

BATTINS FOCUS

Edited by Faith Ponsonby



LIBERAL
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Election Special

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Park policing success

Lib Dem councillors have praised police and local volunteers for their success in the battle against crime. Figures for last year show a reduction of 9% in Leigh Park against 7% borough-wide.

News that the Pride of Place drop-in centre in Greywell is to close on 16th May has dismayed local residents. It follows a joint decision by the police and the Tory-run Council that the costs of running the centre could not be justified, as facilities were being duplicated. However, Inspector Ian Ogilvy is committed to keeping the spirit of Pride of Place going.

Lib Dem Battins Councillor, Faith Ponsonby, has been supporting the volunteers who are exploring how the centre could be saved. Faith told

Focus: "I went to London to meet the landlords; they would assist in moving to a smaller unit if some money could be found to help with rent and running costs."

Faith said the centre has meant people can pop in to see advisers, such as a Victim Support counsellor. She added "It provides a unique and valuable service, that has contributed to the reduction in crime. We must not lose what everybody has worked so hard to achieve."



"Residents' dismay over closure"

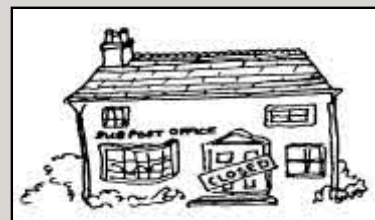
Faith backs green space campaign

Many thanks to residents who responded to the flier put out by Faith Ponsonby in streets near the Battins Copse. Rik Goodall, the local tree warden, said he was delighted that there had been so many volunteers. **The next step is a meeting to set up the 'Friends of Battins Copse' in May, 2008 when a video will be shown of other groups in action.** Everyone is welcome to contribute their ideas on what should be done in the Copse. Portsmouth Council, the owners, have said they could provide materials for better paths. Meanwhile, the litter clearing continues, and extra help would be welcome at 10.00 a.m. on the first Tuesday of each month.



Labour's Post Office shame

Leigh Park residents are furious over the government's decision to rubber stamp the closure of Post Offices, including two on the Park. In a motion against closure Portsmouth Lib Dem MP, Mike Hancock, backed the call while Labour's Sarah McCarthy-Fry voted with the government. Leigh Park's Lib Dem councillors were active in supporting petitions and writing to Post Office bosses.



New Civic Centre What about Leigh Park?



Consultants are about to reveal their ideas for the whole of the Civic Centre Campus, including the Leisure Centre. Apparently the Civic offices themselves are outdated, and too large, and the Leisure Centre will need major work done on it soon.

There could be a proposal to move the offices to a new building in Market Parade, Havant, and sell the land for development as new offices or a hotel. Cllr Faith Ponsonby said that, if the Civic

offices cannot be renovated, they would be better in Greywell/Park Parade. In the proposals for Leigh Park Centre, Tidsworth Car park on Stockheath Road, was identified for shops facing outwards. **She said "It would be brilliant to have the Civic Offices right here in Leigh Park in the centre of the Borough – not only would it bring people in to Leigh Park to see what a great place it is, but it would also be a big boost for the shopping centre."**

An eyesore in need of action - update.



The former Cricketers Pub site eyesore could soon be tidied up. Negotiations are taking place to build on the former allotments behind the old pub, with access either on to Riders Lane or into Ditcham Crescent. Faith said **"This land has been a huge problem with vandalism and fly-tipping, which was one reason why the allotment holders went. Releasing it could see some extra money for use in the community." Please let Faith know what you think.**

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News from Leigh Park County Cllr Ann Buckley

I'm delighted to have been able to arrange county council grants to Malmesbury Lawn and Lawns day centre (£500), Relate (£500), Arthritic Care for days out ((£500), Neighbourhood Watch for new signs (£500), Park Media Group for recording equipment (£1000), SSAFA for ex- service people and their families (£1000) for office equipment, Royal British Legion, new flag pole and Havant Over-55 group (£500).

New Houses and Transport Route plans

Plans from Havant Council show the need for a preferred route for traffic between the new Industrial Park in Dunsbury Hill Farm and the south. Nothing firm has been decided but there is a risk that some Leigh Park roads would carry more lorries and trucks. Residents are urged to read more in the various documents in the Library and on Havant Council's website.

There are also plans to allocate housing on to sites in:

- Riders Lane (see this page),
- Blendworth Crescent
- Bitterne Close,
- Leigh Park Centre,
- land adjacent to Holybourne Road,
- parking areas off Fair Oak Drive and High Lawn Way.

Please send in your comments by April 25th at the latest.

Faith told Focus: "This is a chance to influence possible changes to Leigh Park, so do take a look at them."

