



# FOCUS

SPRING 2005

SWANAGE &  
ISLE OF PURBECK  
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

In this edition we address some of the key issues that concern local people at the moment. These include:

- Housing • Our schools • Identity cards • County funding • Reasons to vote Lib Dem • PDC rubbish plans
- Tory spin • Police • Ferry Road camping • Labour misuse of funds • Imprisonment without trial



GO .. GO .. GO ..  
FOR

**GRAHAM OAKES**

Prospective Parliamentary  
Candidate for South Dorset

A Dorset man for Dorset people

## We're on the up!

Pollsters and serious political commentators say there is a momentum building for Charles Kennedy's candidates for the general election.

About 65% of people are not happy with the government. Only 14% think the Tories will win. Both the Conservative and Labour parties are trading on people's fear. Labour, with the fear of terrorism; and the Tory leader, Michael Howard, on the "fear of race riots following 'uncontrolled immigration'".

## FOCUS

Can you help us with our newsletters? Many people tell us they find them useful and interesting. But they take money and effort to produce. Would you be able to make a contribution towards print costs, or perhaps help deliver near your home? If you can help, please get in touch.

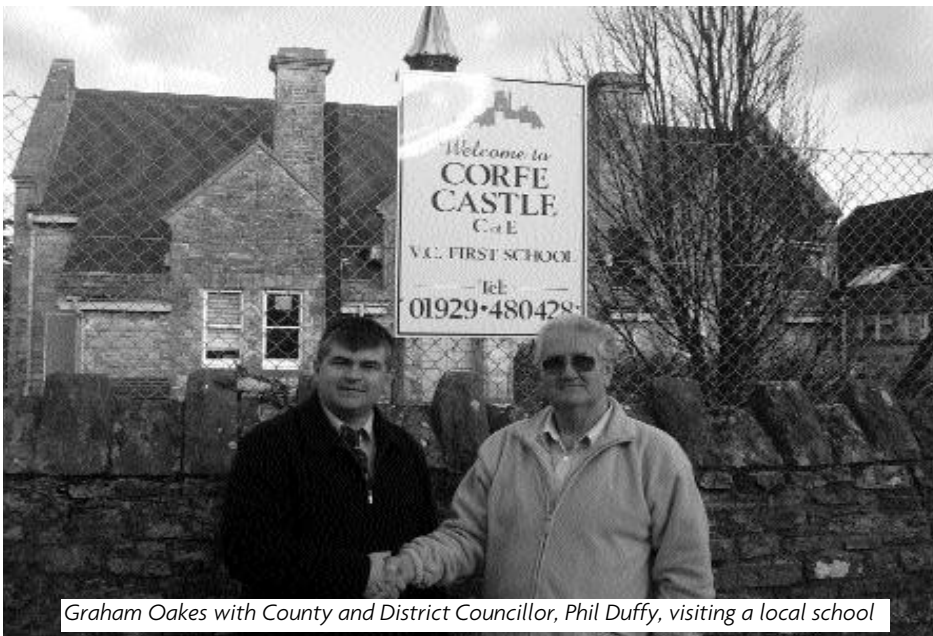
## Local schools under threat

A well attended meeting at the Springfield Hotel in February heard from the County Education Officer that Middle Schools need to have about 360 pupils in them to be viable. However, pupil numbers are forecast to fall by at least 25%, partly because local people can't afford to live in the area.

A discussion document given out has complicated information showing the savings which might be made if the First Schools take the two extra years aged ten and eleven, and the pupils then transfer directly to the Purbeck School. And, of course, the valuable land could then be sold by the currently Tory-controlled County Council. County chiefs stressed that no decision has yet been made and that opinions were being genuinely sought.

Graham Oakes was applauded after he warned of the dangers ahead, pointing out that he had effectively lost two years of his own schooling through reorganisation.

The next public meeting will be held.....wait for it..... after the County elections. Liberal Democrats say that the case has not yet been made to close Dorset's Middle Schools. This will cause massive disruption to all pupils, parents and teachers.



Graham Oakes with County and District Councillor, Phil Duffy, visiting a local school

## Lib Dems rubbish PDC's 'recycling' plans

Liberal Democrats want to maximise recycling. But Purbeck District Council's scheme to cancel weekly rubbish collections and introduce wheelee bins and fortnightly collections as a way of "improving recycling" must be tailored to meet the needs of the people in our area. Any change must take account of people who don't have easy access or don't have anywhere to store bins, so they won't blight our streets. There will need to be a regular collection regime so that fly-tipping does not increase.



Graham Oakes visits Swanage recycling centre

## Who worries about the world? I do!

(A personal view: John Wootton, Chairman, South Dorset Liberal Democrats)

Week by week we hear warnings about the state into which we are getting the planet. And we learn more about more species nearing extinction. What can ordinary people do whilst we wait for governments of the so-called developed nations to face up to the problems?

We could start by urging people to reduce their air travel, reduce trips in their cars, increase efforts at recycling, and demand that there is a real reduction in packaging. At local level, ordinary people could do so much to make the difference. There is little time to lose if we want a reasonable life 20 to 30 years ahead. Action needs to start this year.

Liberal Democrats plan to make a major shift in taxation on to polluting activities. We are by far the 'greenest' of the three parties. We plan to do our bit. We hope you'll do yours.

## TIME TO LIFT THE ROOF ON HOUSING

What happens to the council tax on second homes? After years of lobbying, the government now allows Councils to charge 90% Council Tax on second homes. We have always said that all the extra money raised should be used for local people desperate for a decent home to rent. Tory-run Dorset County Council has grabbed most of the money for other purposes.

After eight years in office Labour has a housing plan. Will it work? It is hardly the comprehensive statement on housing that many were hoping for. The over-complicated version of 'Right to Buy' will appeal to some tenants of housing associations but will further reduce the number of rented units. The fundamental problems of the housing market remain unsolved. The shortage of decent homes for those without a hope of home ownership is ignored - the new policy is divisive.

## Jim Knight should know better

Mr Knight was one of a number of Labour MPs who broke House of Commons rules, using publicly funded stationery and postage to send out Labour Party propaganda.

He was challenged on this by the Liberal Democrats and has since repaid the cost of this stationery. The MP should have known better, like former Home Secretary Blunkett, who repaid the rail fare he bought for his partner.

## Lib Dems say "NO" to ID Cards

According to proposals so far revealed, Identity Cards will:

- carry personal details such as iris scans, photographs, fingerprints, numbers of your national insurance, passport and driving licence.
- cost the taxpayer £5.5 billion over the ten years needed to get them running
- start in 2008 as a voluntary scheme and then could become compulsory in 2012.
- need a central computer storing around 60 million entries.
- carry fines of:
  - £2,500 for not signing up if the cards are made compulsory
  - £1,000 for a spoiled application form
  - £1,000 for failing to notify a change of address

Liberal Democrats oppose identity cards:

- because of the potential misuse of the information they could contain
- they will not protect us from terrorism – those involved in the Twin Towers and Madrid attacks all had I.D. cards
- they will create a new income for organised crime – the production of forged ID
- they are an attack on civil liberties

Remember that:

- previous computer-based schemes have run massively over budget
- government computer schemes have a habit of going wrong
- the £5.5 billion could go to the NHS, education and supporting our police.

Your money could be better spent.

## Durlstongate? Tory councillor Wheeldon awaits verdict

The Standards Board for England has yet to report on its investigation into the conduct of Town and District Councillor, Mrs Julie Wheeldon. We must ask if such behaviour is what local people expect of elected members.

## TEN GOOD REASONS TO VOTE FOR THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

### 1. Put patients first.

Free doctors and nurses from Whitehall meddling.

### 2. Free personal care

When you need it. No one forced to sell their home for care.

### 3. No tuition fees

And no top-up fees. University affordable for every student.

### 4. More investment in children

Especially the early years. Spend money where it matters most.

### 5. 10,000 more police

On the streets. Cutting crime and the fear of crime.

### 6. £25 more pension

Each week at age 75. A million pensioners off means testing.

### 7. Free off-peak local transport

For all pensioners and disabled people.

### 8. Axe the Council Tax.

Local Income Tax is both fair and affordable.

### 9. Trust

We should not have gone to war in Iraq. It is time to restore trust in Government.

### 10. Environment

Take the environment seriously. Cut pollution, cut congestion and boost renewable energy.

*ALL PROPERLY COSTED*

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

Take a look at:

[www.southdorsetlibdems.org.uk](http://www.southdorsetlibdems.org.uk)

## Time to stop overnight camping on the Ferry Road, Studland

Many people believe that the overnight camping on the Ferry Road is not only unattractive but also potentially dangerous, both in terms of fire risk and the health hazards from the lack of proper sanitation facilities.

We understand that steps are being taken to prevent this unsavoury activity, beginning with the erection of signs advising that overnight camping is not allowed.

## Imprisonment of British citizens without trial?

Terror suspects or not, there is a basic issue of liberty here. The Liberal Democrats oppose current government plans. The judiciary are properly trained - politicians are not.

## DORSET POOREST FUNDED COUNTY

Dorset County Council will receive less from the Government than any other county, so increasing the Council tax we all pay. Our county ranks 34th out of 34 counties in terms of the amount it gets from Government.

Why is the tax so high? The Government thinks that we are richer because house prices are high! We have been poorly funded by Government for 25 years. Tory MPs have represented all constituencies for most of that time. Now, with a Labour MP here, there is no improvement.

The Liberal Democrats would scrap the unfair Council Tax. But in the short term we must change our ineffective MP for someone who will fight harder for Dorset.

## LOOK OUT FOR TORY SPIN EVERYWHERE!

Have you noticed how the Tories are inventing non-existent issues to try to make them look better? The Advertiser recently carried a story on the "Possible loss of Coastguard Service" — headline grabbing tosh fed by the Tories, who know perfectly well that plans for a new purpose-built base is well advanced with land and funding assured. Worthy volunteers and the public have been misled.

## Where are our police when we need them?



Graham Oakes visits Swanage police station

Recent claims by our opponents that Swanage Police station was going to close turned out to be a stunt. However, following a complaint from a local resident, Graham Oakes visited Swanage Police Station.

He confirmed that the station is not always open when it is supposed to be. It appears this is due to poor financial management.

## “Axe the Tax” petitions — *thank you*

Many thanks to all those who responded to our campaign to abolish Council Tax. Your petitions were sent to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. A detailed reply was received.

The government says:

- They have been generous to local authorities (“Not me guv”)
- They have capped overspending local authorities (“I’m the good guy”)
- They have done a lot for Pensioners (“I’m a good guy again”)
- They have set up a review of how to finance Local Government (There might just be a problem here)

We shall be forcibly reminded in 2006, the year after the elections, of the problems with this unfair tax. We continue to campaign against it.



## Can you help us?

You could help in many ways:

- **delivering a few leaflets**
- **helping with clerical work**
- **assisting at elections**
- **displaying a poster at elections**
- **joining the Liberal Democrats**
- **making a donation**

Please get in touch if you can help.

## DO YOU WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH US?

We can only support the ideas and needs of local people if we know what they are. Please call one of us, or send in your comments on the slip below.

By Post: South Dorset Liberal Democrats FREEPOST NAT17885 Wareham BH20 6BR

Graham Oakes: 01458 831878 graham@oakes.fslife.co.uk John Wootton: 01929 421433 wootton@ukgateway.net

Hilary O’Donovan: 01929 421065 hodonovan@bushinternet.com Mike Hadley: 01929 427277 mail@mikehadley.net

Or visit our website at <[www.southdorsetlibdems.org.uk](http://www.southdorsetlibdems.org.uk)>

## Join the Liberal Democrats and help to make a difference

Liberal Democrats believe in principled government, and when not in power, in principled opposition.

“The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society. We aim to disperse power, to foster diversity and nurture creativity. We believe that the role of the state is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to contribute truly to their communities and to take part in the decisions which affect their lives.”

Join us and help to make a difference. For more information, visit <[www.southdorsetlibdems.org.uk](http://www.southdorsetlibdems.org.uk)> or contact the Membership Secretary, Hilary O’Donovan, on 01929 421065.

### “I want to say....”

If you have something to say, you can call one of the people above or complete the details below and return to:

South Dorset Liberal Democrats, FREEPOST NAT 17885, Wareham BH20 6BR

(You don’t have to provide your address details, but it would obviously make it easier for us to reply if you do)

Title: ..... First name (or initial): ..... Surname: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: (.....)..... Email: .....

I am concerned about .....

.....

.....

.....

..... (If you want to say more, do please write or call)

“I am interested in supporting the Liberal Democrats” Please get in touch with me.