



# Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 5; August 2007

## 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

### Possibility of October General Election



The by-elections of Ealing Southall and Sedgefield were not brilliant; the total numbers voting were well down on the General Election. The results should encourage David Cameron and his new team to consolidate our policies and be prepared for a General Election.

If Gordon Brown looks at his temporary popularity he may decide to go to the country in October – announce his intentions at his Party Conference and cause our Party Conference to be cancelled and therefore to deny us the chance to showcase our team and our ideas. If Brown waits then the financial overhang may well catch up with Labour. The delay in turning the spending taps off by going for the 6.0% jugular may yet cause 7¼ % rates by next spring. With Government debt going up even more with the costs of Network Rail, bailing out London Transport, the Olympics and the underwriting of 20 year mortgages then we, as a country, are still spending money we do not have. The £ / US\$ rate of 2.05 is protecting us, at the moment, from £1 per litre at the petrol pumps – but any weakness over Iraq, Russia or Venezuela could cost us dear.

Another financial headline to cause concern over the past few weeks was the idea of the Government using £20 billion of supposed unallocated reserves held by the life assurance companies to bolster the general compensation pool for final salary pensions. The fact that these monies belong to either the shareholders or to the policy holders does not seem to concern Mr. Brown or Mr. Darling.

Should we face a General Election in October, I do hope all members and supporters of the Mole Valley Conservative Association will be prepared to support Paul Beresford and to assist Anne Milton in Guildford.

Do please remember that because our new Prime Minister now wears a blue tie, it does not mean he will have changed his basic views. Mr. Darling's need for money will have to be met by more taxes or more borrowing.

Enjoy August – let us hope for some good cricketing weather.

**Mr Colin Crispin**  
**Chairman, Mole Valley Conservative Association**



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Issue 5; August 2007

## News from the House of Commons

### Government housing plans



I recently spoke to Mark D'Arcy on Radio 4's *Today in Parliament* programme to comment on Labour's future housing plans. The Government's Housing Minister, Yvette Cooper, has announced that a major investment of £8 billion will fund affordable housing projects and ambitious reforms to increase the supply of low cost and social homes.

Furthermore a new Green Paper will detail how the Prime Minister's plans to reach his target of creating 3 million more homes by 2020. The Green Paper will apparently focus on three key principles - more and quicker homes, more affordable homes and greener, better designed homes.

There is no doubt that housing is a major political issue with public land being released for house building and targets for the supply of new homes steadily increasing to meet demand. However, we have heard these sorts of plans to build new homes before. The former Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, has already made a mockery of Labour's housing and planning system, taking gardens away in the South East whilst threatening the north east with bulldozers.

If we don't change the whole attitude and encourage people, as in fact the Conservatives were doing before Labour took over, to try and look at the quite superb areas and opportunities that there are further north we're going to end up with exactly the same failure.

**Sir Paul Beresford**  
Member of Parliament for Mole Valley

## Report from Surrey County Council

### Publication of SCC Corporate Plan



**Speculation over future of Regional Assembly** – Jumping on the bandwagon of Conservative policy the Brown government has announced it will abolish Regional Assemblies in 2010, however instead of transferring their powers back to Strategic County Councils like Surrey its will instead give these powers to a government quango SEEDA. It will mean that decisions on housing numbers, transport schemes and development decisions once taken at a Surrey level will be even further away not to mention the potential loss of democratic powers and accountability. If you thought that the South East Assembly was remote, at least it had all the elected leaders of our Surrey authorities on it.

This development agency could be run by government officials and cronies. Are we surprised that Gordon Brown's initial promise to repatriate local powers doesn't stack up? No...

**Councils' warning on Epsom health changes** – Surrey County Council Leader, Nick Skellett, joined south west London council leaders this week to warn of growing concerns at NHS plans for the mid-Surrey and south London area. Mr Skellett issued a joint statement with the leaders of the London boroughs of Merton



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and Sutton after talks on the deepening uncertainty about the future of health services in Epsom, St Helier and the surrounding areas. Proposals to reconfigure health services under the Better Healthcare Closer to Home initiative have been dogged by delays. The leaders of the councils, which together represent 1.4 million people, are warning of massive public disillusionment with the NHS locally. Nick Skellett said: "The NHS has raised public expectations of new, better healthcare services in Surrey and south west London. It appears to us that the delivery will fall short of the promises made".

**Surrey Fire and Rescue** are part of the County Council's services and were on hand to assist in the recent flooding across the country. Chertsey firefighters arrived home on Wednesday after helping the flood rescue efforts in Yorkshire. Eight crew members from the station in Addlestone have been working in the village of Toll Bar, near Doncaster, since the early hours of Sunday, operating six high volume pumps that suck up the flood water which goes through a hose to a river about a mile away.

Part of my new responsibilities in Policy and Performance is to oversee the publication of Surrey's Corporate Plan which shows how well the Council performs on behalf of its one million residents. The plan is entitled "An outstanding organisation making Surrey a better place" to echo our vision of what we want to deliver for our residents. It reports back on council achievements over the past year and brings together the four priorities we are focusing on in 2007-08. These are: improving highways; boosting the educational attainment of children in care; helping more vulnerable adults live independently; and increasing recycling. The plan is available on line through the council's website at [corporate plan](#)

**Helyn Clack**  
**County Councillor for Dorking Rural**  
**Executive Member for Policy and Performance**

## Report from Guildford Borough Council

### Civic Hall project back on course



At last planning permission has been granted for the new Civic Hall. After the long delay to the process of replacing the tired 1960s facility, caused by a legal challenge which was withdrawn at a very late stage and the subsequent withdrawal of our chosen contractor, the project is now back on course. The next step is to tender and award the contract to build.

A planning application for a new hotel next door to the new Civic Hall is currently under consideration. If approved, these two projects will reinvigorate the Upper High Street.

Recycling is going well, with unaudited figures for June showing a recycling rate of 40%. We now include plastic bottles in the kerbside collection as well as paper, cardboard, cans, glass and textiles. We are currently trialling the collection of food waste.

Our MORI figures show a very high level of satisfaction with Guildford Borough Council services.



# Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 5; August 2007

Looking forward, we are conscious that the Comprehensive Spending Review is unlikely to be generous to Councils like ours and we have a group away day in September to reappraise our spending priorities.

We await with some trepidation the publication, expected in August, of the result of the public inquiry into the south east plan which will set out recommendations for house building numbers in the south east. We fear these will be higher than in the draft plan and that the Secretary of State may well, in a few months' time, increase even those higher numbers.

**Cllr Jenny Wicks**  
**Lead Member for Environment, Guildford Borough Council**

## Report from Conservative MEP

### The Dismemberment of England



One of the threats that faces our country is the dismemberment of England. Under Labour, England is being divided into nine euro-regions. Mole Valley is part of a monstrous area called "South East", stretching as far as Dover and Milton Keynes. Local services, including firefighters and the police, are being reorganised at a regional level. County councils are losing ground to the South East of England Regional Assembly (SEERA).

The trouble is, no one has agreed to any of this. If you are upset with, say, the housing targets that SEERA has set for Mole Valley, tough. Your vote is irrelevant.

I am leading a campaign to abolish SEERA and pass its powers back down to local authorities. To lend your support, please send an email to [daniel.hannan@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:daniel.hannan@europarl.europa.eu) including the word "SEERA" in the title.

**Daniel Hannan MEP**  
**Conservative MEP, South East England**



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Issue 5; August 2007

## News in brief

### Mole Valley's Waste Service



Understandably, many Mole Valley residents were at first dismayed when they were told of fortnightly collections but the alternate collections of green recycling bins has encouraged Mole Valley residents to step up a gear with their recycling efforts. Sir Paul says that Mole Valley District Council has "gone from being bottom in Surrey to the top in terms of recycling." Sir Paul recently shared his views with the *Surrey Advertiser* and told them that Mole Valley District Council has recently become involved in a trial to assess the effectiveness of a separate rubbish collection purely for food waste, to be run alongside the alternate weekly collections of green and black bins. Approximately 4000 households in the north of Mole Valley, including Bookham and Fetcham will be taking part in the new scheme. Sir Paul is keen to get involved too, "I know I get frowned upon by my family if I put the wrong thing in the wrong bin. I think people are coming round to the idea that recycling is the way forward."

### Common Field Sand Quarry Application



A planning application which threatens to negatively impact upon the areas of Betchworth, Brockham and surrounding villages has been submitted to Surrey County Council. JJ Franks have applied for permission to extract 770,000 tonnes of sand from the Common Field with work commencing in 2012 and expected to complete in 2024. Local residents were invited to write to the Council with their views and objections by 23 July

2007. The main arguments against the sand quarry include the fact that the proposed location is in Metropolitan Green Belt, the potential disturbance of skylark habitat and the detrimental impact it would have on the health and safety of pupils attending nearby Acorns School.

### Real Nappy Campaign is disposable



Another example of this government's relentless and reckless use of taxpayers' money came to light after the three year Real Nappy Campaign, costing at least £30 million was quietly dropped by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Former waste minister, Ben Bradshaw, confirmed that the decision had been made in light of research which showed that the impact of burying disposable nappies in landfill sites was matched by the energy consumed and greenhouse gases generated by washing reusables. Understandably, many MPs and pressure groups have accused the Department of wasting taxpayers' money in an effort to display green credentials. The washable towelling nappy of yesteryear was kicked into touch by modern throw away nappies with Mr Bradshaw forced to admit that "Reusable nappies may reduce demands on landfill but they still impact on the environment in other ways, such as the water and energy used in washing and drying them."

Sir Paul Beresford who is a member of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry into household waste commented, "This seems to have been put out without anybody noticing. The main success of the Real Nappy Campaign seems to have been to give those of us who are mildly politically incorrect a tremendous horse-laugh."



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Issue 5; August 2007

## Feature Article

### The Fight for Tighter Regulation of Sex Offenders

As many of you will be aware, Sir Paul has been an ardent campaigner for tighter regulation of sex offenders for many years. On Tuesday 17 July 2007 he joined in the debate on legislation regarding codes of practice for encrypted data on computers. Computer users can ensure that the data can only be read by them by using an encrypted code or key that only they have access to. This practice is becoming more sophisticated and widespread with technological advances of programmes such as Vista. The Minister of State for the Home Department, Mr Tony McNulty, explained to the members of the committee that the regulations would give public authorities the powers to require data from the defendant's computer in an intelligible form or to require disclosure of the key to make the data intelligible.



Sir Paul told the committee that encryption laws would help with a variety of cases, "The importance of encryption is that the police have been waiting for seven years for this particular statutory instrument to go through, because they want to use the legislation in serious cases involving fraud, serious robbery, smuggling, human trafficking and paedophilia, just to touch on a few. It is vital that the police can access the information that is on the computers. They increasingly find when they get to encrypted computers that the hard drive is not even there, that the individual has logged on using a floppy disk or that a PIN or key is needed to access the information."

Sir Paul has campaigned to raise the punishment for failure to disclose an encryption code from just 2 years to 10 years because paedophiles frequently choose the shorter prison sentence to disclosing incriminating data to the police which would carry a much higher prison tariff and name them on the sex offenders register. Sir Paul concluded his thoughts with this message to the Minister, "although I welcome the measure, it is timid and late."



Furthermore, this week the website MySpace which is popular with teenagers all over the world has admitted that 29,000 registered American sex offenders were found to be networking on the internet site. My Space is a virtual chatroom for young people to share music, hobbies and photos but paedophiles are infiltrating the site with the aim of grooming children. The scale of the problem was realised by the company when they cross referenced MySpace users' details with those of convicted sex offenders, which they have access to in the USA through Megan's Law. As the website is global, theoretically British children may well have been targets of these offenders. Sir Paul pointed out, in an interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, that the number of offenders who were caught is "just the tip of the iceberg", adding "They are only the ones foolish enough to get caught."