

FOCUS

On Birch Ward



LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

www.libdems.org.uk

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FOCUS TEAM KEEPS ON EYE ON THE BALL (even if FDC doesn't bother)

Last year your Focus Team questioned how St Francis Drive (off New Road) came to be built without any play space or play equipment. FDC replied "we forgot to ask when planning permission was applied for"! However your vigilant Focus team requested the files and



discovered documents in it that showed that both a play area and a commuted sum for play equipment nearby had been negotiated. "Here is the agreement, but where is the play equipment?" asked Cllr Chris Howes. FDC then advised Chatteris Town Council that "the play equipment did not need to be provided until two years after completion of the site". This surprised Chris and Christine so they checked the files again. This investigation disclosed clear evidence

that the play equipment should have been provided "prior to the occupation of 50% of the approved dwellings" and maintained for "2 years after completion of the site". Chris pointed this out to FDC, but the play equipment has yet to appear.

The file also showed no evidence of completion of the statutory archaeological assessment, nor that a satisfactory flood risk assessment, required by the Environment Agency had been carried out. What's more there's nothing to show that the requested new survey had been performed. The only thing that does seem to have been completed is the building and selling of all those houses.

"If any resident would like to see the details of the agreements or a diagram of the planned play equipment, give me a call on 695770," adds Chris Howes.

GETTING THE HUMP OVER (disintegrating) SPEED HUMPS

Residents were relieved when speed humps were introduced in New Road to slow traffic, but these started breaking up some time ago and nothing appears to be happening to remedy the problem. Have any of Chatteris's senior councillors done anything about this? Seemingly not.



SUITS WHO SIR?



Plans to flood the field behind the Methodist School in New Road with new housing were submitted in 2004 and passed in 2005. These plans included NARROWING New Road to provide an increased visibility splay for vehicles leaving the new estate.

Cllr Chris Howes argued at both Town Council and District Council Planning Committee that a Traffic Impact Survey was vital before any decision could be reached. "They can't just go narrowing roads to suit developers without considering the effects on the people who already live there" Chris reasoned.

But amazingly, although FDC Planning Committee agreed with

Chris when he attended their meeting the minutes show that the application was Approved without mention of the need for a Survey. So it seems the effect of the existing neighbourhood will be ignored.

Chatteris NEEDS more HARDWORKING Lib Dem Councillors

KINGSFIELD



It came as no surprise to many that the Tory lead County Council plans to sell off a vast chunk of Kingsfield playing fields for housing. Were this to go ahead it would be a sad loss to the community reducing the already limited amount of open space in Chatteris. This loss would be further worsened by the need to rip out Storers Wood which was planted by the local children. Residents are also deeply concerned at the proposal to gain access through Treeway thus further increasing volumes of

traffic through Station Street, allready worsened by the recent Station parade development. One would hope that our County Councillors would heed all these residents' concerns, but in fact County & District Cllr Melton (former Leader of Fenland District Council) seems unconcerned about the loss of this land. In fact he advised Chatteris Town Council last month that "Sport England have not objected to the proposed sale of the field". But strangely, Cambridgeshire F.A. have stated that "Sport England have strongly objected to the selling off of the land" and have referred to a specific letter from Sport England dated in April. This appears to be another ball game that your Focus team needs to keep a close eye on.



CONCESSIONARY BUS FARES - FDC APRIL FOOL'S JOKE ?

A County-wide scheme to provide concessionary bus fares for senior citizens is not going forward because of the refusal to join in of Fenland District Council and some of their Tory neighbours, despite originally promising on their web site that they would start such a scheme on 1st April 2006. All that is going ahead now is a 'FENLAND ONLY' scheme - of little use for pensioners who want to go to Cambridge or Ely or Peterborough. The FOCUS team are particularly surprised by FDC's reticence as surely concessionary bus fares to help our senior citizens are unlikely to be very costly to Fenland Hall in view of the current notable shortage of busses!

DID FDC OVER SPEND OR UNDER SPEND FOR 2005-6 ?

Last year the Leader of the District Council proudly announced that in 2004 - 5 the Council had collected more money from us than it actually needed. Your Focus team was less than impressed by this ill judged boast. It appears that a huge £200, 000 of spare cash is sloshing about FDC and apparently a cabinet member who represents March West wants to spend all this money just on improvements in Wisbech Road, March. Chatteris contributes nearly 15% of the Council tax raised, and your Focus team can't think of any good reason that £29,000 of money collected in Chatteris should be spent in March, particularly as Chatteris has fewer public facilities than any of the other Fenland Towns. "Besides, if they've got this extra money, why are they closing Public Toilets and Citizens Advice Bureaus?" demanded an angry resident. "And should a Tory FDC cabinet member be proposing such expensive improvements to a road in his own ward?" added another.