

LEIGH AND WEST LEIGH FOCUS

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My message to Essex Police chief

WHILE Leigh is not a high crime area, we are not crime free either.

There has always been an undercurrent of burglaries, thefts from cars, vandalism and domestic violence, but in the last couple of years crime figures have been growing.

And in the last few months there has been an escalation in residential and car crime. So what is changing?

First, I cannot over emphasise the effects of cutbacks in police numbers which means they don't have the resources to respond as quickly to crimes as they would like.

So only a fraction of the crimes are being solved and the criminals are becoming ever more brazen and have no respect for people or property.

Across the country the police have been calling for more resources but so far the response has been inadequate.

Secondly, through Facebook and Twitter residents are better informed about crimes as they happen. I embrace that and have used my Facebook page to organize meetings for residents to focus their views and then meet with the police.

But social media does not outweigh the need to report to

TELL US WHAT YOUR PLANS ARE TO TACKLE RISING CRIME

By Councillor Carole Mulroney



ON THE BEAT: Cllr Carole Mulroney (left) has been helping police, going door-to-door in Leigh and listening to people's concerns about local crime

the police – so I urge everyone affected to do so.

Thirdly, there is growing concern about violent crime spreading into the area, usually drug related. The police are majoring on this but it stretches their resources even more.

Southend Council must be more proactive; it is not just the Police's problem. Residents expect local Councillors to campaign forcefully on their behalf for better policing. It is also our role to assist residents when they are affected.

I am pressing Essex Police Commissioner, Roger Hirst, to come to Leigh to explain to an increasing number of worried residents exactly what he is doing to tackle rising crime.

BREXIT IS A SHAMBLES AND WE NEED A PEOPLE'S VOTE: BACK PAGE



BAG IT UP! Ashley Thompson helps to clear up litter and discarded plastic bottles

Oceans of plastic are a menace... let's do more

SINCE the screening of Blue Planet II we have all become more aware of growing global concern about plastic pollution in the seas.

Seeing the plastic bottles, bags and nets on our beaches is bad enough and when they are swallowed by sea birds and animals the effects are harrowing.

But now there is evidence that plastics are affecting vital food chains.

This happens when ultra violet light from the sun causes flexible plastics to dry and break up into tiny fragments which are swallowed by fish and crustaceans and eventually get into the human food chain.

Here in Leigh there are three things we can do to tackle the scourge of plastics in the sea.

First, we can make sure that all our

plastics are put in the pink bags for recycling.

Secondly, please don't drop litter. One of Britain's problems is rubbish being thrown out of cars and other vehicles.

Cleaning it up is difficult. Plastics fall into drainage ditches which overflow into brooks, streams and then into the rivers and out to sea.

They can wash up on Leigh beach or anywhere in the world.

Thirdly, you can help the great teams of volunteers who pick up litter all along the Thames estuary.

Last year volunteers collected 779 sacks of litter which included 2,312 plastic bottles.

Well done to them – but let's try and do more.

To make our roads safer it's time for a 20mph speed limit

By Ashley Thompson
Lib Dem activist

CARS are driving too fast in Leigh and residents are getting very concerned. The problem is particularly bad on distributor roads, or "rat runs".

Grand Parade to New Road; the Marine Parade, Western Road, Hadleigh Road and Thames Drive areas; Highlands Boulevard and others regularly see speeding traffic which is a danger to other road users and pedestrians, particularly children and the elderly.

But Southend Council's response is slow and ill thought through.

They take months or even years to address problems and then look at roads piecemeal, ignoring the impact that traffic calming in one road will have on others.

This is a Leigh-wide issue.

We are calling on the Council to look at traffic speeds on all the routes through Leigh and come up with a comprehensive

plan of traffic calming to tackle this danger. For years we have been pressing Southend Council to impose 20mph limits on all appropriate residential roads.

The Council's response was to kick the ball into the long grass to await a Government report.

At long last that report has been published and we are delighted that it favours reducing the speed limits.

The Minister for Transport wrote to Councils in December saying the "report confirms public support for 20 mph".

Many Local Authorities are now reviewing 20mph policies and re-interpreting DfT guidance

20mph is Liberal Democrat policy and Cllrs Peter Wexham and Carole Muroney will be pressing for this to be introduced in Southend as soon as possible.

We want the limit to be the default for all residential streets with very few exceptions, and for it to be robustly and routinely enforced.



WELCOME: Beth Hooper

Lights, camera, action ... Beth is new Lib Dem star

LEIGH Councillors, Carole Mulronee and Peter Wexham, together with Lib Dem candidate for Leigh, Ashley Thompson, welcome Beth Hooper into our team as Lib Dem candidate for West Leigh in May's elections for Southend Council.

Beth has spent the last twelve years working within the Leigh community bringing people together.

With the local Royal British Legion, she was the project manager on Southend Schools' Festival of Remembrance where

25 local schools made thousands of poppies in tribute to locals who died in the Great War.

Beth is currently Creative Director and founder of social enterprise Blade Education, which specialises in finding creative solutions to social

problems. In partnership with children from West Leigh schools, she has directed many films about the town, revealing our fascinating history.

Previously, Beth worked for the BBC for fifteen years as a researcher, journalist and producer.

She started her broadcasting career at BBC Essex on the Breakfast programme, went on to be the Nations and Regions London Producer, then onto the UK and Foreign Desk.

From the terrible events of 9/11 in 2001 to the

Golden Jubilee, Beth has some interesting stories to tell.

But she is delighted to be back in the happiest place in the UK where she hopes to make a difference to the lives of her neighbours in West Leigh.

BREXIT: The national crisis badly needs People's Vote to sort it out

UNLIKE the Tory and Labour Parties, we are united on Europe. We have always been clear that Lib Dems want to REMAIN in the EU.

We want a People's Vote to give people a clear choice between the deeply damaging Brexit that the Government is edging towards, and remaining in the EU. And we would back Remain.

We are better off in the EU and working to improve it. A People's Vote is the only way out of the current political crisis.

While the Tories bitterly fight amongst themselves, and Labour doesn't know whether it wants to Remain or Leave, only the Lib Dems are united, positive and speaking with one voice.

But whatever your views on Brexit, and wherever the crisis leads, you can be sure that here in the happiest town in Britain, your Lib Dem Councillors will be working for you to make Leigh an even better place to live.

Library work booked in

LEIGH Library, perhaps our most treasured local building is due a refurbishment.

However, the plans have had to be delayed because a survey showed other utility works were needed.

These must be done before the refurb can go ahead.

Cllr Carole Mulroney has received an assurance from the Borough Council that the delay is temporary and the works are still programmed to proceed.



Council's £20m property punt is astonishing and reckless!

TORIES GAMBLING WITH YOUR SERVICES

TORY-LED Southend Council plans to borrow over £20 million to speculate in the commercial property market.

They hope that they can earn profits to make up for the loss of Government grant. But the only way they can earn returns higher than their borrowing costs is to take on extra risks.

This move is very surprising as the Government has recently warned Councils not to risk taxpayers' money in this way.

Guidance issued by the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government was "very clear that local authorities must

not borrow more than or in advance of their needs purely in order to profit from the investment of extra sums borrowed".

Lib Dem Councillor Carole Mulroney says: "Although some years ago this was thought to be a way forward, in these uncertain times it is astonishing that the Tories should be so reckless as to ignore recent Government warnings.

"What do they know about the commercial property market? If money is lost on these investments it will be the Council tax payer and our services that will suffer."

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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