

# LEIGH AND WEST LEIGH FOCUS

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# PATRONISING & SHAMEFUL!

Voters are  
turning on  
Brexit fiasco

**LOCAL** Lib Dem  
campaigner Carol  
White has led a team  
sampling opinion on  
Brexit.

They invited  
shoppers in Leigh  
Broadway to put  
stickers on their  
Brexitometer,  
answering Yes, No  
or Don't Know to the  
questions: Brexit is  
going well? Brexit  
will be good for jobs?  
Brexit will be good for  
the NHS? We want a  
People's Vote?

As our picture  
shows, most people  
didn't think that Brexit  
was going well and  
thought it would be  
bad for jobs and the  
NHS. And a smaller  
majority wanted a  
People's Vote on the  
final deal.

A survey carried out  
earlier in Southend  
High Street was very  
similar.



**Chancellor's  
'little extras'  
for crisis-hit  
schools is  
yet another  
disgraceful  
Tory failure**

**BETH HOOPER** is a local Mum and  
works on education projects with her  
non-profit organisation.

She was appalled by the  
way the Chancellor talked  
about just giving schools  
"little extras" in the budget.

Beth said: "When  
Chancellor Philip Hammond  
(right) delivered his budget  
in Parliament recently, this was a real  
opportunity to change course and  
properly fund education. Instead the  
Chancellor chose only to offer one-off  
"little extras" to schools that are in crisis.  
How patronising and what a missed  
opportunity.

"The Government has failed our



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**OUR LIB DEM TEAM WISH YOU A HAPPY AND PEACEFUL FESTIVE SEASON**



## Homeless charities are doing their bit. Can you?

**SADLY, the number of homeless people rough-sleeping on our streets has gone up in recent years.**

They can be seen, not only around the High Street but throughout the town. As winter approaches, some local churches are again preparing to provide valuable night shelters.

The causes of homelessness are many and complex but can include family breakdown, addiction

and mental health issues, particularly for ex-servicemen.

The homeless not only need our charity but also professional help and guidance to get back on their feet.

So if you want to help the homeless, please support charities like *HARP* and *YMCA* who are actively involved in helping homeless people in the town.

And if you would like to volunteer with the churches' night shelters,

please e-mail [shelters@lovesouthend.org](mailto:shelters@lovesouthend.org)

Cllr Carole Mulroney says: "The Leigh Community Centre and Leigh Road Baptist Church will be collection points from early December for donations of much needed items (nothing bulky) such as toiletries, hats, scarves, gloves for both men and women who are homeless.

"Let's all try and make this Christmas better for everyone."

## Hammond's budget is a missed opportunity

**FROM FRONT PAGE**

children in Southend once again. With Head Teachers, such as Dr Robin Bevan at Southend High School for Boys, being forced to campaign to make everyone aware of the acute financial pressures on school budgets locally, wouldn't it have been better if some of the tax windfall had been used to undo this damage?

"Nationally schools have already been cut by £2.8bn since 2015 and this has directly resulted in increased class sizes, loss of school and staff and cuts to extra-curricular activities and resources in schools in Southend. Locally, many school class sizes are well over what is considered ideal for pupils and there is no vital funding to reverse the cuts for the funding that support children with special education needs and disabilities

"Just giving "little extras" to schools in a budget which cut taxes for higher band payers is shameful".



CAMPAIGNER: Beth Hooper

## Potholes: Forget quick fixes

**IN the recent budget the Government again announced more money for Councils for filling potholes.**

This is the third time Southend Council has been given extra pothole money, but our roads are still in a mess.

Leigh Lib Dem Councillor Peter Wexham says "Plugging potholes is only a short-term fix as the plugs start coming out again as soon as soon as we get frosty nights.

"Right across Leigh what is needed is to

do the job once and that means properly resurfacing many roads.

"In the long term doing the job thoroughly would be the best situation and make life safer for drivers and less damaging to cars."



## Ashley is confirmed as Lib Dem candidate

Local campaigner Ashley Thompson has been chosen by local Lib Dem members to be our candidate for Leigh in next May's Southend Council election.

Last May he fought a vigorous campaign in West Leigh Ward and substantially increased the Lib Dem vote, confirming our strong second place. Next year he hopes to win and join Councillors Carole Mulroney and Peter Wexham as Leigh's representatives on the Council.

Carole and Peter (pictured right flanking Ashley) said: "We are delighted that Ashley will be our candidate. He is full of energy, enthusiasm and new ideas and will really shake up the Council."

Ashley lives in Leigh ward in London Road and is a professional musician and choir leader.

# Per-head figures show government is hitting us hardest ESSEX POLICE WORSE FUNDED FORCE IN UK



Big news: The last Focus

**By Ashley Thompson**  
**Latest monthly figures from the police show that there were 128 crimes reported in Leigh and West Leigh.**

These include a number of crimes described as "violence and sexual offences" as well as vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Halloween saw reports of one particular group of youths behaving in an anti social

manner near Southsea Avenue; meanwhile a shoplifting incident on the Broadway led to a chase from the trader and the police being called; and rather too often cars are being broken into or otherwise vandalised on our usually quiet residential streets.

High-profile recent comments from national figures such as Metropolitan Police chief Cressida Dick have again

highlighted the extent to which our police forces are overstretched. No wonder only 3% of dwelling burglaries result in convictions.

But what few people realise is that Essex Police, owing to the relentless budget cuts imposed on them by the Conservatives - supposedly the party of law and order - is now the worst funded police force in the country per head

of population. So with too few police on our streets, we all have to be on the alert to spot criminal or suspicious behaviour and report it to the police.

Crime reporting is now more important than ever before, as police priorities are increasingly driven by statistical evidence of the number of offences reported.

I've been doing my bit within

the various community groups I work with to encourage volunteers to come forward to fill the 5 Police Special Constable roles, created thanks to the hard work of Cllr. Carole Mulroney on Leigh Town Council.

But more volunteers are still needed, so please do consider whether you could help keep Leigh and West Leigh the safe place it has always been.



## NHS: Plan for merger of local hospitals is thrown out

THE proposal by the NHS to merge Southend, Basildon and Broomfield Hospitals has been thrown out by Southend Council.

Leigh Lib Dem Councillor Carole Mulroney seconded the motion to refer the "NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan" to the Secretary of State for Health.

Her motion received the unanimous backing of all parties on the Council.

In a nutshell, the Council did not think the proposals were the best for the Southend area.

They particularly opposed the siting of the hyperacute stroke unit at Basildon, when Southend has an outstanding facility which had not even been considered as an option.

The Council was also unhappy about staffing and funding and whether the ambulance service could cope with moving patients and families between the hospitals.

It is now up to the Government to decide what to do.



**BUZZ WORD:**  
Electric charging points must be part of future planning



# Traffic: We must plan and learn from others

**THE parking and traffic problems in Leigh, and indeed in Southend, are different for each area, but Southend Council too often just looks at the local problem and overlooks the bigger picture.**

Cllr Carole Mulroney says "What we need is a traffic and parking strategy for the town as a whole. These are some principles for the future which we will be promoting..."

- A 20mph in all residential streets where appropriate
- More support local bus services
- That the Council carry out a complete review of residents

parking including the risk of knock-on effects which create problems elsewhere

- A reduction in parking charges and hours in winter
- The introduction of a fixed rate low charge for the first hour in all Council car parks
- The installation of electric car points in new developments and publicly available areas

That parking charges for disabled people from outside the borough are rescinded  
"We also need to learn from other authorities who have tackled these problems. What works in other towns could work here too."

## 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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