

In Touch

from Addiscombe & Woodside Conservatives

A fair
deal for
everyone

Winter 2003



Keeping Ryelands Field Green: local London Assembly Member Andrew Pelling continues to work with local residents in keeping Ryelands Field green by lobbying Ken Livingstone on the Council's plan for a leisure centre on the site. Like Andrew and

local residents, the Mayor is concerned about the loss of Metropolitan Open Land when there is another good site for a Leisure Centre in Portland Road. Building on Ryelands Field would break a Labour Council promise never to build there.

Long lost shelter reaches Alma pub bus stop: after much lobbying by local London Assembly Member Andrew Pelling, in conjunction with the local residents' association, Transport for London moved our bus stop shelter to catch up with our bus stop which had been moved to outside the Alma pub.

Davidson Road development: Addiscombe Conservatives want to see the proposed development at the end of Canal Walk overlooking Davidson Road to be sympathetic to the local street scene.

Making life better

Croydon Conservatives' Addiscombe and Woodside Action Teams are out and about making life better across the area, working with Greater London Assembly Member Andrew Pelling.

If there is an issue you would like the teams, or Andrew, to take up on your behalf, please call

020 8660 0491 or email

addiscombe@croydonconservatives.com

Keep up to date with local issues at
www.croydonconservatives.com

Tram to Crystal Palace:

Andrew continues to lobby for Tramlink to be extended to Crystal Palace, opening up much needed new transport links for Addiscombe and Woodside residents.



Clyde Road Lights: you may recall that the Clyde Road traffic lights were phased in such a way that it caused delays and traffic to build up as result. Transport for London are responsible for these lights and following lobbying by Andrew Pelling, (Conservative GLA member) this issue has been resolved.

Addiscombe Linear Park: work hasn't even started on the construction of the long promised Addiscombe Linear Park and the land currently lies derelict. What a waste! Shame our Councillors aren't more active on this issue. Addiscombe Conservatives are making representations to the Council in order to have this space opened for the benefit of the residents of Addiscombe.

Local policing: after lobbying for extra policing, a new beat officer has been appointed for Addiscombe Ward and police action has been taken against aggressive begging in the south Norwood area.



Getting our message out: unlike the Council's magazine 'Croydon Reports', the production of this newsletter is paid for by voluntary donations and it is delivered by volunteers.

If you find that at elections you usually vote Conservative and you can spare an hour every few months to help us deliver, it would make a big difference. If you can help, please email or telephone us using the contact details in the left hand panel.

Council's budget crisis: more cuts in services

Any expenditure that the Council is not legally required to undertake faces the axe under draconian controls recently announced by the Director of Finance to balance the Council's budget.

In spite of the huge increase in Council Tax, the Council is going to overspend by £7.5 million this year. There are no reserves left to plunder, as the Council emptied its 'piggy bank' to keep tax low before last year's local election. Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott publicly criticised the Council earlier this year

for its irresponsible approach to budgeting before and after the election and now seems likely to cap the Council if its proposed Council Tax rise for next year is too high.

Croydon Conservatives' Leader Andrew Pelling says "Front line services are now going to suffer as Labour wields the axe. Labour played politics with the budget and now we all have to pay to put things right. In Croydon, Labour isn't about 'tax and spend', it is about 'tax and cut'."

Labour's parking budget fiasco

A report by the Council's Director of Finance has revealed a huge hole in the parking budget. The Council budgeted to make a profit of £9.2 million on parking in 2002-3. In the event, it only made a profit of £5.7 million. Remarkably this only came to light three months after the end of the financial year. The Director of Finance predicts that there will be a further £3.6 million shortfall in 2003-4. The report identified four reasons for this huge budget shortfall:

- ✗ The decision by Cllr Gerry Ryan, the Labour Councillor responsible for parking, to reorganise his department, separating parking officers from the finance officers who monitored the budget.
- ✗ Cllr Ryan's belief that he could continue to raise parking charges without it having any effect on the number of people using the car parks.
- ✗ Poor budget monitoring.
- ✗ Poor control of expenditure - the report refers to a number of "unbudgeted events".

The £7.1 million that has been lost could have been used to adequately fund our schools or reduce typical Council Tax bills by £56. We are paying Cllr Ryan nearly £40,000 a year. He is responsible for this shortfall. He should resign.

Schools & teachers still suffering

The situation in Croydon's schools remains at crisis point as the Council's overall financial position worsens. Nearly 130 teacher positions were lost across the Borough this summer. As teachers leave, they are not being replaced and this has had serious consequences for our children's education.

Only six schools in the whole of Croydon were able to set a balanced budget for the year 'in year'. The others either made deep cuts, used their maintenance budget to pay teachers or spent their reserves. This means that they will have little room for manoeuvre if next year's settlement is not generous.

As it stands, next year looks even bleaker. 150 more teaching posts are likely to be lost and schools will be in crisis unless the funding levels are restored in real terms to the levels of 2002/3.

The Council and the Government each blame the other, but the truth is that both are partly at fault. The Government grant was not very generous to Croydon this year, but the Council must also take responsibility for managing the finances so badly.

Croydon Conservatives have been leading the fight for a fair deal for our schools. Please show your support for our schools by signing our petition below.

Andrew Pelling - London Assembly Member

Local London Assembly Member Andrew Pelling has successfully lobbied for work to start on the Coulsdon by-pass. This is great news for the environment in Coulsdon town centre and for Croydon's economy, with the improved links to the M25.



Andrew is pushing for a bigger allocation for police officers to the whole of Croydon in the Metropolitan Police Service's new review of police officer allocations around London.

Andrew is also campaigning on post office closures, saving community pharmacies and protecting the Freedom Pass.

To the Deputy Prime Minister: "We, the undersigned, call for fair deal for Croydon with improved grant from Government to fund our local schools properly."

Name:

Address:

Name:

Address:

Send to: 'Fair Deal for Schools' Petition, 36 Brighton Road, Purley CR8 2LG or fax to 020 8763 9686.

