



# Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 7; October 2007

## Welcoming note

Welcome to the October 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 October issue.

## A word from the chair

### Northern Rock hits the headlines



No election before 2009 at the earliest – so we can now expect a Government Wealth Warning on all instruments issued by the Treasury and all statements issuing from Numbers 10 and 11 Downing Street.

Last month I issued a plea for a 6% base rate. Unfortunately this was not achieved but, as the money markets at one time had inter-bank three month money at 6.75% and on 25<sup>th</sup> September the rate was still 6.35%, then hopefully this will achieve the same result as an official base rate of 6%. We have to hope that the current concern caused by poor lending practice, a less than perfect derivatives market and bank managers who had been trying to run before they could walk, will not now let much cheap liquidity into the markets so that inflation once again becomes a problem.

In September Northern Rock hit the headlines – a bank with an excellent asset base but with a market-orientated need for funds – as was realised when the taps were turned off. The FSA gave every indication of not worrying about the liquidity gap, perhaps not even understanding the collateralized mortgage obligations (CMO) market where some of the Northern Rock assets had been secured.

The real result for the taxpayer is that there is now at least £30billion of additional contingent liabilities to go alongside the National Rail contingent liability. To safeguard the deposits of the Northern Rock customers was sensible, but one wonders why support them and not support the policy holder in Equitable Life? Would the support have been as great if the bank had been "Southern Swamp" and based in Dorking?

Mr Prudence himself is now Prime Minister and Mr Darling has taken over as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Government's net borrowing for August was up at £9.1billion, which was far higher than expected. The Chancellor lectures us all on the need for financial probity yet, as ever, the State secret is seen to be profligate. What an irony that the price of gold is at \$730USD an ounce, way above the bottom of the market which Mr Brown called accurately – but unfortunately as a seller of the reserves not as a buyer.

David Cameron's think tanks must make useful contributions. The report on "Green Policies" was not well received by the public and has now been amended before being included in any policy statement but the changes from the unfortunate headlines of a few weeks ago need to be broadcast far and wide.



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The recent statement from Gordon Brown reflects the fear that the Labour Party have been feeling since the superb Conservative Conference. It further underlines that David Cameron is a leader to unite the Party.

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

## News from the House of Commons

### Raising the Inheritance Tax threshold



Hot on the heels of George Osborne's Conservative Party Conference impressive speech where he proposed a dramatic increase to the Inheritance tax (IHT) threshold, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling, decided to announce his own IHT changes in his Pre-Budget Report.

As the old adage states, imitation is the highest form of flattery. However, rather than following Osborne's lead to increase the threshold to such a degree that 9 million family homes would be taken out of Inheritance Tax, Darling's announcement was simply another tax con.

George Osborne's discussed and justified his reasons for wanting to increase the current inheritance tax threshold – the level at which people begin to pay the tax – from £300,000 to £1 million. Inheritance tax was originally intended to apply only the very wealthiest in society but now 4 in 10 homeowners in Britain are within the inheritance tax net. Since 1997 the number of households paying IHT has more than doubled but the Conservatives radical proposal would ensure that only "millionaires" are eligible to pay inheritance tax, saving many homeowners from the iniquities of inheritance tax.

Alistair Darling purported to give families a huge boost by increasing the IHT threshold to £600,000 but, as commentators have been quick to point out, any married couple who consult a lawyer or accountant can already make use of both their £300,000 allowances to transfer £600,000 tax free. Good tax planning means that 500,000 couples in Britain already take advantage of this common practice of splitting the value of a property, so this latest announcement will make no material difference to them at all.

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

## Report from Surrey County Council

### Conservative Party Conference, Blackpool 2007



After a really fantastic week at Blackpool, where the weather for once was as sunny as the party's mood, I have returned re-invigorated (as if I needed to be) and champing at the bit!

The conference opened with a stirring speech from William Hague – he told us to be united, the party is ready to go to the country, and to look forward to some really new ideas and policies over the coming conference days. The delegates were then enthused to set about a high calibre of fringe meetings and policy announcements.



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On Tuesday, George Osborne announced two really welcomed fiscal policies, the abolition of stamp duty for first time house buyers, and raising the threshold of Inheritance Tax to £1 million. Ian Duncan Smith told us about how Britain's society had broken under Labour and how we could put it back together again working with some inspired voluntary organisations, supporting families and young people as they become adults. Lord Heseltine told us about his work to revitalise the cities with all his well remembered brilliance. And we heard from James Paice about how this Labour Government has failed the countryside for the last ten years –reminding me only too well of the outbreaks of disease in our own County which seem to have come from poorly protected government laboratories

Unlike the Labour party conference, the shadow cabinet spoke at length and interestingly, getting their policy ideas across and giving credit to all the members that had helped in the working groups.

Of course the charismatic and professional speech of David Cameron demonstrated his leadership skills and the breadth and depth of Team Cameron. Not in the least arrogant but serious and grown up, he told us what the Conservatives would do when we were back in power to put right the problems of this current Labour Government. He told us that only by understanding the failures of New Labour, could the Conservatives address the problems and find the right solutions. "Call that election, we will fight, Britain will win!" I was on cloud nine as we stormed out of Blackpool suddenly enveloped in a downpour for the first time all week, but we were stirred up and ready for that long drive home!

Mole Valley Conservatives were well represented at the conference in Blackpool.

Back at work at County Hall, I see that in this month's full Council meeting a motion has been tabled by the Leader of the Council to debate the referendum on the EU Treaty debacle. Gordon Brown says he is content that the red lines he and Tony Blair drew across the constitution are sufficient for us to accept this treaty without a referendum. We disagree.

The examination in public over the proposals to build a waste plant in Capel went ahead. I was pleased that the Inspector considered the history of the previous planning application and the consequential judicial review along with local feeling, which was enough to dedicate three full days to hearing both sides. This was the first time that this had been done under the new regulations. I sat through most days of the hearing and heard the case put most strongly by the Capel Action Group and Mole Valley Council. Our MP Sir Paul Beresford also gave evidence against the proposals.

The South East Plan Inspector's report was released on 28 August and in many respects it endorsed the approach taken by the Assembly. Although it recommended the building of 32,000 new homes a year in the region until 2026, this was just 10% more than the 28,900 in the South East Plan and equates to the present build rate. The report was not good news for Government, which had, with the Barker Report and through SEEDA, sought figures way above this.

Unfortunately, Surrey was given a disproportionate amount of the extra housing so the Leader of the Council held a meeting with the districts and boroughs on 28 August to gauge opinion. There were mixed views with Guildford in particular being very unhappy. However, a joint statement was agreed saying that, although the overall regional figure was reluctantly accepted, we were very concerned at the disproportionate amount of extra dwellings allocated to Surrey. In addition, we did not accept reviews of the green belt and we felt it was now necessary that we would have to review infrastructure requirements for the county in the light of the proposed increases in development.



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Now we are waiting to hear (tomorrow) what the new swinging grant will be given to the County in the Comprehensive Spending review, although we don't expect it to be generous. The County has been campaigning over the unfair allocation of grant by government to Surrey for years, but it falls on deaf ears, another reason why we need a change in Downing Street.

The Conservative members at County Hall will be considering the move of the government to abolish all the regional assemblies in England (hooray) and to give all their powers to government development agencies (boo!)

Once again Brown's government ensures that local powers and decisions of vital importance to us are made in some high up department with no local democratic accountability.

And after this debacle over 'will he, won't he' go for a general election, Gordon Brown's honeymoon has been brought to a full stop with his calculating centralising 'I know what's best' attitude. We must now concentrate on getting out the message that the Conservatives must win both locally in our Councils and in the Country before we completely lose the right to say what should happen in our lives. No wonder he is compared to Stalin.

**Helyn Clack**  
**Member for Dorking Rural**  
**Executive Member for Policy and Performance, Surrey County Council**

## Report from Guildford Borough Council

### Holy Trinity By-election



Although Gordon Brown may not have decided to call a General Election, there is a by-election in Guildford Borough. Following the sad death of Cllr Michael Crocombe, we are fighting an election in Holy Trinity ward, which returned one Conservative and two Liberal Democrats in May. We have high hopes of gaining a second seat when the election takes place on 8 November.

However, the Liberal Democrats' dirty tricks campaign is already under way. Guildford Borough Council has launched a trial of a weekly food waste collection, which includes continuing the weekly collection of other recyclables, plus a fortnightly collection of dry residual waste. The aim of this trial is to look at the best way to achieve our recycling target of 60% by 2010 without leaving smelly food waste to be collected once a fortnight. Already, this is being misrepresented by the Liberal Democrats on the doorstep, yet they *supported* the trial when the council took the decision to proceed with it just one month ago.

Guildford Borough Council has objected in the strongest possible terms to the preliminary submission of proposals by Star Energy for a gas storage facility at Albury. However, our powers over this are limited. Unfortunately, Star Energy has taken advantage of the Gas Act, which means that the application will be decided by the Government and not the local planning authority.

Construction of this facility would cause disruption in East Clandon during the construction process, would result in a processing facility being constructed near Send Prison (just within Ripley Parish) and further



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plant being added to the existing low key facility at Long Reach, West Horsley. This has caused real concern to local residents, but we have very limited power to prevent it.

Finally, Alistair Darling's pre-budget speech appears to spell bad news for council taxpayers. This year's local government settlement has been pitched at a very low level, which requires local councils to either trim their budgets or impose an above inflation increase in council tax. Tough decisions will be required on spending priorities as a result.

**Cllr Andrew French**  
Deputy Leader, Guildford Borough Council

## Report from Conservative MEP

### Will Brown get away with the Euro-Constitution?



And so the quadrille begins. One country puts a deliberately provocative proposal on the table for the sole purpose of allowing another to veto it, and then swagger before its electorate. Each leader issues Lear-like threats for the benefit of his home audience. But, behind the scenes, the deal has already been done.

In less than two weeks' time, the new text of the Euro-constitution will be finalised. Yet we already know what it will contain. The draft has finally been published, and we can see for ourselves what we always suspected: that the contents are identical to those rejected by 55 per cent of French voters and 62 per cent of Dutch voters three years ago.

The interesting question is whether the media will fall for it again. Last time, every newspaper except The Telegraph went along with the charade, reporting breathlessly that Tony Blair was "under pressure" to defend his "red lines" and predicting that the whole summit would "end in crisis".

But for the events of last week, I suspect that the Broon would have got similarly credulous and gushing treatment. But things are not as they were. The PM has squandered that most priceless of political commodities, the benefit of the doubt.

I'm sure he'll still do his best to synthesise rows, to strut and snarl, to look tough. But, as we now know, tough is the last thing he is. The Broon is a feartie, poltroon, a girlie-man. The narrative that he had scripted – patriotic leader stands up to dodgy foreigners – is no longer plausible. The Lisbon summit will confirm that, despite all of Brown's assurances to the contrary, we are crawling back to the same treaty on which he promised a referendum. Defeat will mingle with deceit: never an attractive combination in politics.

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



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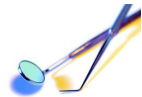
## News in brief

### New polls give Conservatives the upper hand



This weekend has seen two opinion polls published, both indicating a surge into the lead for the Conservative Party. The BPIX poll in the *Mail on Sunday* showed the Conservative Party at 41%, Labour trailing with 37% and the Liberal Democrats at only 11%. The ICM poll in the *Sunday Telegraph* was even better, giving the Conservatives a strong lead with 43% against Labour's 36% and the Liberal Democrats 14%. This ICM poll is the first in over a decade to show the Conservative Party with an overall majority. A strong Conservative Party Conference and Brown's indecisiveness towards an autumn election are cited as the main factors behind this about turn in public opinion. The raft of policies, combined with a dynamic and united cabinet have lent real credibility to the Conservatives in the eyes of the electorate. It looks like the 'election that never was' will come back to haunt Brown for some time to come.

### NHS patients forced to pull out their own teeth under new dental contract



Since the NHS dental contract was introduced in April last year, the largest survey of its kind has found that NHS patients are being left with no option but to go private or take matters into their own hands. The survey of 5,200 patients revealed that 20% had forgone treatment due to high costs and a shocking 6% admitted to having resorted to self treatment. Of the 750 dentists polled, 58% believe quality of care for patients has deteriorated since the introduction of the contract. The Dental Laboratories Association says the new contract places financial concerns over clinical care leading Chief Executive, Richard Daniels, to accuse the service of resorting to methods from

the "Dark ages of dentistry". The government claims this contract was introduced as a way of cutting out unnecessary complex treatments, but in reality Mr Daniels says dentists are increasingly opting for the cheaper or simpler treatment option available, as it will not make a difference to their personal income. The new contract has also failed to provide patients with better access to NHS dentists. Of those surveyed who did not use NHS dentists, 35% said it was because they were unable to find an NHS dentist. The 6% who admitted to self treatment blamed high costs or lack of professional care and some told stories of tooth extraction using pliers and confessed to repairing broken crowns with ordinary glue.

### MVCA Patrons Club

On Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> October at Denbies Wine Estate in Dorking, 60 MVCA Patrons enjoyed a splendid 4 course dinner with wine with guided tours of the fermentation process too.



The guest speaker was Philip Johnson, the Home Affairs Editor and Deputy Editor for *The Daily Telegraph* and this year's winner of the annual Charles Douglas-Home Memorial Trust Award, an essay competition established in honour of the former Editor of *The Times*. There are 3 events held each year for Patrons who give most generously to MVCA each year. This year, the first event was a dinner at a Mole Valley restaurant with a guest speaker from the House of Lords. The second event was a summer garden party at the home of a Patron with guest speaker, Humfrey Malins MP. The third event has previously been held at the House of Commons. The Patrons Club is now 3 years old and proving to be a good sounding board for some of MVCA's members who also give generously in time, resource and money for elections.

If you would like to know more about the Patrons Club, please call 01306 883312.



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## Feature Article

### Royal Surrey Hospital is saved!

Local residents and MPs were thrilled to hear Surrey Primary Care Trust (PCT) confirm that the Royal Surrey County Hospital had been saved from cuts and closures at their Board meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September. Furthermore, there will be no closure of the A & E Department and many areas will even benefit from improvements.



The previous week, Sir Paul breathed a sigh of relief when he learnt that the PCT's "Fit for the Future" programme included recommendations for all services to be kept at the Royal Surrey but there was understandable reticence amongst Surrey MPs to crack open the champagne before the PCT Board 'rubber stamped' the plans.

Over the past 18 months, threats to close the entire hospital or at least cut major departments such as A&E, maternity and paediatrics have all been on the cards.

Anne Milton MP for Guildford has fought tirelessly for the campaign with support from Sir Paul Beresford MP and all of the other Surrey MPs whose constituents would also have been adversely affected by the hospitals proposed cuts, although this campaign has always stressed its non-political aspirations and it has been a cross-party effort.

There have been rallies in Guildford which have attracted vast numbers of local people and more unusual events to attract attention for the cause such as a candlelit vigil in Parliament Square.

The 'Save the Royal Surrey Campaign' is very grateful to the local individuals who have donated money, written letters to the PCT and Ministers, marched, volunteered, attended meetings and sent thousands of letters and emails of support.

There is now likely to be a consultation on renal services to help local people suffering with kidney disease in Surrey. The Royal Surrey offers a superb service to patients and Sir Paul Beresford MP for Mole Valley is delighted that his constituents can continue to use such a fantastic Hospital.

