



WE DESERVE THE BEST FROM OUR TOWN COUNCIL -LIKE QUALITY STATUS

Your FOCUS team believe that to get the best for the residents, Chatteris Town Council should work to achieve Quality Council Status. At full Council meeting on 2 June 2006 Lib Dem Councillor Chris Howes formally proposed a motion suggesting this, but Chatteris Town Council overwhelmingly rejected the suggestion. Many local Councils have taken this step, and recently Somersham were proud to be awarded this coveted quality benchmark. It is rumoured that March Town Council are about to start the process which will allow them to do more for the community, for example taking over management of the public convenience that FDC want to close. But FOCUS regards Chatteris's refusal to even look at this idea as they recently refused Chris Howes's previous motion to set up a system to examine the Council's performance and consider how it could be improved. Clearly the Town Council regards is somewhat feeble efforts as being so good they cannot be bettered! FOCUS suspects there are few who agree with this view!

NOBODY LIVES IN BEAUFORT CLOSE !!!

The Head of Planning at FDC attended the Chatteris Town Council's meeting on 6th June and Lib Dem Cllr Chris Howes leapt at this opportunity to express the concerns of local residents about the lack of play provision in the SmartLife development to be constructed in Beaufort Close. Many residents had expressed their concerns to Chris about the prospect of numbers of young children playing between cars in the new development and in neighbouring Pound Road, if they were given no proper place to play. Chris had wished to attend the Planning Committee meeting to make this point but Chatteris Chairman Cllr Florence Neewell had insisted she should attend instead. However, she failed to turn up at the FDC Planning meeting when the application was discussed and did not trouble to arrange for Chris, or anyone else, to go instead. The upshot was that

the Application was granted with neither provision for onsite play space nor play equipment.

To Chris's surprise, when he tried to explain the potential problems to the FDC officer Chairman Newell repeatedly interrupted him and insisted that no-one in the area is concerned about lack of play space. She added that Chris was lying and that there was no-one to complain as no one lives in Beaufort Close at the moment! (sorry residents) Amazingly, she then went on to say there was no need for play provision there "because so much of Chatteris has been developed during her Chairmanship without play provision - and why does Slade Lode expect to be treated any different?" The FOCUS Team ask, does Chatteris really deserve to be represented by a councillor, much less a Chairman!, with an attitude like this!

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.