

NEWS IN BRIEF FROM ACROSS THE PANTILES AND ST MARK'S

Invigorating The Pantiles

During 2021/22 I championed an entrepreneur to enhance the Chalybeate Spring. The plan - reduce the iron content making the water more palatable; bottle and sell it through local bars, restaurants, and other outlets. His plans will remove the non-vintage items, add new heritage quality features, provide costumed performances, the history of the Wells etc. By supporting the entrepreneur, he won approval from the Town Forum, The Civic Society, the Council and got his lease approved.

This will add to the music, entertainment, hospitality, shops and markets of our world recognised Pantiles, enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

Modernising transport

Solving our difficult long hill and spread-out shopping streets is important for many who use the Pantiles. My extensive investigation, and support I gained from local operators and major developers, indicates potential funding for a light electric 6-seater minibus service from the Pantiles to RVP and beyond.

Let's also bring in new thinking and electronic technology to our taxi and bus services with local 'UBER style' taxi hailing and door-to-door bus services (such as the Go2 minibus service).

Enhancing car movement

The logjam at the London Road and Vale Road junction needs to be fixed with peak-time traffic lights, a roundabout or other system.

The temporary seating / parklets on the High Street was designed to enhance the High Street for pedestrians, shoppers and users of restaurants and bars. Permanent seating parklets are needed but traffic management on Vale Road needs to be improved as part of this project.



PROTECTING SERVICES FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

Ensuring financial competence during and after COVID



As a former Deputy Leader, I believed maintaining Council services throughout Covid was essential to support residents and get funding to businesses. Despite income loss, all deficits were covered and readied for post Covid recovery. Slashing services would have been silly.

We managed to keep open sports and community centres and completed during Covid the Amelia Scott (aimed at attracting visitors to our town). This action helped support businesses in the Pantiles, the High Street, village and elsewhere ready for post-Covid recovery.

Strong underlying funding ensured a substantial surplus, post Covid, during 2022/23. Budgeting funds, should Covid have continued, was sensible for our town. Being cost efficient and organising home working by employees allowed us to balance the Council's books.

PROTECTING OUR NATIONAL SPORTS IN TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Our sports and leisure clubs in The Pantiles, the Village and St Marks, include the Cricket Ground, Tennis, Boules on the Pantiles and shooting clubs. All are nationally renowned and fully supported by me when in Cabinet. I will continue to push the Council to support them during their sporting calendar events and to be responsive to their needs and to fight for resources from national and international bodies.



DAVID A. SCOTT

*Standing up for
The Pantiles
and St Mark's*

Our plan for TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH



1 SUPPORTING OUR TOWN CENTRES

We successfully secured over £53 million in central government grants to support local retail and businesses to bounce back post pandemic. We will extend first hour free parking across council car parks to support community centres and local businesses.

The LibDem Alliance Labour coalition have hiked parking fees at exactly the wrong time and not consulted local shops.

3 CONTROLLING SPECULATIVE PLANNING APPLICATIONS ON OUR GREEN BELT

We developed a new Local Plan to protect our green spaces from speculative planning applications and to provide strategic management of housing, sports and community facilities for the next 20 years.

The Local Plan has stalled under the LibDem Alliance Labour coalition, it needs Conservative leadership to get it delivered.

5 SOUND COUNCIL FINANCES

The Conservatives left the Council in May 2022 with no external debt, £130 million in assets that generate substantial income, £24 million in reserves & 13 years of consecutive clean external audits.

The LibDem Alliance Labour coalition squandered this strong legacy, leading to unjustified hikes in fees and the resignation of their Finance leader after the car parking fee hike fiasco.

2 HOUSING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

To support the next generation of homeowners, a record 662 new homes were built during the last year of Conservative control, including 272 new homes allocated as affordable housing with part ownership options starting at 20%.

In comparison new affordable housing has dropped over 80% under the coalition.

4 COMMUNITY CENTRES

Across the borough we worked successfully with parish and town councils to deliver community hubs providing new medical centres for GP practices, community spaces & sports facilities. Both the new Amelia and Southborough centres have made a significant regeneration impact to our town centres.

The LibDem Alliance Labour coalition have failed to build on this success, with no new initiatives put forward.

6 CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION

The Council's carbon emissions were reduced by nearly 50% during Conservative control, including installation of solar panels on our leisure and community centres.

Progression of new carbon reduction initiatives has completely stalled under the LibDem Alliance Labour coalition despite their promise of "hitting the ground running"