

Repair delay threat to Christchurch Tower



A proposal by the Conservatives to stop £150,000 of repairs needed to Folkestone's Christchurch Tower has been slammed by local Liberal Democrats.

In 2006, a survey was made of the 158 year old tower's condition and £145,000 for repairs was put into the Council budget over the next 2 years.

A Shepway Council report suggests removing those funds from the Council's budget. It says last year's earthquake had "seismically tested" the tower - but also proposed to build a fence around the tower as a precaution.

Lib Dem Campaigner Neil Matthews said:

"Many local people had their house 'tested' in the earthquake in 2007, and have had to make expensive repairs since. If big repairs were needed to Christchurch Tower two years ago, then an earthquake and two years wait will hardly have made things better!

"Leaving the tower to decay or fencing it off would be a disgrace. A fence would look awful and block access to the Burma Star memorial. The required repairs should be made, and quickly, before any more stone falls from the tower. What would happen if someone was hit?"

Neil Matthews and Folkestone Councillor Gary Fuller: "Looking around the tower you can see stones which may well have fallen from the tower. To say that the tower being 'tested' by the earthquake in 2007 means that repairs are not needed is incredible."

Shepway Lib Dems have selected Neil Matthews as their Parliamentary Candidate for the next General Election.

Neil has lived in the constituency for over 20 years with his family, and has served as a Parish Councillor, including as Chair and Vice Chair, Town Councillor, Mayor of Hythe and District Councillor.

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New £25 Tory Parking Tax?

The Lib Dems have condemned Conservative proposals to charge residents £25 per car for kerbside parking.

A Lib Dem motion for a "first permit free" scheme was voted down by the Conservatives. Folkestone Councillor Peter Carroll commented:

"There are major parking problems in some roads, but a flat £25 fee for every car of every local household is wrong. Local businesses will have to pay £100's to park, and shoppers will have the existing free parking replaced with Pay and Display.

"A good scheme could really help resolve parking issues in local roads. A bad one will just be ANOTHER tax on local residents from Shepway's Conservative Council."

Got a Problem locally? Tell us!

 My View:

Can you help us?

I can help deliver Focus in my area
Focus is delivered by volunteers. We aim to produce one every 6 weeks and it should take no more than an hour.

I would like to join the Lib Dems
Being a member doesn't mean you have to be active. We are not funded by big businesses or trade unions, just our members and supporters. Membership costs a minimum of just £10 a year.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

I would like to receive regular email news from the Lib Dems (please add email address)

The Liberal Democrats and their elected representatives may use the information you have provided to contact you from time to time about issues we think you may find of interest. Some of the contacts may be automated. You can opt out of some or all contacts at any time by contacting us.

Please return to: East Ward Lib Dems
FREEPOST CU592 FolkestoneCT20 3BR

The Liberal Democrat team is here for you.

If you have a problem, please get in touch or use the form above and send to our FREEPOST address - East Ward Lib Dems, FREEPOST CU592, Folkestone CT20 3BR.

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Shepway Community Chest 2008: Can YOUR group apply?

Shepway Council have announced £68,500 funding in 2008/09 to registered charities or not-for-profit groups in the Shepway District area for schemes and projects in the area.

Projects seeking funding are required to help the Council address at least one of the following:

- Improve the appearance of the District
- Regenerate our communities
- Improve opportunities for sport, leisure and culture

Grant offers will not exceed £5,000, with the exception of one large grant of £20,000 which will be considered at the second grant advisory panel meeting. Decisions will be made in two rounds, the closing dates for which are:

Round One - 12 noon Monday 1st September 2008
Round Two - 12 noon Monday 3rd November 2008

Projects will need to have started before the end of March 2009 and to have been completed within 12

months of the grant being offered.

For more information contact David Illsley on 01303 853 474, dave.illsley@shepway.gov.uk or Melanie Waltham-Smith 01303 853 402, melanie.waltham-smith@shepway.gov.uk.

Departure of Martin Salmon and Anthony Dunning

As you may have heard, East ward Councillors Martin Salmon and Anthony Dunning have joined the Conservatives.

Many local residents will be disappointed with their decision. In the last year, the Conservatives have introduced a £35 garden tax on users of brown top bins and have proposed charging residents £25 per car for kerbside parking. The Lib Dems opposed these new taxes.

Your remaining Lib Dem team remain committed to standing up for East ward against new taxes.

By-election Success

Lib Dem Season Prater stormed to victory in the recent by-election to Sandgate Council. Season won more than 58% of the votes beating the Conservatives into a poor second place.

New Councillor Season said:

"Thanks to everyone in Sandgate Valley for the fantastic reception they have given me and the Lib Dem team.

"The Conservatives in Sandgate and in Shepway have been taking the voters for granted. They have made a series of unpopular and bad decisions, and I will work to hold them to account and stand up for local people."

Folkestone's Zero Heroes

Folkestone's Lib Dem Group helped secure a zero percent rise in Folkestone Council's council tax this year - for the second time running!

The budget spent allocated more to local events and services but froze the tax charged to local residents. In contrast, Conservative Hythe Town Council put up their tax by nearly 15%, with Conservative Shepway and Kent Councils also increasing their tax rates.

Lib Dem Councillor Tom McNeice said:

"It was disappointing to hear some Folkestone Councillors suggest taxes should rise simply to put more money into increasing already good Council reserves. The Lib Dems understand that tax money is not Council money, it's local people's money."