FOCUS
On Canterbury North

Liberal Democrats



The Canterbury North team - Councillors, Dan Smith, Steph Jupe, Alex Ricketts, Peter Old & James Flanagan

KCC electoral division including Blean Forest, Chestfield and Chartham & Stone Street (part) wards

More Reform Chaos at Kent County Council



County Councillors Alex Ricketts (left) and Mike Sole (right) are concentrating on the important issues facing Kent residents.

Since winning a majority with 57 seats last year, Reform have presided over chaos and incompetence at County Hall. In just 12 months their number has been reduced to 47. It is perhaps no surprise that the administration's performance has been less than impressive.

Reform's budget was officially deemed as high risk: the adult social care budget continues to run at a deficit in the tens of millions of pounds, and traffic is grinding to a halt all over Kent. Despite this, the most pressing issue for Reform has been reciting the Lord's Prayer before council meetings, and singing the National Anthem at the end.

County Cllr Alex Ricketts, who sits on both the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee, said:

"We are facing a health and social care crisis, and with summer round the corner Operation Brock will return to our roads. But none of these seem to matter to Reform. They are more interested in flags, prayers and sing-songs, than potholes, care homes and schools."

Your Lib Dem County Councillors will continue to hold Reform to account.

Lib Dems end coalition with Labour

The Liberal Democrat Group has ended its coalition with Labour on Canterbury City Council. This follows unacceptable demands from the Labour leadership to vote for or abstain on sites in the draft local plan, and removing **Lib Dem Dan Smith** as Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.

Liberal Democrat Group Leader **Councillor Mike Sole** said:

"These demands gave us no choice but to end our involvement with the partnership running the council. Everyone has the right to expect their planning applications will be considered fairly and openly on planning policy."

Lib Dem members of the planning committee recently voted to defer a decision on the controversial Bodkin Farm development in Chestfield.

Of the three years in coalition, **Blean Councillor Steph Jupe** said:

"Our integrity and commitment to the Nolan Principles is unwavering so we unanimously agreed that it was time to exit. As a cabinet member, **Alex Ricketts** fought hard for the rural wards, championing Blean Forest and Chestfield, and he put a great deal into creating the new Transport Strategy for the local plan. He has left a legacy to the district to be proud of."

The Labour party will operate as a minority administration, with 18 councillors, whilst opposition parties, including the Lib Dems, hold a combined total of 23 seats. Council committee roles have been more evenly distributed across all parties to increase scrutiny. We hope this leads to a period of cross-party working in the best interests of the district.

Labour's Planning Grab

The Labour Government has told local councils that all planning applications for more than 150 houses must be referred to the Secretary of State - if they are minded to refuse them.

With thousands of unbuilt planning permissions and the practice of "land banking" by developers still rife, focusing on local councils will only benefit the companies set to make large profits from a less rigorous planning process.

Blean Councillor Dan Smith, who is still Vice Chair of the Planning Committee, said:

"It's unclear how this move will work in practice, but removing local oversight of the planning process will reduce the quality of final applications. If the planning committee does not have the power to refuse unsuitable applications we will lose a vital pillar of local democracy".



South East Water Fails Again!

Parts of the area have yet again been failed by South East Water, with some people suffering days of low or no water supply.

Just as in previous outages, your local Lib Dem team focused first on making sure vulnerable residents were supplied with water, Councillors **James Flanagan** (pictured) and **Steph Jupe** drove round helping those unable to get to the shops, and who had not received emergency supplies.



We will continue to put pressure on the water companies, not least to ensure they have a clear and visible action plan for local people. They must provide details of where emergency water stations will be, and work with residents to ensure everyone has access to clean drinking water.

Working hard all year round - not just at election time

The Canterbury North Lib Dem team in action!

Ham Shades Lane bridge, Whitstable

Following on from getting the lamp post moved from the narrow stretch of pavement, **Alex Ricketts** is pressing for better signage to make drivers aware of pedestrians - particularly schoolchildren - crossing the bridge. We have also recently asked residents for their opinion on moving the traffic lights back, something KCC is costing up.

Bodkin Farm

James Flanagan and **Peter Old** spoke against the proposed Bodkin Farm development at a recent planning committee meeting.

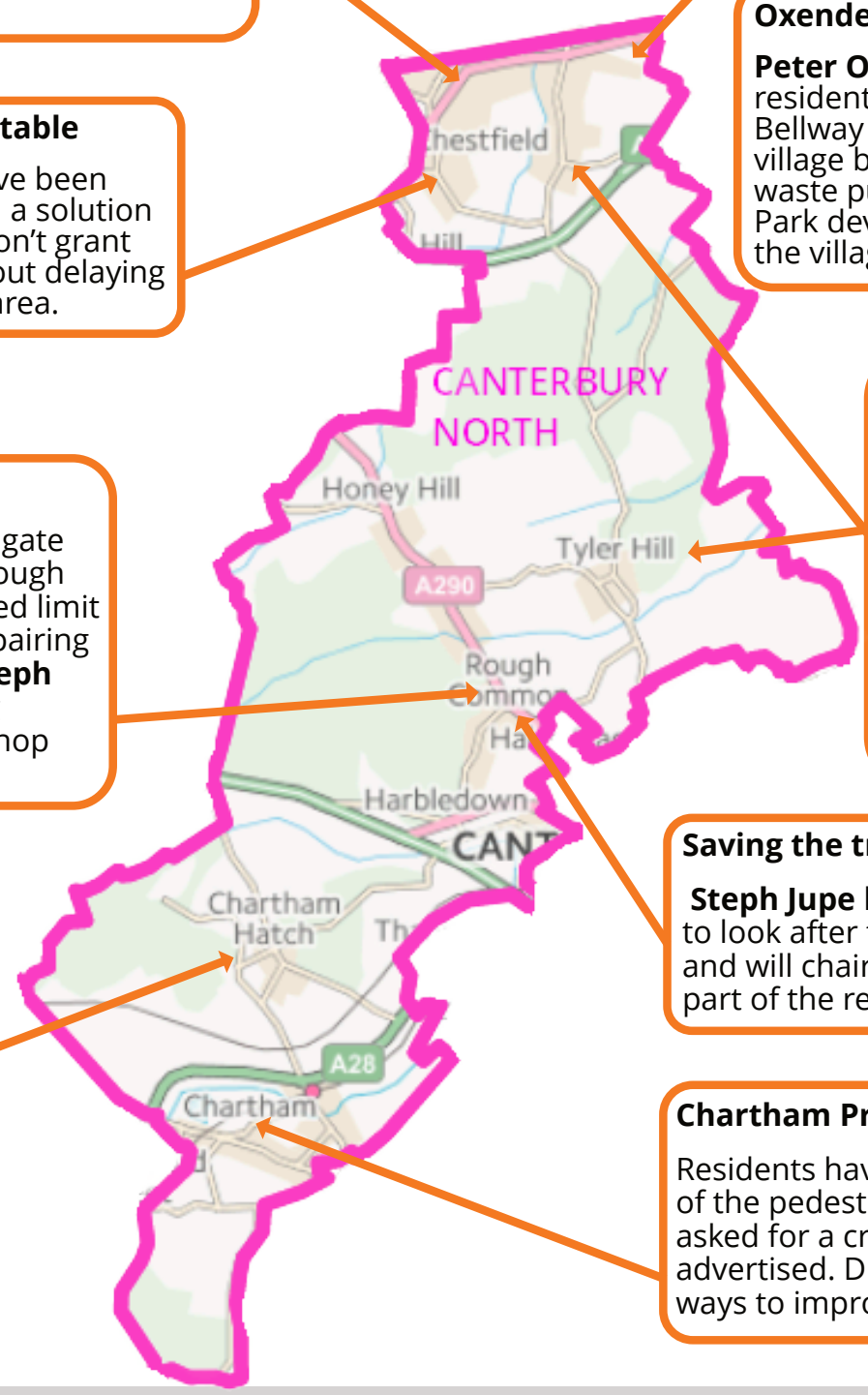
Liberal Democrats

Oxenden Park sewage smell

Peter Old and James Flanagan joined local residents in Chestfield to protest against Bellway Homes. This follows parts of the village being plagued by the smell from waste pumped from Bellway's Oxenden Park development in Herne Bay towards the village.

Church Street playing fields, Whitstable

James Flanagan & Alex Ricketts have been working closely with residents to find a solution that retains vital open space if KCC don't grant village green status to the field. without delaying much needed SEN provision for the area.



Number 5 bus

Stagecoach have, without consultation, reduced the Number 5 bus service, leaving residents in Chestfield and Tyler Hill with even fewer buses. **James Flanagan** immediately wrote to Stagecoach to protest. **Alex Ricketts** and **Steph Jupe** will meet their senior team, along with residents, to ask them to reverse the changes.

Rough Common Road

Alex Ricketts has asked for a village gate sign at the Whitstable Road end of Rough Common with a reminder of the speed limit and weight restrictions, as well as repairing the surface on the zebra crossing. **Steph Jupe** reported the poorly functioning temporary traffic lights outside the shop and managed to get them improved.

Saving the trees

Steph Jupe has got South East Water to agree to look after the trees in Neal's Place Meadow and will chair the biodiversity working group as part of the reservoir project.

Chartham Hatch 20 mph zone

Signs have recently gone up and it looks like the project will finally begin after having stalled somewhat in recent months.

Chartham Primary School

Residents have raised concerns about the safety of the pedestrian crossing. **Alex Ricketts** has asked for a crossing patrol person to be re-advertised. Discussions are ongoing for other ways to improve safety at the site.

Local Plan Update

Proceeds to "Regulation 19"

The Local Plan has moved to the next phase where it will be examined by the planning inspector following a "Regulation 19 Consultation". This is a technical process focused on the soundness of the plan. It will include representations from developers whose sites did not make the final draft, as well as objections to those that are included.

Despite the fact that the draft did not include a new town at Adisham, major development at Blean, or a new park and ride on Thanington Recreation Ground, not to mention the zones and bypasses of earlier versions, Bodkin and Brooklands Farms remain in.

Chestfield councillors **James Flanagan** and **Peter Old** voted against the plan due to the inclusion of these sites, and have submitted a response to the planning inspector as part of this consultation.

We also note that Save the Blean has submitted a detailed response and will seek to address the inspector. The final version of the plan is likely to be sent to the Secretary of State at the end of this year, and we will update you as news comes through.

CONTACT YOUR LIB DEM TEAM



Cllr Alex Ricketts
Kent County Council (Canterbury North)

Canterbury City Council (Blean Forest ward)

07900 081955

alex.ricketts@kent.gov.uk

alex.ricketts@canterbury.councillor.gov.uk

Canterburylibdems.org.uk



Cllr Steph Jupe
Canterbury City Council (Blean Forest ward)

07850 411979

steph.jupe@canterbury.councillor.gov.uk



Cllr Dan Smith
Canterbury City Council (Blean Forest ward)

07505 083413

dan.smith@canterbury.councillor.gov.uk



Cllr James Flanagan
Canterbury City Council (Chestfield ward)

07807 379289

james.flanagan@canterbury.councillor.gov.uk



Cllr Peter Old
Canterbury City Council (Chestfield ward)

07948 962038

peter.old@canterbury.councillor.gov.uk

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