

# FOCUS



LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

FAREHAM NORTH-WEST WARD - SUMMER 2011



Becci Frost, right, explains the 'Save Our Surestart' campaign to Lib Dem councillors Jim Forrest and Katrina Trott

## Fight for our kids goes on

A big reorganisation of Hampshire's children's centres, merging some and managing them in groups to make savings of £6m a year, is to go ahead despite a bid by concerned mothers and Liberal Democrats to halt it.

Despite testimonials from centre users and managers, their bid was voted down by the Tory majority at Hampshire County Council.

Liberal Democrats also suggested letting good centres run independently within this group management structure. Officers said they would look at this idea, but refused to set up a pilot scheme.

Parents fear centres will be merged in unsuitable groupings. One said: "They're not listening. I can't believe they refused a pilot scheme when there is no proof their type of management structure will work."

Fareham Borough Council has questioned Hampshire's Youth Service plans to target resources to the 5% of young people considered to be in greatest need. The fear is that the vast majority could be excluded from youth activity. Fareham council also criticises Hampshire's reliance on the voluntary sector to provide and run youth clubs for the majority.

## Becci Frost

Becci Frost (See photo above) has recently agreed to join our Focus team.

Becci was one of the leaders in the recent "Save Our Surestart" fight against both Hampshire County Council and the national government to prevent the threatened closure of local children's centres.

Following a campaign which included presenting an enormous petition to 10 Downing Street, in addition to marches and demonstrations, the County Council relented somewhat, keeping all the centres open, but with amended management arrangements and slashed budgets.

Becci is 24 years old, and the mother of a three year old son. She has lived and worked in Fareham all her life, and has always been interested in local affairs.

She has been involved with local children's centres in Fareham North-west Ward for some years, and her enthusiasm has recently been recognised at Oak Meadow by a recommendation to become a member of their Partnership Board.

## Fareham Park Project

Community Champions are now holding Chatters mornings on Thursdays, between 11 and 12 at the Highlands Hub, for anyone needing help to drop in and chat about it. The Chatters will endeavour to put callers in touch with organisations who will be able to assist with any questions.

The Citizens Advice Bureau is now available at the hub on Tuesdays from 9am to 4pm., and a Careers Development Group all day on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The police hold their beat surgery at the hub on the first Friday of each month from 1.30 to 3.30 pm. Please call in for dates and times of other services on offer.

As part of this project, under the auspices of Community Action Fareham's Walking for Health scheme, a new walk has been introduced which commences at the North-west Community Centre area in Henry Cort Drive. The walk follows the path down past the Fisherman's Rest, with refreshments at Titchfield Abbey Nursery before returning to the Community Centre.

## Opposition

Coalition? There may be one at Westminster, but there is certainly NOT one at Fareham Borough Council.

The Liberal Democrats form the opposition, which attempts to curb the less sensible ideas of the Conservative majority (for example, their enthusiasm for building thousands of new houses on green field sites to the north of the town).

## Council Shame

Impromptu gardens set up and tended by Transition Fareham, a Green Party group, at the former Hampshire Rose public house site, have finally shamed Hampshire County Council into clearing this land, for so long an eyesore, of weeds and rubble.

## Coalition

A year ago, the coalition seemed like a good idea. It should have meant the Tories could not rule roughshod over us as they have in the past, as the Liberal Democrats would hold them to account and curb their more right wing ideas.

However, I'm afraid it hasn't turned out that way. Make no mistake, the ghastly policies pouring out of Westminster one after another are Tory (and, dare I say it - Thatcherite!) ones.

The clever bit on their part is that where they know in advance that a policy will be either controversial or thoroughly hated by the population, they push forward a Liberal Democrat to take the blame. It's worked quite well so far, but hopefully won't work so well in the future.

Local Liberal Democrats have put together a booklet setting out the improvements Lib Dem ministers have made to peoples' lives. For a copy, contact Jim Forrest at 4 Hill Head Road, Fareham PO14 3JH.

## Misled?

In his report on Fareham's future planning Core Strategy, the government inspector said of the proposed SDA north of the town:

"Various council publications, most notably a special edition of Fareham Today, .... Give the impression that the SDA is intended to meet Borough, rather than sub-regional housing needs. This clearly conflicts with the evidence base."

He also said "While additional demographic evidence has been prepared by the council, this does not justify a development of the scale proposed at the SDA solely to satisfy housing needs generated within Fareham Borough."

These comments clearly demonstrate that local Conservative councillors have misled us all, presumably for their own political purposes.

## DO YOU HAVE A PROBLEM OR AN ISSUE?

Perhaps we can help. Please contact Councillor Eric Dunn at:

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