

LEIGH AND WEST LEIGH FOCUS

The Liberal Democrats 
WORKING FOR YOU



*Peter
and
Katie*



Old hand Peter Wexham and new hopeful Katie Kurilecz will be our Leigh and West Leigh candidates in the May local elections. Meet them inside ...

Southend Airport: Environmental Action Plan on the horizon PAGE 4

BUDGET FOR THE PEOPLE



By Carole Mulroney
Liberal Democrat
Council Group Leader

A budget to make things better.

It is clear to most that the ever-increasing needs of child and adult social care are putting excessive pressure on all local authorities.

Southend is no different but we cannot shirk our responsibility to those most vulnerable in our society.

So inevitably the budget contains the allowed increases for these services.

But you as residents want more from your Council and

TURN TO PAGE 4

● Schools ● Road repairs ● Environment ● Street lights ● Homes
● Flood prevention ● Social care ...there's something for everyone

Youth and experience Meet our Lib Dem candidates

Katie Kurilecz *Prospective candidate for West Leigh*

IT is exciting news to introduce Katie Kurilecz as your Liberal Democrat candidate for West Leigh in the local elections this May.

Katie, who grew up in America, but traces her roots to Southend, moved to Westcliff with her husband in 2017, explaining: "We fell in love with Leigh and all the local area has to offer and feel very lucky to be able to buy our first home in this wonderful setting."

"For me, it's also great to reconnect with my grandfather's past. He was born in Southend and was one of the British troops evacuated from Dunkirk, so I think of him every time I see the 'little ship' Endeavour."

As a passionate advocate for

others, Katie will be an active voice for Leigh residents and community.

Speaking on why she is running for West Leigh Katie said: "The Lib Dem team are doing fantastic work bringing about real change for Leigh and its residents. I'm particularly

impressed with all they are doing on the environment which is so important

to protecting people's health and ensuring a future for the next generations."

"As a Councillor for West Leigh, I will aim to work hard to build on this change, ensuring residents' voices are heard and the issues which matter to them are given full consideration."



Peter Wexham *Prospective candidate for Leigh*

IT will come as no surprise to residents that our candidate in the forthcoming May elections for Leigh ward will be Peter Wexham.

He is known to you all as a long standing councillor who works hard for the ward and has a special affinity with all things environment plus a love of Leigh, its fishing and history.

Peter's achievements are vast so we have highlighted just a few of them. He was instrumental in ...

- Getting Anglian Water and the County Council to build a raised seawall on the south east corner of Two Tree Island.

- Bringing about the setting up of a secondary sewage treatment works to stop sewage getting into the sea.
- Stopping the Tory Council from building a super casino on the foreshore and allowing large blocks of flats to help pay for it.

- Setting up the Cory Environmental Trust that gave landfill tax money back to the local environment and good causes.
- Battling

for years to get fisheries grants to improve and modernise the local industry.

● Fighting to save Strand Wharf from developers.

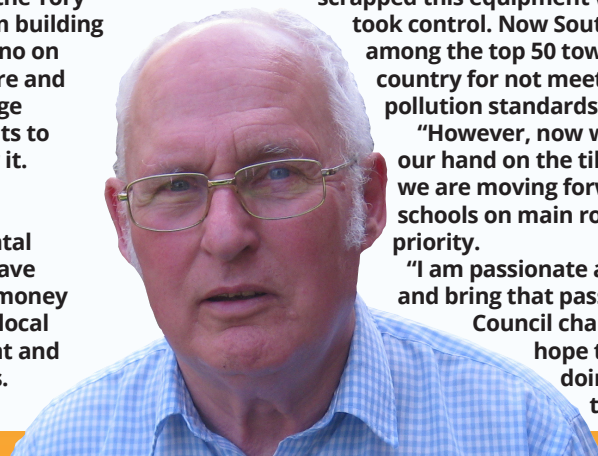
Peter said: "I have campaigned on the environment all my life and, working with others, have been able to get a lot done. But I still have the desire to achieve more."

"Carole Mulronee and I have managed to get the environment and climate change up the agenda and into Council policy which Carole is taking forward."

"I am passionate about improving our air quality. In the 1990s I got the Council to purchase kit which measured air pollutants. The Tories scrapped this equipment when they took control. Now Southend is among the top 50 towns in the country for not meeting air pollution standards."

"However, now we have our hand on the tiller again we are moving forward, with schools on main roads a priority."

"I am passionate about Leigh and bring that passion to the Council chamber. I hope to continue doing just that."



ALL CALM ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

By Cllr Beth Hooper

A WIN for residents in West Leigh!

It is great to be able to report back with good news for West Leigh ward.

Congratulations to everyone who got involved with the consultation for tackling speeding issues on Hadleigh and Western Roads.

It has been so exciting to be part of a team of people who have come together to improve major routes through our area.

Thank you to the many residents who made the persuasive argument for traffic calming measures to be implemented on these roads.

What you asked for is now going to happen.

Your engagement did a great deal to convince Southend Borough Council to vote through a scheme that will help make these roads safer for years to come.

Last year I spent a great deal of time canvassing in West Leigh. It soon became apparent that many residents were concerned about speeding along Hadleigh Road.

When I became your local councillor I pushed hard for improvements that recognised the dangerous churn of students from four schools all using this main thoroughfare as well as the hazardous junction with Glendale Gardens.

It became obvious that an extra crossing would be a real asset so I'm delighted that this has been recognised as part of the scheme.

Once again, thanks to everyone who supported this initiative. Your involvement made all the difference. Please stay in touch.



ON THE BEAT:
Beth Hooper (right) is out and about with Carole Mulronee



HIGHWAY PATROL:
Cllr Ashley Thompson

Beth Hooper: The unexpected councillor

A challenge ... but being on council is also rare privilege



NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK: Beth Hooper celebrates her victory with fellow councillors Ashley Thompson and Paul Collins

ON the night of the election in May last year, I wasn't expecting to win.

Apart from being elected to West Leigh Infant School governing board when my son was young, I had never been a candidate for anything.

When so many residents voted for me I was genuinely delighted. I was, though, all too aware that it was also a huge challenge.

I want to see real and positive change for our town, from the way the roads work to keeping everyone safe and well.

It is easy to talk about ideas to improve the world but now I'm part of the team trying to deliver it in West Leigh and the wider area. As

a councillor people seek your advice and support on all kinds of issues.

I spent 15 years working at the BBC as a journalist, which means I have a background in research but there is a huge amount of learning to do in order to be an effective Council member.

I am an avid reader but even I have struggled with the huge amount of paperwork we're expected to understand and scrutinise.

Apart from my work to improve Hadleigh Road and Western Road, I've supported residents to get the right decisions for Underwood Square and Highlands Court, although development control and town

planning is one area I have had to study late into the night.

In quiet moments the challenges can feel quite daunting. When dealing with a community there are different opinions on what is the best outcome.

Most important Council decisions are made by committee, with all the frustrations that can entail, while delivery of services is much more complex than I ever imagined.

But, through my role as your councillor, I have been privileged to gain a greater understanding of our Borough and the wonderful people who live and work here.

Thank you to all those who have supported me so far.

At last! There's cash for potholes

THIS time of year sees the Council turn its mind to how it will use its precious financial resources.

Newly-elected Leigh ward councillor Ashley Thompson was delighted to learn that £3.2 million is to be invested in improving our highways and footways.

After years of Tory neglect and austerity, which affected

every part of the Borough, the hard work to bring our highways back up to a decent standard is starting.

Ashley has been hard at work with other members of the Lib Dem team surveying every road across Leigh and West Leigh for cracked paving, disrepair, potholes, and also unsightly grass verges which have been damaged by inconsiderate parking. From

an environmental perspective there is also a large number of unnecessary bollards, blank sign poles and general clutter which we are campaigning to have removed, not least as they pose needless hazards to those with sight problems.

Whilst we don't have a magic wand to sort out every single nook and cranny overnight –

and the £3.2m has to cover seventeen wards, of which we are only two – the message is clear: the fightback by a joint administration working across party lines is under way.

And if you want to do your bit, get in touch with Ashley with any significant highway maintenance problems you spot, or report them yourselves via the MySouthend website.

SOUTHEND AIRPORT MUST DO BETTER TO LIVE WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS



THE planes may be soaring to new heights from Southend but down on the ground things are not so rosy.

Your Lib Dem councillors have been at the forefront of dealing with residents' complaints about, in particular, noisy night flights.

Coupled with the now self-evident world-wide need to accept that we must act fast on climate change, we have raised all of these grievances with the Council and the airport.

The problem is that, some years ago, the Council, managed by the Conservatives, negotiated what are now seen as totally inadequate controls over the airport, without the teeth to rein

in the more locally damaging effects.

The airport still has scope for more within their current permissions and the only opportunities which could present themselves for exercising more control have to await developments.

It is clear that after Cllr Carole Mulroney publicly called the airport to task on these issues they have done some soul searching and agreed her request for an Environmental Action Plan.

This will look at solutions and mitigation measures to encourage the airport to work in an open and transparent

manner, including collaboration with local residents and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

We are not trying to stop the airport operating but we want it to operate better, cleaner and more community focussed, and with more clarity over its operations as they interact with residents.

The airlines themselves are starting to take these issues seriously and so, too, should the airport.

Over the coming months Carole will be working with airport bosses in the preparation of the Plan and is hoping that this promising start will be maintained.

FROM FRONT PAGE

the Lib Dem team working within the joint administration have produced a budget which, amongst other things, improves our environment, our housing and our public areas and highways.

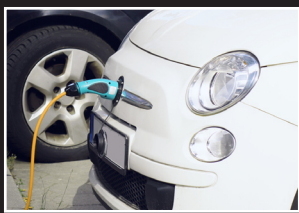
The bald figures give a modest weekly rise for a Band C property which means we still retain the second lowest council tax in south Essex

Our future investments provide capital funding for school expansion, further investment to maintain and protect Southend Pier, and significant funding to ensure continued decent housing standards.

There will be considerable extra funds for road and

Budget is right one for all ...

pavement repairs, junction protection, car park resurfacing and improving pavements around trees, as well as further investment in street lighting. Car parking



ELECTRIC DREAMS: Charging

charges are frozen. On the environment we have already committed substantial amounts for tree planting and added to this we are proposing 2,500 new shrubs across the Borough.

There will be £2.2m for a number of energy projects, including delivery of new e-vehicle charge points, solar energy projects and air quality improvements, including employing a specialist air quality officer.

A climate change capital investment of £6.8m includes coastal defences, flood prevention and improving resilience to flooding.

Forget the naysayers! Southend does have a brighter future when we all work together.

THANKS FOR YOUR VOTE



By Nina Stimson
*Lib Dem Parliamentary
candidate for Southend West,
2019 General Election*

A BIG thank you to the many Southend West voters who put their trust in me and the Liberal Democrats in December's General Election.

In line with recent local trends, our vote here went up by more than 3,200 (a bigger jump than for the Conservatives) while the Labour vote dropped by almost 3,000. Even so, Southend voted in line with much of the rest of the UK

to "get Brexit done". Now Boris Johnson has to make that happen, although the final deal may take much longer than his supporters expect.

As we highlighted in the run-up to 12th December, there are many other important battles for our town and our country – climate change, crime, the NHS, funding for our schools, more social housing, the fate of the High Street and the local economy (and, of course, night flights from the airport).

I'll be working with our Lib Dem councillors and candidates to get the best deal for residents on those key issues. And we will keep a close watch on what our Conservative MP says and does. There's much more to our future than "Brexit".

THE LIB DEMS NEED YOU!



WE are proud of our inclusive liberal values.

And we are also proud of our Leigh and West Leigh councillors, who daily make a difference to the lives of local people.

But we need help ... and that's where you come in.

Don't sit on the sidelines. Come and join us to support our team as they carry on making Leigh special.

Whatever your skills or time issues we will make you welcome and find a worthwhile role for you.

Email Councillor Ashley Thompson:
dajthompson@hotmail.co.uk

It's time to get involved!

LEIGH'S LIB DEM TEAM Always at your service

*Meet your Lib Dem Councillors
on the second Saturday of the
month at Leigh Community Centre
between 9 and 10.45 am.*

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