

WORKING HARD FOR THE WHITSTABLE COMMUNITY

whitstable news



REGULATING AIRBNBs FOR ALL

Protecting homes for local
people

HELPING WITH THE COST OF LIVING

Providing help when people
need it most

FIGHTING FOR LOCAL SERVICES

Organising to save our
Children's Centres

Protecting our Green Gap



VAL TALKING TO RESIDENTS IN ALBERT STREET

LABOUR BACKS AIR BnB RULES

Labour councillors have forced the Tory council to consider a full and comprehensive review of AirBnB's and their effect on our town. Whilst the new Local Plan does propose a cap on the total number of properties let this way using new planning powers, Labour is worried about the council's reluctance to indicate what this will be set at and is worried it will be toothless.

Last October Cllr Val Kenny laid a motion to discuss the problem of AirBnBs at council. Labour would like to see the introduction of a new licensing scheme which would raise health and safety standards and force AirBnB owners to contribute annually to the cost of extra rubbish collections and improve noise enforcement. We think planning rules should prevent garages and outbuildings being converted into holiday lets and are proposing a doubling of council tax on second home owners to free up local housing supply.

"This is a real problem for many" said Cllr Val Kenny "we need a Labour council to solve this issue and not a Tory council full of empty promises."



Over 100 people attended our January meeting at The Whitstable School on the problem of new housebuilding along the Thanet Way.

Labour councillors are working with local resident associations to protect the character of our town and have voted against developments on the Seasalter Levels which the Green Party didn't even protest - despite them being near a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

In our response to the Local Plan Labour have called for the establishment of a Green belt to prevent urban sprawl.

We have also presented plans to ensure independent experts and not greedy developers are involved in deciding whether our sewage network can cope with new housebuilding.

Labour's detailed plans, like those of SOS Whitstable's, call for clearer use of planning to ensure the infrastructure is in place before new homes are agreed.

"With over 3000 on our council waiting list we can't say no to all new housing" said Cllr Cornell "but should demand environmental safeguards".

Read more at www.savethegreengap.org



PROTECTING STRUGGLING FAMILIES THIS WINTER

Local charities providing free food, clothes and toys have reported a substantial increase in need for their services this year. With rising energy bills many families who never thought that they would need help have had to seek it.

In November Labour councillors launched a campaign to collect toys for families struggling across town after desperate pleas from school family liason officers. The campaign collected over £1,400 worth of toys which were distributed through Whitstable Umbrella Centre and 'All Wrapped Up' at Riverside Church.

Last year Riverside Church provided Christmas dinner hampers and toys to 45 local families in the area. This year it had requests for over 220 hampers and toys for almost 170 children from local teachers and social workers.

"Demand has skyrocketed this year" said Rev Keeley Bateson "and as a result we've really needed the support of the local community to supplement the outstanding generosity of our congregation."

"Christmas is a hugely expensive and stressful time for many" said Cllr Chris Cornell "and anything we can do to help bring a bit of joy and practical help is worth it."

Donations personally brokered by councillors also contributed over £1,200 to the cost of Christmas hampers and allowed more than 320 children to visit Santa for free this year. For the second year councillors again supported the Horsebridge in personally writing and delivering over 200 Santa letters to kids in town.



CHRIS WITH DONATED TOYS AT RIVERSIDE CHURCH

LEADING THE RESPONSE

Last September Labour councillors asked the Tory Leader of the Council to appoint a cross party working group on the cost of living. We suggested, such was the scale of the problem, that we avoid all the bureaucracy and roll up our sleeves to ensure that the council was there to provide support to residents before the worst of the winter set in. Cllr Ben Fitter Harding refused.

After four months of Labour pressure the council agreed to appoint a cost of living co-ordinator in January but haven't given them a budget.

In the face of such indecision, Labour councillors pressed ahead to provide support. In Whitstable our councillors brought together over 15 community venues to offer a warm space and warm welcome this winter.

The first Warm Hub opened at Whitstable Labour Club in November with many now choosing to remain open to support those struggling with loneliness throughout the spring.

Working with the Office of Rosie Duffield we ran a cost of living fair in February, bringing together advice and information services including Canterbury Foodbank, Citizens Advice and Red Zebra. Free baby equipment,



toys and school uniform was also available at the event thanks to some amazing local services.

Liam Waghorn is the Warehouse Manager at Canterbury Foodbank and praised the events as a "great way of meeting the public and other organisations helping people at this time."

"Donations to local foodbanks are dropping just when need is going up" said Labour campaigner Simon Warley. "So its great to see Labour councilors approaching schools to see if they can help". To date 14 local schools have agreed to run a co-ordinated fundraiser for local food poverty services this year. Local Labour councillors are truly on your side.





BACKING INDEPENDANT TRADERS AND JOBS

Whilst this government has capped domestic energy levels, many local businesses have seen their costs increase by well over a third. Local independent shops have seen their contracts cancelled with energy companies with many forced to sign up at a higher tarriff.

providing practical support and leadership in our town

Last October, local Labour Councillors tried to alleviate some of this pressure by launching Fiver Fest and encouraging residents to support independent business.

Lisa Green, who runs a flower shop on the Canterbury Road, said "takings are up and more importantly local people are talking about how they could keep our high street independent."

The campaign highlighted that if every resident in Whitstable spent just £5 per week in local independent shops our economy would be boosted by £6.3m a year. Money spent with local firms helps local families put food on their table and supports people paying tax here rather than off shore.

Conversations have already started about how the project can be repeated this year.

Over 110 local business across Whitstable and Tankerton agreed to run a £5 deal over two week period with local Labour councillors helping launch Totally Locally Whitstable to help run it.





SAVE OUR CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Kent County Council are planning to close Joy Lane and Swalecliffe Children's centres in a plan which local parents fear will substantially reduce the service available to struggling mums and young families.

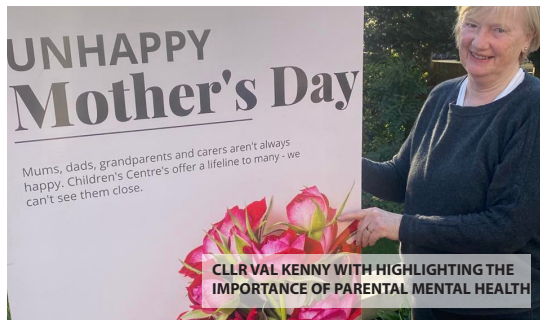
The plans will see 38 children's centres cut across the county with parents expected to get the bus to services up to half an hour away. The new 'family hubs' will also now house services for children making it harder to run services such as breastfeeding support groups and perinatal mental health support.

"Joy Lane was a lifeline when I had my first child" said Hetty Genower. "I used to get my child weighed two or three times a week so I could just see someone. I didn't have much support around and the children's centre was key to keeping me sane."

These cuts have been described as "short sighted" by Labour councillor Val Kenny who helped set up SureStart Centres in London during the late 1990's.

Local Cllr Chris Cornell has been working with affected parents to survey the effect that these cuts will have. The survey show 97% of people fear that how long it takes to get to a service will affect their willingness to use it. 68% said that they'd be less willing to use a service co-located with teenagers.

The Labour Group at Kent County Council presented an alternative budget which identified how they could keep these services open but the Tories voted against it. Local parents have signed a massive 3ft an 'Unhappy Mothers' Day' card to highlight the impact that these cuts would have on their own mental health.



CLLR VAL KENNY WITH HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH



LABOUR'S MEETING ON ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

MAKING OUR STREETS SAFER

Over 120 people attended a meeting between Kent Police and local residents following a rise in anti social behaviour across town. Labour councillors have been tackling the intimidation of residents whilst the Tories have been pre-occupied with unenforcable new laws to stop barbeques on the beach.

At the meeting, additional officers and dog units were committed as part of a dedicated effort to combat the ten most prominent offenders. New forensic officers were also committed to help target thefts from beach huts.

"Whitstable is largely a safe place to live" said Cllr Chris Cornell "but people have been rightly concerned about the rise in ASB and as such we've been working behind the scenes to ensure the council, police, youth service and local schools are working together. We need to simultaneously both provide more services for young people who are bored and show them that crime doesn't pay."

You can read a summary of the meeting and the Police response at

Work begins on Cornwallis Circle park

Work on the new play park at Cornwallis Park begins on 17th April after local Labour councillors secured almost £90,000 of investment through a range of public and private donations.

The final design also now includes more provision for children with physical disabilities.



"A huge thank you to the Cornwallis Circle Playground Improvement Trust and all the local families who have helped fundraise" said Cllr Val Kenny. "The new playground has taken over three years to secure but sees us deliver on a promise to improve the environment for all.

Returning the Umbrella to Whitstable



The council is offering the Whitstable Umbrella the chance to buy

its building for a nominal fee - ensuring the long term financial viability of the charity and the services it provides our town.

The charity was served an eviction notice last year before local Labour councillors stepped in to broker a deal.



DELIVERING A GREENER WHITSTABLE

Last summer Labour councillors decided to put pen to paper on two policy reports designed to drive forward the environmental agenda in Whitstable. With a pragmatic purpose we chose to directly identify and lobby for solutions which had worked elsewhere.

Since the publication of our Rewilding Plan Kent County Council has planted over 20 new trees on sites we identified at Station Road and Old Bridge Road, the council has committed to re-wilding areas around the new playground at Cornwallis Circle and Southern Water is bringing forward depaving initiatives in Bexley Street and Salt Marsh Lane. Negotiations are started about a green wall on the side of Whitstable Library. Local residents have planted up beds we identified on Cromwell Road and Acton Road as in need of attention.

As a direct result of our Litter Plan for Whitstable, the council has committed additional resources to ensure bins by the coast aren't open to seagulls and will be increasing capacity on the coast by installing additional wheelie bins along the front this summer.

This summer the council are installing community litter picking stations after a pilot run by VERO Planet and funded by Labour councillors for the last two years. They will also be commissioning an art work to sit in Whitstable Harbour and remind people of the effect of plastic pollution on our beaches.

They are going to install humorous Ballot Bins to see if they help reduce people disguarding cigarette butts.

18 months after Whitstable elected a Green councilor it is still Labour who are proposing and delivering on the radical solutions to improve our environment.





KATE, FRED AND SAM FROM THE NEW LGBTQ+ NETWORK

CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL

Labour councillors have been working with the Herne Bay LGBTQ+ Society to extend their work to Whitstable from this summer. Despite being known as an inclusive town, Whitstable has no dedicated LGBT support group apart from the one at the youth club.

Local Labour councillors have been key in helping introduce the Society to supportive local venues and promised funds to help fund dedicated safe spaces for some of their sexual health advice services run in conjunction with the local NHS trust.

Speaking of the collaboration, Sam Tyler said "we've been blown away by the support Whitstable councillors and venues have given us so far. Labour councillors have been so helpful and we are really excited to see what will happen next".

The society will start by bringing a bi monthly TransNetwork to town and regular coffee and catch up sessions for the wider LGBTQ+ community. We will be supporting them to see if the Herne Bay Pride event launched last year can also include Whitstable venues.

Demanding more police services

Over 90 local businesses signed an open letter to the Chief Constable of Kent Police about the need for more police in February. Local campaigner Dan Allan collected the signatures as the number of PCSOs is steadily dropping across Kent.

"We need to see more police on the beat" said Dan "and deploying fewer officers over larger areas doesn't work. Labour is the only party talking about crime in our area."



Charging forward

Labour councillors are consulting on new locations for on street electrical charging points in Whitstable. The council has promised to double the number of charging points across the district but don't know where to put them.

Local Green councillors haven't offered a plan for increasing the number of points whilst Labour have also advised how other authorities also use off street car parkings to help residents wanting to charge their vehicles overnight.

You can suggest sites to us and read about our plans at www.chargingwhitstable.co.uk

**JORDAN FOAD
LINDEN AVE**



**“Our local Labour
councillors are ace.
When most politicians
are full of excuses,
they have a real
can do attitude”**



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For online distribution only. Promoted by Julia Seath on behalf of Whitstable Labour both of 11 Belmont Road, Whitstable, CT5 1QP.



WHY VOTE LABOUR IN MAY

On May 4th you can help deliver a Labour council for Whitstable and the Canterbury District. A council which is committed to spending your money on big problems like housing and not frittering it away on on useless car parks and shopping centres.

A council that will scrap the crazy plan to carve up Canterbury and better serve Whitstable by giving you a vote on a new town council in the first two years of its administration.

Whatever you think about national politicians, local elections are about you deciding on who you think is doing a good job. Labour councillors are at the centre of community action in our town in a way that the Tories and Green councillors just aren't. They work tirelessly to keep you informed posting weekly updates about their work and are focused on the issues people care about.

The Tories only need to loose 4 seats in this election to be forced out of power and Labour is the party best placed to take over.

If you want to read about our plan for a fairer, greener and more united Whitstable our manifesto is available at www.whitstablelabour.co.uk