

FOCUS ON...

# BERKHAMSTED EAST

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## The Credit Crunch

**Vince Cable** the widely respected Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman is proposing a long term reform of British banking with a firewall between domestic banking, where you expect your money to be kept safe, and the risky casino type investment banks which have gambled the world to the edge of disaster

He has been saying for a long time that the existing system was going to hell in a handcart but the Labour government was too foolish and the Conservative opposition too tied up with the financial world to take notice and do what should have been done.

A LibDem Treasury under Vince Cable would have seen the trouble coming and taken steps to protect you, your jobs and your pensions.

**LibDems have been right on the important issues in recent years – opposed the war in Iraq and again on debt and the economy.**

Thinking about who you should support? Take a look at the national policies we are putting forward – and what the Lib Dems stand for.

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## GO GREEN in 2009

### SO, WHAT IS A FEED-IN-TARIFF?

**Many EU Countries are already generating far more energy from renewables – such as photo voltaic and wind turbines – than we do. Why?**

These EU countries give a renewable energy **REWARD - Called a feed-in-tariff.**

This is a charge on energy companies to pay a guaranteed long term premium price for electricity generated by renewable sources and fed into their power system.

Our Government has only now agreed to this by passing an amendment to the **Climate Change Bill**. But, as often we have the words but no action plan.

Promises, Promises..... LibDems are pressing for **ACTION**



Setting out how the Liberal Democrats would deal with the economic crisis, Liberal Democrat leaders **Nick Clegg and Vince Cable** include in their **Green Road to Recovery** Programme a plan for energy and money saving Smart Meters in every home.

For more see: <http://tinyurl.com/8t8aru> or <http://tinyurl.com/9hur2r>

## BOROUGH TO DEMOLISH GABLE HALL?

The Borough Cabinet decided in December to close and demolish Gable Hall in Prince Edward Street - beside Victoria School. This was passed over to the Borough in the 1974 reorganisation - at no cost - along with a lot of other land and the Civic Centre.

Now we're told that the building will cost too much to update and its bookings don't make enough to justify keeping it. Lagley Hall is another one that is being closed. Did the Borough consider offering this hall for use by the Day Centre whose elderly users now travel to Tring? Is it suitable? How can these halls can be retained for use by our community?

In recent months the County Council has sold off the site in Manor Street - also passed over by Berkhamsted Council in 1974.

Should our community buildings be returned to the Town or sold to the highest bidder? What do you think about it?

## Rising Fares – again!

January sees the annual hike in train fares – London Midland [having taken over the franchise in 2008] has decided on 4.8%. But that is not the end of the story – for its charges for parking also went up during 2008 – a daily ticket is £5.5 and annual season is £715. And it now charges for parking in the evenings and week end – when these were 'free'.

The result is many more cars left on side roads causing residents no end of inconvenience, while more folk decide that its better to drive – for work or pleasure.

Norman Baker, Liberal Democrat MP for Transport, has called for fares to be frozen and said passengers deserved to be treated the same way that motorists were. He said - "The government has repeatedly frozen fuel duty for motorists in the light of external circumstances, despite the fact that under Labour the cost of motoring has actually fallen in real terms by 10%."

## The County Council

Residents have been telling us how disappointed they are in the current state of the County Council.

The Conservative-run administration over the past four years has had many failings.

- They have lost a star in the Audit Commission rating system.
- There have been major breakdowns in delivering services to elderly and vulnerable residents.
- Roads and pavements are in a significantly worse state than in neighbouring counties.

We have made it clear that the Lib-Dems are determined to cut waste. Your money is not being spent as efficiently as you would spend it yourself. We need the Council to be run in the same way.

In December we found they have not costed their **Highways re-organisation** correctly. There is a shortfall on the budget of half a million pounds. This will directly impact on service delivery. No local county councillors were informed of this mismanagement: it took enquiries from the Liberal Democrats after local front line staff told them to find out the truth. Highways officials have been left reapplying for their own jobs.

County Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lib Dem spokesperson on Highways and the Environment said on hearing about the mess: 'This smacks of total ineptitude by Tory controlled Herts Highways which seems to be reorganising for the sake of it.'

## Gypsies and Travellers (and lots more houses)

We are told there are around 1200 new pitches needed in the Eastern Region to meet the shortage of sites for Travellers. This has resulted in Dacorum needing to find 15 [or 20] new pitches on top of the 36 already provided, with more in future years.

Spreading the sites around may disperse the Travellers – but the reports show that there has been little consultation with the Traveller community to develop solutions that will meet their needs. We could end up with lots of unused sites in some areas and illegal pitches elsewhere. A wasted opportunity to get it right.

The Town Council knew about the plans for local sites in September yet local residents complained at the public meeting in November that they were in the dark.

In East Ward concerned residents distributed leaflets that publicised the Consultation and proposals for over 1200 new houses far better than the Borough or Town Council. A good example of collective action by our community

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**Garrick Stevens**, former Mayor and Leader of Berkhamsted Town Council, has been selected to contest the County Council Election in June. A Town Councillor for more than 10 years, he has battled for a better service from County Highways for our roads and pavements as well a better deal for our young people and elderly. He says 'LibDems are committed to 'localism' - empowering people and bringing decision making closer to the communities affected. We are also pretty radical in our policies - you only have to look at what Vince Cable is proposing to tackle the credit crunch.'

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