

newsline



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SAUGHALL MASSIE GREEN BELT THREAT

Chris Blakeley calls for new Council Leader to drop Labour's plan to build 974 houses on local Green Belt

It was revealed in April that a secret meeting of the previous Labour Cabinet backed the loss of yet more Green Belt.

The meeting, held in secret in November 2018, saw the then-Cabinet agree to build:

- 682 houses on land 'north of Greasby Road'
- 27 houses on the former Garden Hey Nursery
- 25 houses 'north of Barnacre Lane' in the Conservation Area
- 193 houses 'north' of Saughall Massie
- 47 houses 'east' of Garden Hey Road

Following the local election results, which saw Labour lose control of the Council (see page 2), local Councillor Chris Blakeley has written to the new Council Leader, asking him to scrap his predecessor's proposals.

Chris said: "For the Town Hall to back almost 1,000 new houses on our Green Belt, with all the additional pressure that will put on our roads, schools and GP surgeries, is a massive error of judgement.

"I have asked the new Council Leader to drop these plans and, instead, to work with us, and residents, to have a Local Plan that protects our local environment while building homes on brownfield sites in the urban areas that are crying out for regeneration."



A meeting of the Town Hall's Cabinet in November 'agreed' to build a new housing estate on this Green Belt land between Saughall Massie and Greasby

HELP FOR WIRRAL'S PRIVATE TENANTS COMES INTO FORCE

Private tenants in Moreton and Saughall Massie have new protections from 1 June thanks to a new law.

The last census (2011) revealed there are 7,278 families in private rented homes in this constituency.

The change in the law means that the maximum tenancy deposits that

renters pay at the start of their tenancy is capped at the equivalent of 5 weeks' rent.

In April this year, Conservatives also announced plans to stop private landlords from evicting tenants from their homes at short notice and without good reason.

At the same time, Wirral Council also now has a range of measures to

enable them to crack down on the small minority of rogue landlords and agents who let unfit properties.

This includes fixed financial penalties of up to £30,000 and banning orders – possibly for life – for the most serious offenders.

For more information and a link to the new Guide for Tenants visit wirralconservatives.com/renting

In this issue:

Labour loses control of Council

Steve Williams was re-elected as Councillor with an increased majority while the Wirral Council elections in May were a disaster for Labour: **Page 2**

Street lights to be replaced

Streetlights continue to be one of the top issues raised by residents. Following a meeting between councillors and directors, action is promised: **Page 3**

New development update

We report back on the current status of planning applications at Dodd's Builders Merchants on Bermuda Road and at Oak Avenue: **Page 4**

Road repairs list published

Thank you to everyone who responded to our roads survey in the Autumn. The Town Hall has now revealed which ones are to be repaired. **Page 4**

Allotment waiting list hits 1,599

The number of people waiting for an allotment plot has hit a new high and the Town Hall is being asked to make more land available for plots. **Page 4**

Reporting back...

Parks and play areas:

Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey on local parks and children's play areas. We'll be meeting with the Council manager shortly to share the results of the survey and to ensure that the extra money that is planned for our parks and play areas is spent on the things people want.

Tree planting:

In May, the Government also announced a new £10 million fund to plant 130,000 trees in urban areas. We have asked the Town Hall to ensure that Wirral bids for a share of the cash and that Moreton and Saughall Massie receives a share of any new trees received.

Weed spraying:

Many councils have recognised the need to allow more plants to pollinate, to support the bee population, in grassed areas, parks and open spaces. There are, at the same time, concerns that the weed control programme on pavements and entries is not good enough, resulting in waist-high weeds by the summer. We have been assured that these areas will be sprayed twice this year.

Council Chief Executive:

Within three weeks of Labour losing control of the Council, the Chief Executive announced his resignation. The post costs the Council £200,000 a year and Conservative Councillors have asked for an assessment of whether the remaining nine 'Senior Leadership Team' at the Council could assume more of the duties, helping to reduce the cost of the top directors to the taxpayer. Some other councils have decided to 'share' chief executives or, in some cases, remove the post altogether.

Special needs:

In December, it was announced that councils will receive an additional £250 million over the next two years on top of the £6 billion already provided for the 'high needs' budget this year, to provide much needed support for children and young people with complex special educational needs. An inspection of how Wirral provides the service is imminent.

Well done Tranmere!

Congratulations to Wirral's own Tranmere Rovers on their win over Newport County at Wembley in May, securing their spot in League One.

LABOUR LOSES CONTROL OF WIRRAL COUNCIL

Labour's vote falls by 8,000 and they lose four Council seats to Conservatives, Greens and Liberal Democrats

Labour no longer controls Wirral Council.

The Party lost seats to the Conservatives, the Greens and Liberal Democrats on 2nd May, as voters decided not to risk a Militant-style Council in the Borough.

The new Council sees 32 Labour councillors - two short of an overall majority.

As well as losing Pensby, Prenton, Oxton, Birkenhead & Tranmere,

Labour also came close to losing Rock Ferry to the Independents, while their majority in Leasowe was also slashed.

Across Wirral, 8,000 Labour voters switched to other parties or stayed at home.

A vote for a new Council Leader, following the departure of Phil Davies, saw Labour hold on, as Green and Liberal Democrat councillors abstained.

However, when it came to the council committees, Labour no longer controls any committee (other than the Cabinet).

The Environment Committee is now chaired by Councillor Chris Blakeley who has immediately pledged to work with residents to finally end Labour's Dog Ban Plan.

The results mean that, while Labour no longer has outright control, the parties must now work together to get things agreed.

The new make up of Wirral Council means Labour doesn't have a majority any more...



...STEVE'S VOTE UP IN MORETON & SAUGHALL MASSIE

Labour fails to gain one of their 'top targets' as local Conservatives increase their majority over Labour and prevent a Militant-style Council

The local Conservatives here in Moreton and Saughall Massie increased their majority over Labour on May 2nd.

Councillor Steve Williams was re-elected with 1,592 votes more than Labour.

The Greens (8%) and Liberal Democrats (2%) were too far behind to win. UKIP failed to nominate a candidate.

Steve received 63% of the votes - up from 44% when the seat was last contested.

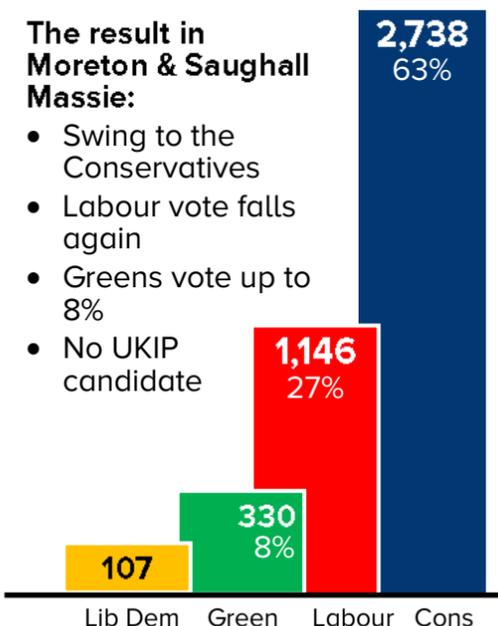
Labour's share of the vote (27%) was the lowest in the last 11 years.

Following the result, Steve said: "Thank you to everyone in Moreton and Saughall Massie who voted for me to continue my work, with Chris and Bruce, for our community."

"I know from our many conversations on the doorstep, that while people are unhappy at what is happening nationally, they wanted us to continue our work locally."

"A special thanks to those people who voted Conservative for the first time and to those people who usually vote for other parties at a General Election."

"Thank you to all 2,738 people who voted for us and to keep the team that works for our community!"



ACTION, FINALLY, ON STREET LIGHTS...

At every election, for the last three years, Labour has promised to replace street lights. Instead, more and more are becoming faulty.

The contract to start replacing the streetlights was awarded this month. It follows £4.6 million from the Government for new LED lights in residential roads.

Chris, Bruce and Steve are, in the meantime, pushing for repairs to lights that have been reported to us as faulty or where the Town Hall is taking too long to act.

Since our last newsletter, street lights in Hoylake Road, Coppice Grange and Beech Avenue have been repaired.

Outstanding requests for action include Kingfisher Way, Birchfield and Cambrian Road.

The new LED lights use less electricity while giving out a brighter light and also cost less to maintain.

We have asked for the programme of works so that we can let residents know when the new lights will be installed.

Please contact us if, in the meantime, there are faulty lights in your road that need attention.

Work has started on former Girtrell Court site...

Building work has now started on the new Extra Care facility for Alpha Living on the former site of Girtrell Court in Woodpecker Close.

We are told the project will take around 80 weeks to complete, in October 2020.

The development will see 78 'extra care' apartments built.

The site was previously used as a council-run respite centre for those with severe disabilities.

In spite of a campaign from families who relied on the centre, it was closed by the Council.

Your councillors have been working closely with many residents living around the site - starting with making sure the Planning Committee visited to see it for themselves and, more recently, on issues arising from the site preparation including felling of several of the trees.

If residents have any concerns during the construction please contact any one of your three councillors - details on the front page.



CAN YOU HELP US TO KEEP IN TOUCH?

Chris Blakeley, Bruce Berry and Steve Williams work as a team, to get the best we can for our community.

Our team also includes local residents who do their bit to help us keep in touch and campaign locally.

Can you spare some time to help with:

- Sitting at a polling station for two hours on day of the next council elections, taking numbers from voters?
- Delivering 100 or so newsletters to homes in your area every couple of months?

Call/text Chris on 07803 614418 or online:
www.wirralconservatives.com/getinvolved

Local issues, local action...

Since the last issue of Newline, your local Conservative Councillors have been working on local issues raised by residents, including:

SAUGHALL HOTEL:

Following requests from residents, we requested a new 'keep left' sign near the pub after concerns about road safety and visibility for road users.

TOWN MEADOW LANE:

We are constantly contacted by residents concerned about road safety by the flats on Town Meadow Lane. Residents have asked if a lay-by can be installed to ease the situation. We are told by Council Officers that the cost would be in the region of £89,000 and they have no budget to do that. We will keep lobbying the Council for action at this location.

ALTCAR DRIVE:

A new road sign has been installed in Altcar Drive, off Cobham Road, following a request by your councillors.

SAUGHALL MASSIE FIRE STATION:

The official opening of the new fire station took place in early June. As many people will be aware the fight to stop building on our green belt took over 30 months, however it is now built and operational. As your local Councillors our job is now to make sure activities at the station do not cause disturbance or distress to local residents.

DEVONSHIRE ROAD:

We have reported the poor condition of the footpath on the corner of Devonshire Road and requested action by the Highways Department to fix it.

BORROWDALE ROAD:

We have also reported the problem of overflowing litter bins in Borrowdale Road. The Town Hall is slowly introducing new, larger bins at many locations.

SAUGHALL ROAD:

Following requests from residents, we arranged for trees on Saughall Road to be pruned.

DIGG LANE:

Parking (often inconsiderate!) in Digg Lane continues to cause problems for residents and road users. The narrow, winding road, is not suited for on street parking. We have asked the Highways Department to see what can be done.

MORETON YOUTH CLUB:

We are continuing to push for a youth club to be included in the plans for the development of the site on Pasture Road, The Council's investment in the multi-million Birkenhead youth centre is too far away for many young people in Moreton.

A PROBLEM IN YOUR ROAD?

Tell us: details on front page.

Local planning update...

OAK AVENUE:

We understand that following refusal for the construction of five homes at 18 Oak Avenue that the applicant has submitted an appeal to the independent Planning Inspectorate. We will keep residents informed of the outcome

DODDS BUILDERS MERCHANTS:

There is currently a planning application to build 15 homes on the site of the current builders yard off Bermuda Road. We understand planning officers are waiting further information about drainage before referring the application to the Planning Committee for a decision.

WIRRAL'S LOCAL PLAN:

Wirral is one of 15 councils that has failed to comply with a law passed in 2004 to have a 'Local Plan'.

The Council has now brought in extra staff to try to head off the threat of a Government intervention.

The Local Plan is required to protect the Green Belt and to show developers where they should be building instead.

NEXT STEPS ON SINGLE USE PLASTICS...

More than 1,600 people took part in a recent consultation on whether some single use plastics, should be banned.

The Government has now confirmed that from April 2020, plastic drinking straws will be among the items that will be phased out.

Last year saw the ban on 'microbeads' - small plastics in products such as shower gels. While the plastic bag charge has achieved an 86% reduction in their use as well as raising £51 million for charities and good causes.

The latest consultation by the Conservatives, on introducing a 'Deposit Return Scheme' for cans, plastic and glass bottles, to encourage their re-use and reduce littering, finished in May and a response is expected soon.

CALL FOR ACTION AS ALLOTMENT LIST HITS 1,599

The latest figures from the Town Hall have revealed that almost 1,600 people are waiting for an allotment plot.

The nearest sites to Moreton and Saughall Massie show that there are now 68 people waiting for one of the 18 plots at Manor Drive (near the M53) to become available and 40 people waiting for one of the 28 plots at Salacre Lane in Upton.

Chris said: "The increasing numbers

of people wanting to rent an allotment plot, along with the environmental benefits and income generated for the Council mean that the Town Hall should be looking at currently unused green spaces for potential sites.

"We'll be meeting with Council Directors again on this issue and have also asked for a report to go to the Environment Committee."

Seven years ago, after residents raised concerns about the lack of sites nearby, Conservative

Councillors worked to have a site set up on disused land at Twickenham Drive. The allotments there are run by local volunteers.

Chris said: "The Council needs to look to see if there are other suitable sites around Wirral that could be used, either by extending existing allotment sites or setting up new ones."

The National Allotment Society lists mental wellbeing, healthy activity and fresh, local seasonal produce as some of the benefits for plot holders.

U-TURN ON COUNCIL GOLF COURSE SELL-OFF PLANS?

While the Town Hall continues with plans to borrow £26 million to support the proposed 'Hoyleake Golf Resort', the future of the four municipal courses was put into doubt after Labour announced a plan to privatise the running of two of them.

Shortly after the elections, Labour announced that they were in the

final stages of transferring Arrowe Park Golf Course and The Warrens Golf Course (including The Grange) in Wallasey to a private operator.

Brackenwood, in Bebington, and Hoyleake Municipal are excluded from the plan.

Members of the clubs have been in touch with your three councillors, unhappy that the Town Hall had not consulted users of the course.

This, along with a lack of accurate financial information about The Warrens or Arrowe Park, led to Labour's decision being 'called in' for further scrutiny.

Councillor Chris Blakeley said: "At the meeting we called, it was clear that senior officers and the Cabinet Member who made the decision did not have all the facts. The plan has now been put on hold and we hope will enable the plan to be dropped."

ROADS IN MORETON AND SAUGHALL MASSIE TO BE RESURFACED:

Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey in the Autumn asking for roads and pavements that need repair.

Chris, Steve and Bruce submitted the list to the Town Hall, asking for each to be inspected and included in this year's programme of repairs.

We've now had it confirmed that the following roads in Moreton and Saughall Massie will be resurfaced between now and March 2020:

- Cobham Road, (as shown in the picture with Chris)
- Garden Hey Road
- Sycamore Avenue
- Winston Grove
- Service road for Saughall Massie Road

The total cost for the programmed works in Moreton and Saughall Massie is £70,000.



Chris Blakeley in Cobham Road - one of the roads we've asked to be resurfaced.