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LET US KNOW WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY

1 Take just two minutes to add in your views and details*

2 Post the results to Centenary House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3PE
OR Send a screenshot/picture/snip to admin@huntscca.co.uk

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Mobile: _____
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1 Which of these following issues are you most concerned about?

- Please tick any which applicable
- Planning and development
 - Social services and care
 - Affordable housing
 - Supporting local shops & businesses
 - Keeping Council Tax low
 - Transport and congestion

3 Are there any local issues or concerns you would like to raise?

2 How satisfied are you with how the Independents are running St Neots Town Council

< Very Dissatisfied

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Very Satisfied >

*Your data will be used by HCCA as part of our democratic engagement with electors. Where necessary, your data will be shared with Conservative Party Headquarters, our candidates and elected representatives. It will not be given or sold to anyone else. For more information please see our privacy notice available at hcca.org.uk/privacy

YOUR CONSERVATIVE TEAM FOR ST NEOTS & LITTLE PAXTON



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Caring and Campaigning for our Community

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News Update from St Neots Conservatives

Spring 2019



ST NEOTS TOWN COUNCIL GOING BROKE?

17.7%

increase to St Neots council tax in 2019

+ 66%

council tax hike under Independent controlled council

9X

more than the current level of UK inflation

£12,000

removed from town grass cutting budget

Less money for the community as St Neots Independents force service cuts and tax increases

St Neots Town Council has announced the town's reserves have reached a dangerously low level following budget discussions in January.

The council's budget determines its share of the council tax charge for the next financial year.

At a full council meeting in December, Independent Councillors proposed an eye-watering 35.4% council tax rise, passing the cost of four years of financial mismanagement on to residents.

At a further extraordinary meeting of St Neots Town Council in January, Councillors eventually settled on a 17.7% rise, almost nine times the rate of inflation.

Residents are now paying £50.00 more (per Band D Property) than they were in 2015, when St Neots Conservatives

last set Town Council tax levels.

The Independents have also agreed thousands of pounds in cuts.

This includes slashing spending on public events such as the St Neots Christmas Lights switch-on event as well as a £12,000 reduction in the grass cutting budget.

A vast majority of Independents voted in favour of the increase.

St Neots Independents have now wasted tens of thousands in public money on questionable 'vanity projects'.

The Council has squandered nearly all its savings and now only has almost half of what the National Association of Local Councils recommends it should have in reserve. In dire circumstances, this could see the council go broke in less than three months.

CONTINUES OVER PAGE

HDC CONSERVATIVES INVESTING IN ST NEOTS

Carparks such as Riverside will benefit from the new Conservative strategy



At the District Council, the Conservative group has always recognised the unique importance of St Neots as our largest town. That's why it continues to be the area which receives the largest amount of HDC funding.

However, St Neots is now due to receive even more additional investment as the town is set to benefit from a new Car Parking Strategy, building on a Conservative manifesto promise to support and encourage retail in our town centres.

The council is proposing to modernise

our local car parks by introducing cashless parking, upgraded electrical charging points and a 'Pay for What You Use' system, which will reduce the amount of overpayment by customers and ensure value for money by charging a parking fee relating more closely to the actual time elapsed on departure.

This is not just about thousands of pounds of additional investment. St Neots Conservatives are listening and responding to local needs as a community, and fighting to keep services and businesses in our town centre.

Caring and Campaigning for our Community

Find out more at www.hcca.org.uk

WHERE HAS ALL OUR MONEY GONE?

Leading Independents have admitted that this tax hike would hit the most vulnerable, with one warning his fellow councillors that "There will be no magic money fairy and if we don't control the budget we are in danger of running out of money." (Hunts Post, 9 January 2019)

Documents circulated as part of the agenda for the



Greens such as Eaton Ford's may see the brunt of grass cutting reductions

must take responsibility for this and not just by demanding more council tax, but by showing real leadership and taking the difficult decisions to get us back on an even keel. It must be remembered that the money the council spends isn't their money, it is our money and we don't want it wasted." (Hunts Post, 9 January 2019)

It is clear that St Neots cannot afford to keep paying the price for this failed administration.

Meanwhile, your Conservative District Councillors have ensured a balanced budget, with any council tax changes double locked to keep them below any rise in either wages or pensions to ensure it is affordable.

According to the Hunts Post, one member of the public present during the meeting told the assembled Independents: "You



Green spaces and town centre events will be hit by the effect of cuts

COUNCILLORS MISSING?

As their elected representatives consistently fail to attend Town and District Council meetings, are residents being left uninformed and underrepresented?

At one meeting of the full Town Council, eight Independent members failed to show up, despite such subjects as Neighborhood Plan amendments, the Town Council's investment strategy and the compulsory purchase of town buildings (at taxpayer expense) all being on the agenda for discussion.

At District Council level, where the Independent group remains the current official opposition, the group leader - a councillor from St Neots - failed to show up to more than 40% of his meetings since the election (HDC attendance record, figures correct as of 30 January). He has now been replaced as Leader of the Opposition.

If these St Neots councillors cannot find time for their constituents, how can they be expected to take the tough decisions necessary to save St Neots from a financial black hole of their own creation.

A member of the public stood up to speak at the meeting and accused the council of failing to show "real leadership".

FROM THE HUNTS POST, 9 JANUARY

OUSE MEADOW: THE FACTS

Following a misleading report in the Hunts Post concerning the potential development of Ouse Meadow, we wanted to set the record straight and put residents' minds at ease. In short, the facts are:

1. The Meadow has never been subject to any protection from development, and therefore **has not been stripped of any protected status**.
2. Listing the field as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) **does not protect the site from development**. Not only can



Huntingdonshire District Council have robustly defended Ouse Meadow

the current owner choose to develop the site themselves, ACV status only allows the residents of St Neots a six month window to raise funds to potentially purchase the site; **a purchase the owner can still reject**.

Given that the Town Council is now woefully short of funding, any funds would again come out of residents' pockets.

3. Far from being earmarked for development, the Meadow is in fact **already going through a process which could deliver protection from development** via being registered as a Town/Village Green with Cambridgeshire County Council

4. Huntingdonshire District Council have robustly defended the Ouse Meadows against developers wishing to see it allocated for development in the Local Development Plan.

This included successfully resisting the developer's attempt to have it declared suitable for development by the planning inspector who was considering the draft Local Plan.

This demonstrates once again that there are those in St Neots who will resort to scaremongering, rather than facing up to the challenging issues genuinely affecting residents.

CONSERVATIVES PROTECTING OUR BOBBIES AND KEEPING THEM ON THE STREETS

Cambridgeshire police will have increased the number of bobbies on the beat for the first time since 2005.

Thanks to the hard work and responsible financial management of Jason Ablewhite, Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, over one hundred additional constables will be in place and going through the training.

The increase comes at a time when the Government is investing millions more in local constabularies up and down the country, with Cambridgeshire potentially benefiting from a cash increase of up to £10.3 million.

This does not include additional national spending of £50 million for Counter-Terrorism Policing and £130 million for national policing priorities, such as 'County Lines' drug dealing and knife crime.

At a local level, Mr Ablewhite recently completed a survey of residents across Cambridgeshire to raise further funds to recruit an additional fifty officers.

Furthermore, the Commissioner has committed to ensuring that St Neots maintains an active police station and its own community policing team, which currently provides the town with support from Police Constables and PCSOs on top of standard response units.

As Commissioner, Mr Ablewhite has been clear that every possible penny can and will be spent on the front-lines, ensuring our local officers have the resources they need to keep everyone safe.



PCC Jason Ablewhite