come before the planning committee soon.

Cllr **Fiona White** said, "Of course I can not comment on a planning application before it comes before committee but we want to hear the views of the community on the application - whether positive or negative."

Contact your local Focus team

Meet your Lib Dem Councillor: If you have an issue that you would like help with, we hold a surgery at Millmead on the first Thursday of every month from 6.30pm. Ring 306000 to book an appointment with a Borough or County Councillor.

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FOCUS
on Stoughton

Spring 2006
LIBERAL
DEMOCRATS

Grange Road set for more overcrowding?

Plans for more new houses on already busy road

Despite Lib Dem Cllr Pauline Searle recently delivering a petition to the Tory-run County Council about traffic problems in Grange Road, another planned development has come to light.

Northmead School wants to build a further sixteen houses on woodland near the railway line, on top of the eleven already approved last year.

A new close would come out on to Grange Road, creating further traffic problems near the school. It is expected that the development plans will come before Guildford Borough Council soon.

The School is aiming to use the money raised to build a new wing for a creative arts centre, which will be available for local groups as well.



Above: Cllr Jayne Marks (left) and Cllr Pauline Searle (right) discuss the latest planning application at Northmead with a local resident. **Inset:** Cars are often unable to squeeze past buses on the narrow road.

They will also provide ten parking spaces for Grange Road residents.

Cllr **Pauline Searle** said, "I think the arts centre will be fantastic but it seems madness that Northmead needs to raise money like this when

across the road the County are making thousands from selling so-called redundant school buildings. "Why can't the sale money fund this building to stop more development in an already overcrowded road?"

Local Youth Clubs under threat from Tory cuts

Conservative-run Surrey County Council is planning to close Stoughton and Bellfields youth clubs.

The County Council's plans will see fifteen fewer youth clubs across Surrey. Some local communities will inevitably be left without a local youth club.

Cllr **Fiona White** said, "Nobody likes having large groups of kids hanging

Lib Dems = Lower Taxes
Council tax rises, 2006

Tory SCC +5%	Tory GBC +2.48%	Lib Dem GBC Proposal +1.85%
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See inside for a special report on how the Tories tax you high and waste your money



Cllr **Fiona White** (second from left) and fellow Lib Dem Cllrs at under threat Stoughton youth club.

Join the Winning Team!

Do you want to help the Liberal Democrats? Return this slip to:

Guildford Lib Dems, Freepost SCE 15741, Guildford GU1 1BR.

I can deliver some leaflets in my area

I can display a poster at election time

I can help with stuffing envelopes

I can make a donation of £ _____

(A donation of £6+ entitles you to party membership. If you do not wish to join or already belong, tick here

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Email _____

Local news and action all year round

Focus Special: How the Tories waste YOUR taxes

1) £1.5million prestige plan 2) Council builds war chest

The bill for the Tories' new reception area at the council offices has now climbed to £1,500,000 - as opposed to the £1,000,000 that Focus reported at the end of last year.

Apparently the aim is "to improve disabled access and to upgrade facilities." However, the reception area is fully compliant with disability requirements and the plans cut the number of parking spaces, **reducing accessibility!**

Cllr Pauline Searle said, "This is quite clearly a prestige project and an absolutely appalling waste of money."

How should this be spent?

Only a few changes are needed to help the disabled - such as better lighting and moveable seating - and to improve public safety by relocating deliveries to the rear of the building. These would not cost £1,500,000.

What do you think?

What would you spend the money on? Safety schemes such as better street lighting and CCTV? Environmental improvements such as better parks and cleaner streets? Facilities like community halls and sports courts?

Let us know your views

Do you agree that the Tory scheme represents appalling value for money? Would you like to see the money better spent? Please get in touch using the contact details on the back.



3) Waste at County Hall



wasted by mismanagement.

During the last year £15 million has been spent on expensive agency costs resulting from poor retention and recruitment policies at County Hall.

Money has also been wasted on expensive external consultants, called in to try to save money! Another £4 million has been spent on a failed initiative to move the County Offices from Kingston to Woking.

Millions of pounds of your money is being wasted by Conservative-run Surrey County Council.

Anger is growing as local council taxpayers learn that Surrey's portion of council tax is to soar by more than double the rate of inflation - while some services face being cut and money is

With borough council elections in 2007, Guildford Conservatives have once again chosen to use council tax to build up their "war chest".

As well as a "parking reserve" of £100,000 started last year, we taxpayers are now adding to an "Invest to Save" fund of £300,000.

Lib Dems voted against this and instead proposed increasing council tax by just 1.85% - below the rate of inflation - while improving many services, such as:

✓ **Extending plastic collection throughout Guildford – nothing in Tory budget.**

✓ Reducing litter with a rapid response team – street cleanliness is less than half Tories' own target.

✓ **More resource for on-street parking – cut time for lengthy reviews and look into car-share schemes.**

✓ Enhancing CCTV recording equipment - backed by police.

✓ **Retain Nippy Chipper service – being axed by the Conservatives.**

The Liberal Democrats also sought: a commitment towards running the Civic when reopened; collections of food waste; and to restore funding for smaller local projects that have been neglected recently.

The Tories rejected ALL of these proposals and the borough's share of council tax will go up by 2.48% - more than Lib Dem-run neighbour Waverley Borough Council.

Civic Hall - the saga grinds on

Two years after the Tories decided to close the Civic to avoid spending £81,500 to keep it open, they still have no confirmed plans for a replacement.

The net cost to build a 'state of the art' new Civic, as promised by the Tories, has rocketed from £2m in 2001 to £20m.

They are reluctantly considering refurbishing the existing building – but are still wedded to unnecessary extravagance.

Consultants' plans for development of flats and parking alongside the Civic would not be compatible with refurbishment.

Now the Tories are talking to the University about combining the town's Civic Hall with a Performing Arts Centre on campus.

The cost of consultants so far is nearly £1 million – and rising fast.

Cllr Fiona White said, "This situation is getting beyond a joke. The people of Guildford have waited far too long for the Tories to get their act together."



Did You Know?

After voting down a Lib Dem proposal last year for kerbside collection of plastics, the Tories did a u-turn and a trial scheme is starting in some wards shortly - but sadly not in Stoughton.

They have refused a Lib Dem suggestion to extend plastics collections in 2006/7 and to start planning for composting of kitchen waste by 2007/8.

BOOK SALE

Saturday 24 June
St Joseph's Church Hall,
York Rd

Free entry - refreshments - thousands of second hand books, CDs, vinyls and tapes

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