DAVE POULTON STANDS UP FOR RESIDENTS

Dave Poulton with Paul and Rob

Following several requests from residents, **Dave Poulton** asked a question at a recent Southend City Council Meeting to seek reassurances that the current administration is committed to further road safety measures, particularly around **Eastwood Rise** where there have been several accidents. Cllr Buck in charge of Highways said they didn't see a problem in these roads and that no further action would be taken. We have made a formal request for more monitoring and Dave would like to hear from residents who have experienced problems.
Contact details on page 2.

COUNCILLOR'S ALLOWANCES

At a recent Southend City Council Meeting Councillors were asked to consider a proposed increase of 4.4% in their basic allowances. The Conservative Executive Councillors were also looking at a further 12% increase in their additional allowances. Paul said that the City could not afford such increases at this time, and he and Rob and the Liberal Democrat Group voted against them. Sadly, ALL the Conservatives present voted in favour of the increases and the proposal was passed.

Kingsdown School RAAC Concrete – Update

Cllr Rob McMullan says "It was pleasing to see quick action taken at Kingsdown School when RAAC concrete was discovered in the building. This was something I'd been pressing the Council to check for some time.

"It was great to see neighbouring Eastwood Primary School offer help with extra classrooms while Kingsdown were waiting for temporary buildings to be set up." The Council will continue to offer Kingsdown support as they seek to rebuild the affected parts of the school.

BUDGET CUTS COMING FROM THE TORIES?

The Conservative Administration has produced a Budget Paper which proposes that the Council should close two of the five Branch Libraries **AND** Five of the nine Children's Centres across the City. It is also proposing to cut the Parks Budget by £250,000 a year, on top of the cuts they made a few months ago.

Your Liberal Democrat Councillors, Paul Collins and Rob McMullan are very concerned how these cuts will affect Eastwood and understand that **Kent Elms Library** and the **Children's Centre at Eastwood Primary School** are particularly at risk of closure. Paul says "Rob and I will fight any cuts that harm the most vulnerable and affect those that have no alternative in accessing these services in Eastwood."

Keep in touch with Paul and Rob on their Facebook Pages or email them and ask to be kept informed of these proposals.

Paul and Rob outside Kent Elms Library

CAR THEFTS IN EASTWOOD

There has been a disturbing increase in car break ins and thefts in Eastwood, as well as unsuccessful attempts. At a recent Police Liaison Meeting **Cllr Rob McMullan** urged the Police to provide more patrols to deter thieves. Across England and Wales in the year to June 2023 around 140,000 vehicles were reported as stolen or attempted to be. Of these, 108,000 were unsolved and closed without any prosecution. The Police claimed that not all attempted break ins have been reported to them and urged all victims to do so with any evidence from doorbell or CCTV footage. This would help justify the need for more patrols. The Police did mention that Ford Fiestas and any type of Range Rover were particularly vulnerable. **Rob says**, "We urge people to have good security with a steering wheel lock on their cars."

PAUL WELCOMES NEW TREES NEAR SYMONS AVENUE

Paul and Rob are pleased to announce the planting of seven new trees in Eastwood. Wren Avenue and the walkway from Symons Avenue have new trees. Paul says "We are always pushing for more Street Trees and looking for good spots to plant them

SCHOOL STREETS – WHAT DO *YOU* THINK?

At a recent Highways Meeting **Cllr Rob McMullan** called for the introduction of "School Streets" schemes at schools in Eastwood. This followed concerns raised by some parents and residents about dangerous and inconsiderate parking affecting children's safety and health, pollution from idling vehicles and congestion in roads outside schools at the start and end of the school day. It would mean closing off the road for a short period to create a safe and traffic free environment when children go in and out of school. It would only be possible in side roads, not on main roads like Rayleigh Road.
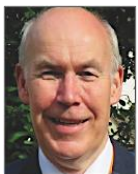
What do **you** think? **Contact Paul, Rob or Dave with your views**

Council Elections

Each Ward in Southend currently has three Councillors. Paul Collins, Rob McMullan and a Conservative represent Eastwood Park at the moment. The Boundary Commission is reviewing all the Wards in Southend with the intention of adjusting all Wards sizes to have roughly a similar number of voters. Some Ward boundaries are likely to change. As a consequence of these changes ALL 51 Councillors, in ALL Wards, will have to be elected afresh.

As a further potential change to the current arrangements the Council will soon embark on a Consultation with the residents of the City as to whether the current system of electing one Councillor each year in May (bar one) for a term of four years or have just one round of "all up" elections every 4 years. There are pro's and con's with both systems. **What do you think?** Please keep a look out for the Consultation on the Council's website and Social Media and make sure you have your say.

Eastwood Park Liberal Democrat Team: Always here to help!

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Eastwood Park Lib Dem Surgeries / Meet Your Councillor sessions twice each month!
2nd Saturday: Kent Elms Library, 10-12 noon
4th Saturday: The Oakwood, 10-12 noon

You can always contact us about issues, or report them directly on the Council website at "MySouthend" (but let us know so we are aware and can follow up your problem)

Can you help deliver our Focus leaflets in your neighbourhood? Would you like to join the Liberal Democrats? Please contact Paul, Rob or Dave!