

The Liberal Democrat Manifesto for Hertfordshire

These are Our Priorities

1. Looking after the Old and Vulnerable

A Liberal Democrat County Council will reverse

- the cuts already made to those suffering homelessness
- the proposed cuts in day centres for older and vulnerable people
- the funding cuts for the voluntary sector

Over the years voluntary sector organisations have provided high quality services which help the vulnerable and at a lower cost than the council could ever achieve. Without their help, costs will rise and council taxpayers' money will be wasted.

2. Making Hertfordshire Healthy

The NHS is currently cutting the money it pays the County Council to look after vulnerable people. We will press for closer working between the County Council and the NHS to make sure bad practice is driven out and patients have the best possible care from Hertfordshire health bodies.

We will protect the County Council's public health budget and ensure that prevention and healthy lifestyles are seen as the key way of minimising the incidence of diseases like diabetes and stroke.

3. Providing More School Places

The Conservatives have been too slow to spot areas where there is a shortage of school places, and too slow to find new sites or increase the sizes of existing schools.

Liberal Democrats will

- improve planning to prevent problems
- allocate places better to cut travel distances
- forge stronger links with schools in our county
- resist attempts by the current Government to reintroduce selection

All selection does is ensure that most children from the age of 11 are permanently disadvantaged in life

4. A Better Deal on Highways and Pavements

The Conservative's highway maintenance is failing.

A Liberal Democrat County Council would:

- be tougher with failing highways contractors
- clean out roadside gulleys **at least** annually

- maintain full winter gritting to keep schools and town centres safe
- give 20 mph zones a much higher priority

A large number of people are keen to ensure that there are 20 mph zones in town centres but the County Council is pitifully slow in responding.

5. Sort Out Public Transport

A Liberal Democrat County Council will:

- be pro-active and innovative in developing integrated public transport links
- review supported bus services so timetables and routes match current travel patterns
- press for improved rail franchise agreements and a better deal for commuters
- press government for greater control over local public transport and bus services
- seek to make public transport the norm and save our cities from jams and pollution

6. Make the Money Go Further

A Liberal Democrat County Council will:

- axe excessive expenditure on publicity and prestige publications
- improve the procurement and management of outsourcing contracts to get better value for money
- work more closely with district council, police, NHS and other agencies to reduce duplication of services and buildings
- devolve appropriate functions to district, parish and town councils

Nigel says, "Lib Dem membership has soared since June. We won another seat in Parliament in December and our net gain of over 30 council by election seats almost mirrors a Conservative net loss of the same size. People are now heartily sick of self-centred right wing politics and are joining the Liberal Democrats.

Why don't you come aboard? Whatever your background, if you value freedom and tolerance, you'd be very welcome!

Join online on www.libdems.org.uk or contact Nigel Taylor on nigel.t@which.com



**THE CONSERVATIVES HAVE RUN THE COUNTY COUNCIL SINCE 1999
Now They Run the Government Too. They are the Problem - not the Solution!**

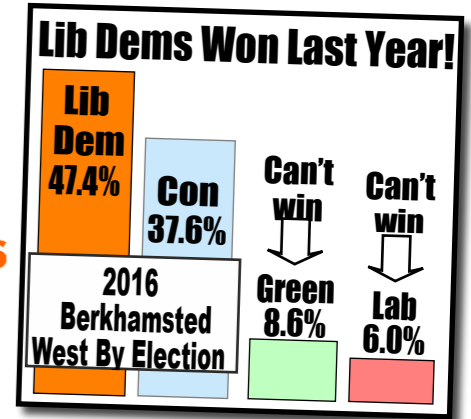
Berkhamsted DEMOCRAT



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It's Time for a Change at County Hall!

Berkhamsted is a town with history, with civic pride and citizen involvement. It is prosperous, but caring, and a town which combines strong self-respect with a deep sense of community.

Time and again local people have made valuable contributions to the development of the town - from comments on individual planning applications to assessments of larger schemes. There is a wealth of expertise amongst citizens and an ability to participate and contribute.

All this was amply demonstrated by the Bee Hive exercises which provided such good advice and feedback to improve the Library and Police Station redevelopments.

The County Council also benefited greatly from well attended consultation days and seminars, enabling them to tap into residents' local knowledge and views. This was invaluable in finalising the improvement schemes in the local Urban Transport Plan.

A Multi-Level Mistake for Our Town

Cllr Nick Hollinghurst, who was a Dacorum councillor at the time said, "I was in the DBC Council Chamber when the Multi-Storey Car Park was announced - like a rabbit pulled out of a magician's hat. It came to a budget debate late in the day, but fresh from the Conservative Group Meeting. As far as the Leader of Dacorum Borough Council was concerned it was a done deal right from the start."



Since then many people have pointed to the obvious flaws both in design and siting. Set in the heart of the town where there is an almost continuous traffic jam, it will produce a wave of extra congestion twice a day as cars surge in and out every morning and evening.

Apart from inconvenience and waste of time, this will add to the existing exhaust pipe pollution such as NO₂ and PM_{2.5} particles. It is now clear these can produce longterm health problems.

Now you might have thought that the views of local people and of the local town councillors would have been taken into account, but at least 4 of the Town Councillors felt the consultation with them had been totally inadequate. A Tory councillor resigned in protest, and, in the ensuing election, the voters passed judgement on the majority party by voting in Liberal Democrat Gordon Yearwood as a replacement.

Not Listening to Us - Again!

This failure of consultation is not an isolated incident. It arises from a fundamental flaw in the politics of Berkhamsted. At County, Borough and Town Council **the same party** - the Conservative Party - has a large majority. There are 6 Town Councillors who are also members of the Group that runs DBC and a seventh is a member of Tory-run Herts County Council. It's plain to see how your Town Council is in the pocket of the Dacorum Tories, who are part of the same group that runs the County.

Our representation is out of balance. Most of those representing you and the town have the same political bias.

What the Tories decide in Hertford or Hemel Hempstead today, you get in Berkhamsted tomorrow.

But you now have a chance to make a change for the better. Vote for **Nigel Taylor** and elect a Liberal Democrat Councillor with an independent outlook - and *with the freedom to represent you better!*



Nigel Taylor

Like many people in Berkhamsted, Nigel Taylor has moved to the area for a better quality of life - and he's delighted with Berkhamsted and its surroundings. Now working in Milton Keynes, Nigel has cut his daily commute, appreciates the benefits a smooth train ride to work and is enjoying the friendly atmosphere of a small town, steeped in history and surrounded by beautiful countryside.

Nigel says, "In my day job at Network Rail I'm always looking for ways we can make the railway run better. I believe there are also opportunities to improve our lives in the same way. I work in the transport sector and of course personal and public transport are two key ingredients of modern life that bring with them huge benefits - but also some obvious difficulties."

While rail transport can be fast and direct, if you need to travel to the centre of a large town, access to local stations can be problematic. Although some can reach a station by bus, on foot or by bike this is not practical for

Nigel Taylor is the Liberal Democrat candidate in the Herts County Council Elections on May 4th

SOUTHERN COMMUTERS HIT AGAIN

More misery for Southern commuters as a result of the dispute between the Unions and Government.

Southern normally offers an excellent direct service from Berkhamsted to Croydon and Clapham Junction - allowing passengers to reach destinations across the south of England without the need to go through London. They also run trains to Milton Keynes, an increasingly popular commuter route.

Most people have given up on Southern. Because London Midland also runs trains on this route they don't think it matters if they cancel trains. But it causes considerable inconvenience to travellers.

It's time the Government took responsibility and sorted out the mess.

YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO COMPENSATION

Yes, really! Southern have said they will refund one month's cost for season tickets between Milton Keynes and Clapham Junction or any other two stations they serve. See

<http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/customer-services/compensation-announcement/>

But be quick - this might be withdrawn without much notice

Towns are for People - Let's Make them Good Places to Live in.

everyone. Many people are dependent on the car to get to the station.

As a relative newcomer to the town Nigel was very surprised by the proposal for the Multi-Storey Car Park. Although from Dacorum Council's point of view it is a convenient location because they own the land - for several other reasons it is a very bad idea.

Nigel says, "Given the narrow streets, the tightly confined cross roads, the tidal flow to the nearby station car park that already exists and the need to reduce pollution from vehicles this scheme seems not to have been thought through. The County Council is extremely unhappy about the traffic implications and I am not surprised."

"DBC's land is a valuable asset but it could be used for a residential or commercial development that would generate the resources to fund a more appropriate solution to the parking and station access problems. One idea is to expand the existing station car park. Currently it has a second level but this covers less than half of the ground level space. If this were expanded to cover the whole of the ground level, it could make a significant contribution to parking in the town. Meanwhile other dispersed sites for residents parking should be sought."

BERKHAMSTED STILL PLAGUED WITH POTHOLES

Local Lib Dems have been shocked by figures from the County Council, showing spending on maintenance and improvements of roads and pavements has been **cut every year over the past four years.**

Spending dropped from £39.2 million in 2013-14 to £30.1 million this year.

Cllr Garrick Stevens, said, "The Conservatives are always telling us that spending on roads is going up. However, figures provided by council officers show that in fact this spending has fallen every year for four years.

"The council is promising an increase next year. They did exactly the same this time last year but instead *we saw another fall.*"

"No wonder local residents are complaining more and more about potholed roads and trip hazards on pavements".



Onwards and Upwards as the Liberal Democrats go from Strength to Strength

Under their new leader, **Tim Farron MP** the Liberal Democrats have recovered from the hard knocks of the General Election. Membership has steadily increased from that point and is now in excess of 84,000. Locally and nationally the Liberal Democrats have been winning by elections, from a seat on Berkhamsted Town Council last February to the Parliamentary seat of **Richmond Park** before Christmas. And along the way we won the council by election of **Gade Valley** and so **regained control of Three Rivers District Council.**



Tim Farron MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Andrew Horton, Chair of the Berkhamsted & Tring Lib Dems said, "There's no doubt the tide has turned. Labour are in pieces. The Conservatives look like going down in history as the people who lost us the City of London. Young people are angry about the loss of their rights and their future. Old people face eroded pensions. Couples starting out can scarcely afford a home.

There's never been a time when Liberal Democrats have been more needed."

The picture shows Cllr Ron Tindall, the Liberal Democrat Spokesman for Adult Care at Herts County Council and Nigel Taylor, who is standing in the County Council elections on 4th May as the Liberal Democrat candidate for Berkhamsted.

Serious Funding Gap for Adult Care

Cllr Tindall told local party members in Dacorum that Hertfordshire was facing a serious and ongoing deficit in the funds it needs to look after the county's old people. He said, "Right across the UK, councils are in difficulties. On the one hand the population is getting older, with all the health problems that go with that, councils are faced with rising costs and now need to pay the living wage. On the other hand, councils' ability to raise more council tax is being restricted **at the same time as central government support is being withdrawn.**"



An Unfair Tax

Cllr Tindall continued, "Relaxing the restrictions on council tax increases to plug the gap might seem acceptable - but it isn't. **Council tax is a very unfair tax.** In parts of London multi-millionaires are actually paying less than nurses or care workers in a neighbouring borough."

"Poor people pay a much higher proportion of their income in council tax than the rich. In places like Hertfordshire it means that the needs of the extremely poor are being paid for by other poor people."

A Glimmer of Hope?

Nigel Taylor pointed out that Norman Lamb MP, the Liberal Democrat Spokesman on Health and a former Care Minister, had launched a cross-party campaign to overhaul the way the NHS and council social care departments work together. He said, "Norman Lamb is well respected and is having some success in attracting support. This is the kind of initiative that could reduce bed blocking in hospitals. Cracking that problem would be a huge benefit to old people and their families and it would pay for itself many times over."

To contact Berkhamsted Liberal Democrats call 01442 731783 or mail Nigel Taylor on nigel.t@which.net