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South West Hertfordshire Conservatives Working for the Community

## ALL ABOUT THE HIGHWAY RESTORATION PROJECT

Example of what the restoration project will archive. Signs are assessed, cleaned, repaired or replaced as required and any obscuring plant growth removed



The project has been able to achieve up to 30% cost savings through its purchasing power providing better value for money for every taxpayer in Hertfordshire. It is also contributing, on average, £39,000 to the additional 43% more being spent in every Division across the County this year on local highway maintenance

### What is the Highway Restoration Project?

As well as the routine maintenance work that goes on each year to maintain Hertfordshire's roads, we have invested extra money on essential work throughout the County that is not always a priority. This is funding a programme of works up to next spring 2017 which includes:

- Cleaning 86,000 road signs
- Clearing 14 miles of ditches
- Trimming 94 miles of hedges
- Refreshing 559 miles of white lines
- Digging out 2,300 roadside drains

### Why have we not been doing this regularly?

In Feb 2010 the Coalition Government made substantial cuts to Local Authority Funding.

In a survey to seek residents views on service funding priorities, routine maintenance on sign cleaning, white lining and traffic management was placed last in priority to Fire and Rescue, children with special needs, vulnerable children & families and vulnerable adults.

The savings achieved by suspending routine cleaning of signs and refreshing white lines was refocused in support of those higher priority services identified by residents.

### So why are we doing it now?

There comes a time when the absence of routine maintenance impacts on effectiveness and safety.

It was considered that point had been reached and that action needed to be taken.

As the scope of the project was mapped out additional routine maintenance items were included and because of the quantity of work being commissioned across the County, significant savings of up to 30% were being achieved on normal costs.

The project will continue into 2017 with planned completion in March.

### Additional £10,000 allocated to repair local potholes

Additional pothole funding has been given to every County Councillor to spend in their Division as part of the 43% more being spent on local highway maintenance this year.

County Councillor Ralph Sangster has allocated the funds to areas of Nightingale Road and Harefield Road outside Tesco.



## NHS Local Clinical Commissioning Group withdraws £8.5 million of funding from Hertfordshire County Council's Social Care Budget

The West Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) responsible for allocating NHS spending in the West of the County has announced it will be withdrawing £8.5 million pounds from Hertfordshire County Council's Social Care Budget.

The funding was used by the Council to provide dedicated teams embedded in local hospitals and other services to support patients leaving

hospital early to free up much needed bed spaces.

Rickmansworth County Councillor Ralph Sangster said: *"This is a terrible mistake. It's like cutting off your nose to spite your face. The CCG is going to clog up hospital beds and leave it in a worse position than it is in already"*

Despite reassurances to the contrary concerns still remain that the East Herts CCG may follow suit.

### A few thoughts from:

#### Ralph Sangster

Rickmansworth County Councillor  
Deputy Executive Member for Highways



**It is important that politicians act responsibly when communicating information to the public. It is not acceptable to misrepresent facts or seek to frighten or intimidate the public or cause anxiety without justification by using inappropriate and over emotional language.**

I am afraid it has become common practice in politics to use fear, anxiety and misrepresentation to influence public opinion. You might say that has always been the case and I would have to agree to some extent. I think, however, that during the recent Brexit campaign and again in the United States Presidential election it has reached unprecedented levels.

The easiest job in the world is to be a critic. I have personally always tried, wherever possible, to present a positive approach to political debate. Seeking to continually criticise

your opponent or their policies without being constructive shows a lack of original thought.

We all pay, through our Council Tax, for local services. We also pay, through general taxation, for any subsidies for those services received from Central Government. There are no magic money trees. What we consume in local services is paid for one way or another by you and me.

Judgments on where those funds should best be spent and who should bear the greatest burden of taxation is what politics is all about.

## Controversial location proposed for temporary homeless accommodation

Three Rivers District Council has proposed using the site of the existing RVS Hall in the Bury as a homeless hostel. They intend building a temporary structure of 17 modular units capable of housing over 100 homeless people



Local Conservative Councillors voted against the proposal when it was brought before the Council's Policy and Resources committee in November. *"It is not the principle of providing this type of accommodation for the homeless which concerns*

*us."* said Councillor Ralph Sangster *"It is the proposed location. This is a conservation area and adjoining one of the few amenity areas in the Town Centre."*

The proposal, which is subject to a planning application in the New Year could accommodate

over one hundred people.

Councillor Sangster confirmed that he had asked the Council if a social impact assessment had been undertaken. *"This would provide important information on the impact the development would have on the local area and existing community but also its suitability for the proposed occupants."*

He went on to say; *"When I raised this issue at committee I was told that an assessment had not been undertaken and was then set upon by Liberal Democrat members who accused me of having questionable moral values. I replied that local residents were concerned about the development and its impact and that as their representative I would raise those concerns in an appropriate way despite the aggressive and intimidating attitude being adopted by members of the Council's political administration."*

## LATEST LIB DEM FABRICATION



Liberal Democrat claims about highway funding levels are as false now as they were last May when first used in the District Council Election campaign!

- **General maintenance spending on the County's highways has now increased by £10.8 million in this financial year**
- **Targeted local spending has increased from £90,000 to an average of £128,961, a 43% increase**

This is the second time we have had to correct local Lib Dems on this subject. Their continued wilful misrepresentation of the facts is outrageous. Its clear they intend repeating this fantasy in the hope someone will eventually believe it.

There was no meeting held in the last few months to reduce spending as this false story has clearly been recycled from last year's District Election campaign and the Conservative administration at County Hall has already provided additional funding.

## Brown Bin Charge of £35 is equivalent to an 18% increase on the TRDC Council Tax

Take-up of the brown bin service has now exceeded 21,000 homes. For a Band D property the charge of £35 is the equivalent of an 18% increase on the TRDC element (£192) of their Council Tax bill.

Because the charge is a flat rate those who pay less

Council Tax than the norm pay the highest percentage. This means the poorest are hit hardest.

When the Lib Dems claim that they have not raised Council Tax for 10 years remember that there are other ways of raising your taxes.



Your Brown Bin

## Conservatives CUT local roads & pavem

The Conservatives running Herts County Council have pushed through a cut of over 11% from the local highways repair budget. No mention was previously made of this proposed cut in this year's council budget.

The cut was voted through at a meeting earlier this month. Liberal Democrat county councillors object strongly to this cut, but were not allowed to speak or vote at the meeting.

Lib Dem Cllr Sarah Nelmes said, 'Almost every resident that I speak to comments on the appalling state of local roads. We need more money spent on these roads, not less.'

Do you agree with the Conservatives that less money is needed to repair and improve local roads and pavements? Or do you agree with the Lib Dems that more money is needed?

## REACH FREE SCHOOL RECEIVES PLANNING CONSENT FOR ITS NEW HOME IN MILL END

Reach Free School's planning application for its new home in Mill End was approved at the Three Rivers District Council's Planning committee meeting on 15 December

The meeting was well attended by both residents concerned over the impact the development will have on the local area and parents of children who would benefit from the school securing a permanent home.

Significant changes had been made to the roundabout access for the school since the application was first considered in September

ensuring that the residents on the corner of Long Lane retained the open Green Belt area immediately in front of their homes.

County Councillor Ralph Sangster challenged the committee to be bold in imposing conditions which would secure the very best facilities for the children at the school and the wider community.

## HS2 Update from the front line

County Council officers continue to engage with HS2 over many local issues and areas of concern.

A planning application is expected in Feb/Mar 2017 to close Chalfont Lane and construct a new link road between Shire Lane and Hornhill Road. This is likely to include the construction of a roundabout at the Hornhill Road junction.

During 2017 the new access ramps onto the M25 are to be constructed at the point at which the existing Chalfont Road crosses it. This work is to be completed before construction works on the the compounds commence.

There is a further commitment from the Secretary of State that all principal traffic engaged in the tunnels construction must use the M25 to access and egress the construction site.

HS2 will be investing £23 million in mitigation measures within the Colne Valley Regional Park.



Projects are being considered and a public consultations will take place in Feb 2017. The local event will be on the 8 February 5 - 8 pm at Maple Cross JMI School. A further £3 million has been set aside for the Colne Valley Regional Park Committee to allocate to local mitigation priorities. Projects being considered include work associated with access to the Rickmansworth Aquadrome.