



Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 39; August 2010

Welcoming Note

Welcome to the August issue of the Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter.

To unsubscribe to this newsletter, please contact us through the website 'Contact us' page with a subject line of 'unsubscribe'.

Our aim is to provide you with a monthly update on the work of the Conservative Association and your elected representatives. We would value your feedback or comments.

We hope you enjoy reading the August issue.

A word from the Chair

Aspirational Society



A splendid objective but not if the qualifications to make it possible are made easier. The educational process and the teachers who are involved should aspire to ensure that the less fortunate are able to achieve the highest levels. For all the tinkering with the system the one factor which should not be ignored is that there was an avenue- with no financial barriers – where all could aspire to achieve top level results: and the institutions were called Grammar Schools – and one of the remaining Grammar Schools for the West Country did brilliantly in its 'A' Level results this summer! Ultimately Society has to decide do we wish to have doctors who reach the required level or do we have to lower the standard to achieve national equality. As a patient I would prefer to maintain standards. Although not a matter of life and death I would suggest to you lawyers, accountants and sales managers should all be encouraged to aim for the highest levels and maintain standards. We wish all to aspire to the top; not to reduce the standards to make for saleable politics.

The M.P. for Twickenham continues to act as the U.K. representative for the Swiss Relocation and Tourist board – does he really want to force banks to leave Britain and move to Switzerland, Hong Kong or Singapore? There is one glimmer of hope, namely the latest draft for the Basel rules on Capital – this should enable banks to operate with a more appropriate and less draconian capital base and thereby have more funds available to lend to businesses and individuals. Another idea being floated is the concept of the State indemnifying (underwriting) loans made by the banks – which would pass on the bad lending decisions to non-creditworthy borrowers to the taxpayer and most of us can waste money without the help of Whitehall.

The big cost cutting decisions are due to be announced in October. Simon Heffer recently posed the question – Is the defence of the realm less important than ring fencing of overseas aid? If we are impotent then our ability to help others will be zero.

On a local level the debate should now centre on the restructuring of local government; there could be huge cost savings in Surrey if there were either 5 unitary authorities - each with about 165,000 electors or just 4 authorities with about 206,000 electors. The prospect is enough to make one salivate at the opportunity to save money; particularly as we are talking about borrowed money not being needed.

Mr Colin Crispin
Chairman, Mole Valley Conservative Association



Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 39; August 2010

News from the House of Commons

News from the Department of Communities and Local Government



Since the Coalition came into existence, the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP and his Department of Communities and Local Government have been busy implementing new policy.

Here is a taste of the changes that have been made.

Local taxation

- Scrapped Labour's plans for new bin taxes on family homes, which would have harmed the local environment by fuelling fly-tipping and backyard burning.
- Announced we will work with local councils to freeze council tax for at least one year, and two, if money permits; and give people the power to veto high council tax rises.
- Introduced a more generous small business rate relief scheme, to help firms come out of recession, for one year starting in October. Firms with a Rateable Value under £6,000 will pay no business rates at all for a year.
- Scrapped Labour's ports tax – unfair retrospective business rates on firms in ports which threatened to decimate those firms and damage Britain's whole manufacturing sector.

Housing & planning

- Scrapped John Prescott's flawed Regional Strategies and the role of his unwanted and unelected Regional Assemblies.
- Introduced new powers for councils to resist unwanted garden grabbing and scrapped arbitrary Whitehall density targets for new housing.
- Abolished the expensive red tape of Labour's Home Information Packs (HIPs have already been suspended, pending full abolition by primary legislation).
- Encouraged councils to use their enforcement powers to tackle unauthorised traveller sites, and promised to give them stronger powers to ensure fair play in the planning system.
- Pledged new financial incentives for councils to build more homes and support economic growth.
- Overhauled the flawed system of counting the numbers of rough sleepers, so councils and charities know the true scale of homelessness and can target their expert help and advice where it is needed most.
- Announced the abolition of the unelected Infrastructure Planning Commission – whilst ensuring a fast-track planning system for major projects with full Parliamentary accountability.

Local democracy

- Abolished Labour's unnecessary Comprehensive Area Assessment inspection regime.
- Stopped Labour's imposition of expensive new unitary councils in Devon, Norfolk and Suffolk.
- Vetoed a proposed excessive salary package of £240,000 for a new chief executive of the Audit Commission, to send a strong signal to town halls that they don't need to spend a fortune on senior salaries.
- Worked with councils to deliver a new era of town hall transparency, with town halls to publish their spending and contracts over £500 online by the end of the year; my own Department and its agencies have published their own spending over £500 online.



Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 39; August 2010

- Pledged to give councils stronger powers on licensing to tackle the alcohol-fuelled violence that plagues local high streets at night.
- Announced plans to give councils a lead role in public health, make our health service more answerable to patients and ensure more joint working with the NHS and social care.

Funding for frontline services

- Increased flexibility for councils by freeing up the ring-fencing of local authority budgets by £1.2 billion – as the first stage in phasing out such ring-fencing; this gives councils power and discretion to focus their resources on frontline services.
- Delivered £6 billion of savings this year to help tackle the budget deficit, but protecting the £29 billion of funding for Formula Grant – the funding of councils used for frontline services, and ensured that no council had a reduction in revenue of more than 2 per cent.
- Secured and authorised £1.25 billion of the last Government's £1.5 billion housing pledge, despite the lack of sustainable funding and the massive budget deficit we inherited. Tackling the deficit will help prevent soaring interest rates for home owners.

Regional government

- Taken steps to replace distant and unaccountable Regional Development Agencies with new local enterprise partnerships of local firms and councils working together.
- Stated we are minded to close all the unelected Government Offices for the Regions – they are agents of Whitehall which interfere with local councils.

Big Society

- Moved to cut the red tape, paperwork and form filling that hinder local people from organising street parties, fetes and local community events.
- Encouraged councils and residents to fly the English flag and have pride in our nation, rather than letting political correctness or 'health and safety' get in the way.

Many of these changes will have an impact on local matters in Mole Valley and the quality of life residents enjoy.

Sir Paul Beresford

Member of Parliament for Mole Valley



Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 39; August 2010

Feature Article

Traveller Sites



Mole Valley residents, as well as Mole Valley District Council and Guildford Borough Council, have had and are still having real problems with unofficial traveller sites and planning applications.

Thankfully the Government are taking steps to tackle the problem of illegal gypsy and traveller sites.

With the August bank holiday upon us, the new measures are particularly apt. In the past, travellers have bought land and laid concrete on it during bank holiday weekends, safe in the knowledge that planning authorities will not interfere for three solid days.

However, Ministers will prevent this from happening by giving Councils new powers to stop such settlements and by ensuring that enforcement officials are on duty during the weekends.

As the government have stated, it is clearly unfair on local homeowners that certain travellers use this loophole to create a home for themselves over the bank holiday and then seek planning permission afterwards.

Changes in the planning system should seek to quell any tensions with travelling communities. The current government have criticised the previous Labour government for undermining relations. Ministers remain committed to providing travellers with better access to education and health.



Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 39; August 2010

News in brief

Jobless figures fall



UK unemployment has fallen to 2.46m. The three months to June saw the largest increase in the number of people

employed since 1989.

The number of people unemployed in the UK fell by 49,000 to 2.46 million in the three months to June, according to official figures.

It was the second month in a row that the jobless number fell - the biggest drop in three years.

The number of people claiming unemployment benefits fell by 3,800 in July to 1.46 million.

Changes in Parliament



The House of Commons Commission has approved a package of measures that will cut £12 million from this year's budget.

These measures include a commitment to save £500,000 by raising catering prices.

From Monday 23 August 2010, Cafeteria prices increased to be brought into line with staff restaurants of Central Government Departments. Increases in other venues will be phased in during the autumn.

In accordance with the wishes of the Speaker, John Bercow, The House of Commons nursery will open to its first intake of children on 1 September.

Open to children aged three months to five years, the facility will offer forty places for the children of Members, Members' staff and House of Commons staff.