



Tory Council's Finance Fiasco!

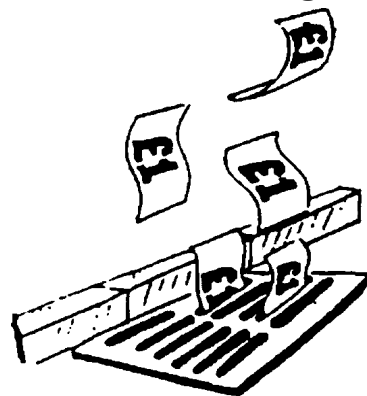
Liberal Democrat Councillors have slammed Conservative controlled Surrey Heath Borough Council for financial incompetence. They are seeking urgent answers to why the Council is almost £1 million over budget.

At a recent Council meeting it was revealed that the Council was in the red for the 2005-06 financial year by nearly £1 million, leaving its reserves dangerously depleted. The council's 'current account' was more than £1.8 million in April 2004, but by April 2006 it is estimated that it will be reduced to £332,000.

Councillor Patricia Pinder told Focus *"This is a shocking state of affairs. There would appear to be no financial control being exercised by the Conservative administration. Increased spending on staff costs relating to changes in staffing are to blame"*.

Cllr Duncan Clark, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Liberal Democrat group, commented *"For staffing costs to be as far out of control as they are is outrageous and the implications of the problem are massive. In my view we should be considering some very serious steps indeed to establish what has gone wrong with the control procedures in this council."*

Cllr Patricia Pinder continued *"I would like to know why we have reached this point now without being made aware of this situation. Who was aware that the wheels had come off this Conservative budget? This finance fiasco is due to poor Conservative management - as simple as that!"*



New Licensing Laws Gag Residents and Councillors



Liberal Democrat Councillors have condemned the Labour Government's new Licensing laws, which limit the part local residents can play in determining new applications.

Government regulations mean that only residents within 100 metres of an establishment are allowed to submit their views formally. Local councillors are also barred from representing their residents at hearings concerning applications from establishments from within their own ward. So much for increased local accountability!

Village Design Statement Update

Your Liberal Democrat Councillor, Patricia Pinder, has been working with a group of local residents to produce a Village Design Statement (VDS) since January 2005.

The statement is now in its final stages and will hopefully be adopted by Surrey Heath Borough Council as supplementary planning guidance in early 2006.

Following extensive public consultation it has become clear that local residents are opposed to the 'march of high rise' development in our Village. Many residents feel that the middle of our Village has already been spoiled by the building of too many large, three-storey flats and offices.

The proposed VDS states that the character of our Village is that of two-storey buildings, coupled with spaces between each building and fronted by hedges and trees. Guidelines, in the VDS, will set out the aspects that planners and developers should respect in the future. Hopefully, we will see an end to developers wanting to build three-storey blocks of flats and offices, which would dominate the middle of our Village.



Cllr Patricia Pinder with a copy of the Village Design Statement.

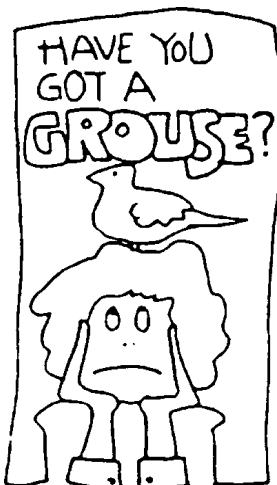


Hanging Baskets.

It was a delight to see hanging baskets in the Village centre this summer. At the first Village Design meeting, Mike Godwin, Secretary of the Business Association, suggested that hanging baskets could be a first step in the right direction to making the Village centre look more attractive. Cllr Patricia Pinder was delighted to be able to assist the Business Association in getting permission (which had previously been refused) to put up the hanging baskets. A big thank you must go to the Lightwater Business Association for organising and financing this improvement to the Village centre.

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Councillor Patricia Pinder and the Liberal Democrat Focus Team would like to hear from you....

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