

Leigh & West Leigh FOCUS



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Autumn 2020 – BUT WORKING FOR YOU ALL YEAR ROUND

OLD LEIGH NIGHTMARE!

Summer in the Old Town was a nightmare for the community. Hundreds flocked to the area during the good weather and whether the pubs were open or not they drank and caroused and caused mayhem. "The rubbish they left behind was horrendous and dangerous to humans and sea-life," says Leigh Cllr Peter Wexham. "We would like to thank Veolia, local litter groups and residents who did a super clear-up."

"My colleague Cllr Carole Mulroney was instrumental in getting Police to use a dispersal and *all* your Lib Dem councillors have been relentless in supporting a residents' petition for drink-free public areas in Old Leigh and successfully opposing more off-licences."

Peter on the case!



Peter Wexham says: "We will not let this behaviour ruin our town and its heritage! When the petition is considered by the Council we will support it all the way."

A DANGER TO THEMSELVES & OTHERS!

Cockling is the lifeblood of the Old Town, with a finite season and limited working days, so it's vital that the fishermen can get into port and unload quickly and efficiently. Not so easy with huge groups of youths tombstoning, throwing mud, abusing the fishermen and crawling all over their machinery.

Peter Wexham explains: "Leigh is a fishing port, first and foremost, so this has to stop! It's our heritage and we must protect it. We had Bell Wharf barriered to prevent access, but then they attacked the fishermen from the water, putting both themselves and the fishermen in danger."

"Swimming around the boats means the fishermen have to take evasive action – that can cause danger for people in the water as well."

"Safety must come first at Bell Wharf – for the fishermen and for young people" says Peter



"Because of austerity cuts, the Foreshore Office don't have the patrol boats they used to have and the river police presence is constrained – although the Marine Police do monitor jet skis, another potential danger to life and limb."

"This is not the exuberance of youth, it is plain disregard for others and these issues get worse each year – if someone is hurt it'll be the fishermen blamed for things outside their control," says Peter.

"Of course youngsters need to let off steam, but the danger is too great here and we're looking at further prevention."



"KEEP NHS CARE LOCAL" – KATIE

In the middle of lockdown, Southend, Basildon and Broomfield hospitals merged and soon it was decided to treat all South Essex COVID patients at Basildon, to create a barrier from COVID for Southend Hospital. No thought to the stress to local families, or Basildon councillors' concerns on parking, amongst other things!

Is this a first move in downgrading Southend A&E, which we have vehemently opposed? Our waiting times are already among the worst in the country and in the UK's bottom 7%.

"Commitments have been made for this centralising control over our hospital – let's make sure they're kept to," says West Leigh Lib Dem candidate, Katie Kurilecz.

Have you, your relatives or friends been affected? Please let Katie know!

HERE WE GO AGAIN! THE PLANNING SAGA

Planning is a never-ending story in Leigh and it's set to get worse with wholesale changes to the system proposed by Government, focused on housing, reports Cllr Carole Mulroney. We are squeezed in Leigh and the trajectory looks like being upwards, in more ways than one. We know we need housing, but it has to meet the need not the developer's aspiration, be in the right place and infrastructure-led.



Government is, as always, light on detail, big on catchphrases. Their aim is 'beautiful homes', but this won't solve the housing problem. Once again the Government wants one size to fit all. But Leigh, and places like us, don't fit that oven-ready template.

The move is to zonal planning with areas allocated for 'growth', 'renewal' or 'protected'. An allocation as one of these in the Local Plan will, in effect, be outline permission. That's why the Local Plan will be even more important in terms of having your say, but it will be a shortened process. That's good, as long as it gives adequate respect to the issues of importance to local people.

Recent Government relaxations to the need for planning permission for building higher, and converting offices to housing with no thought of infrastructure, make it difficult for Councils, and that means residents will get annoyed even more. The information here is just the tip of the iceberg and this merry go round is set to run and run. **We will be watching out for your interests!**

Here to help! LEIGH & WEST LEIGH LIBERAL DEMOCRAT TEAM

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