

Northchurch DEMOCRAT



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Lib Dems en marche!
The Dacorum contingent marching for co-operation and freedom.



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The Liberal Democrats have more members nationally than the Conservatives. This makes them UK's second largest political party



So are you **Young?** ...or **Young at Heart?**
Do you prefer **co-operation** to competition?
Do you want a **better future**... rather than the false dawn of a rose-tinted past?



- Do you value **personal responsibility and restraint**, to egotism and conflict?
- Do you prefer **fairness of opportunity** to the maintenance of privilege?
- Do you prefer **solidarity** to selfishness? **Opportunity** to oppression? **Encouragement** to control?
- Do you believe **reward should come from merit**, not from entitlement or social origins?
- Do you believe we have a common interest to **mitigate the disadvantage and misfortune** of others?
- Do you believe we should **help people to make the most of their lives** - irrespective of background, ethnicity, aptitude or handicaps?
- Do you believe **education enhances opportunities and choices** in people's lives?
- Do you believe that **modern states need firmer foundations than ethnicity or a dominant culture**?
- Do you believe that all human beings should have **equal respect**?

If most or all of this reflects your views... then why not join the *Hundred Thousand Plus* who have already made the Liberal Democrats their political home?

To join the Liberal Democrats: visit our web site <http://www.libdems.org.uk> go to <http://www.libdems.org.uk/join> or phone Lara Pringle on 01442 876234 or e-mail lara.pringle@yahoo.co.uk

Help us Redress the Balance!

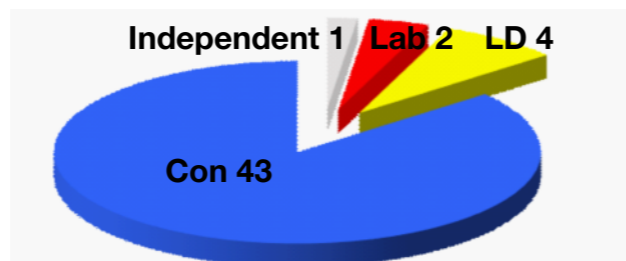
Lara says, "Dacorum is full of caring pro-social people but has two uninspiring Tory MPs and a badly run Borough Council. People are outward-looking and engaged and charitable giving is high. It's not the sort of place where you'd expect to find a Tory majority."

Now the Tories are split and the council is in crisis. Support us to bring change to Dacorum."

People Deserve Better Run Councils

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The Current Composition of Dacorum Borough Council



This simply doesn't represent the spread of opinion in our Borough

The Liberal Democrats have chosen a Local Candidate for the Northchurch By-Elections

Lara Pringle is no stranger to local politics. She is an experienced campaigner and is standing for both the Parish and Borough Council Seats.



'Your Voice at Dacorum'

Lara Pringle lives in Northchurch with her husband and their two young sons, both of whom attended St Marys Primary School

Vote for Lara Pringle on March 8th for Northchurch Parish and for Dacorum

The Liberal Democrats



- Listen to Local People and Stay in Touch
- Campaign for Better Roads and Transport
- Make the Case for Improved Local Services
- Insist on Good Governance and Transparency on Local Councils at all Levels

Lara Pringle - backed by an Effective Team

The Liberal Democrats:

- have had experience in government bringing in **tax and pension reform**, fighting for a **better NHS**, **greener energy** and **fair and effective economic policies**
- run **Watford Borough** and **Three Rivers District Councils**
- Are the **Opposition** on **Herts County Council**
- are strongly represented on local **Town and Parish Councils**



Our Sports Centres - “A History of Neglect and a Procurement Disaster”



The Dacorum Tories Want to Privatise Our Sports Centres

Lara says the Tender Process was Flawed

When Lara Pringle went to the Dacorum Council Meeting on 17th January she felt her Liberal Democrat colleagues had done well in forcing the Council to re-consider their sports contract procurement. Not only did they have the support of Labour, but also of a few brave Tories.

Protest from the Public

Eight members of the public, all experts in sports management, spoke well and persuasively. One spoke of Sportspace’s work helping disadvantaged groups, another of their nationally recognised success of Sportspace in developing participation in sports and a third of the company’s strong public service ethos.

Sportspace themselves reminded people how the supporting grant from Dacorum had come down from £1.4 m to £250,000 a year, how they had attracted £5.3 m of external funding that Dacorum couldn’t get, while also re-investing £8 m.

Protest from Councillors

Opposition councillors said that the re-tendering was unnecessary, the value had not been demonstrated and the specification failed to take account of Sportspace’s financial success, their development work, their community involvement, and their public service ethos.

They also said the tenders were evaluated with, in practice, more weight given to finance than the 40% factor claimed by Dacorum.

The tender did not allow for a fair scoring of

Sportspace’s good safety record and didn’t recognise any community benefits at all.

Moreover the Tories were ignoring the odd corporate structure of the successful bidder, which shows a trading company within the private sector group being somehow registered as a charity. This is a risky tax strategy which could turn into a serious expense if disallowed by the authorities in the future.

Tory Vote to Ignore Protest Despite Split

However Lara became increasingly dismayed by the stubborn attitude of the majority Tory councillors. None of the points made by either the opposing councillors were really addressed, let alone accepted - so when it came to a vote she was not surprised that 24 Tories voted against reviewing their earlier decision and the opposition proposal was voted down despite 10 votes in favour.

This shows that the Lib Dems were quite justified in calling this decision back to the council for debate. Their arguments resulted in 3 Tories voting against their party and won support from the one independent plus Labour.

In addition there was a very high number of Tory abstentions and absences. They are split on the issue and the result also means that this policy is supported by fewer than half of the DBC councillors.

Lara’s Comments

Lara said afterwards, “This procurement process is **completely opaque**. Key financial details are hidden from the public. One Tory councillor actually said that she’d vote on figures that she’d seen - but she couldn’t tell us what they were!”

“It is also **flawed**. Initially Dacorum only got one bidder - Sportspace - but then they extended the tender period rather than negotiate. It also looks as though the specification might have been set up to exclude Sportspace.”

“Finally, we need to know where the capital is to come from for the much needed repair and refurbishment? The buildings in Berkhamsted and Tring have been badly neglected for some time and promised refurbishment is delayed over and over again.

This is a disastrous procurement process and something I am determined to help to expose. ”

“No Lockfield houses before New Road Traffic is Sorted Out!”, Says Lara



Lockfield, off New Road is being considered for development after 2031, At the moment it is railway land and provides an access to the track from a public road. As such it is infrequently used and generates very little traffic. In the left hand picture you can see Lara Pringle discussing the matter with her Lib Dem colleague, Tring County Councillor, Nick Hollinghurst. They both agreed that residential development would result in significantly more traffic to and from the site - and on a daily basis.

Lara explained to Nick that there are huge traffic issues in Northchurch in general with New Road now taking far more traffic than ever before. The narrow bridge acts as a chicane but does not always slow the traffic down. Sometimes traffic actually speeds up to cross the bridge before someone else.

Lara feels that New Road and the High Street are both part of the same problem. She said, “I very much support the move towards much support the group campaigning for 20 mph speed restrictions, but I feel it should include New Road and start near the junction with Bridgewater Hill.”

She continued, “Personally I feel that the site is completely unsuitable for housing. I certainly

wouldn’t want to live so close to a high speed rail line. However the government has drastically reduced planning restrictions recently and so it is now much easier to get permission to build on Previously Used Land - which Lockfield clearly is.

But if Dacorum Borough Council - which is our local Planning Authority - does ever grant permission, then I would look to the developer to make a significant contribution towards road safety in Northchurch - a mini roundabout at the site entrance, traffic calming on New Road and the High Street and speed tables at each of the crossing points.”

She concluded, “But whatever is decided we can’t wait till 2031 for our 20 mph zone in Northchurch!”



Lara Pringle is also Standing for Northchurch Parish Council



Lara lives near the Community Social Centre in the heart of the village with husband Caleb and her two young sons. Up to now her main involvement with the community has been via the school, where she was fully involved, volunteering and serving as a parent governor for several years. She has helped run a support group in the Parish Rooms for parents of children with special needs.

Lara has worked as a barrister in the public sector for nearly 25 years. She feels she can use her experience and training to help the Parish Council achieve more through a closer engagement with other councils, with relevant public bodies and with voluntary organisations.