

CHAMPIONING OUR CHILDREN

INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUNDS

Both **Alex and Ryan** believe that all children have a right to play and that this should be reflected in the community play spaces. Playgrounds are important spaces for community engagement and childhood development and should be built with inclusivity as a core principle.

To do this we must ensure that when playgrounds are improved they must include accessible design and inclusive equipment that disabled children can use and play on.

Research from Scope has discovered that 96% of parents with disabled children had used a public playground in the past year – but 49% said they had accessibility problems with these playgrounds.

To make sure play equipment in our ward and Weymouth as a whole is inclusive and accessible to all, Ryan put a motion through Weymouth Town Council in November which was passed and will ensure the principles of inclusive design are included going forward in every development or refurbishment of a council playground.



TACKLING CHILD POVERTY

In 2017 the Conservative Government introduced a cruel rule that restricted support in Universal Credit and tax credits to two children per household. End Child Poverty Coalition figures suggest that there could be >5500 children whose families are affected in Dorset (approx

8% of children). Local child poverty rates for Dorset are running at 25%. Scrapping the two child limit would be one of the most effective ways of reducing child poverty.

Lib Dems are the only party to have consistently opposed this policy. Leader Cllr Nick Ireland successfully put forward a motion that Dorset Council should continue to put pressure on the Government to scrap the two child limit. **Ryan** commented, 'This government has no idea what it is like for our residents. Having more than two children is not a crime and larger families should not be singled out for this treatment.'

FOCUS On Westham

Feb/ March 2024



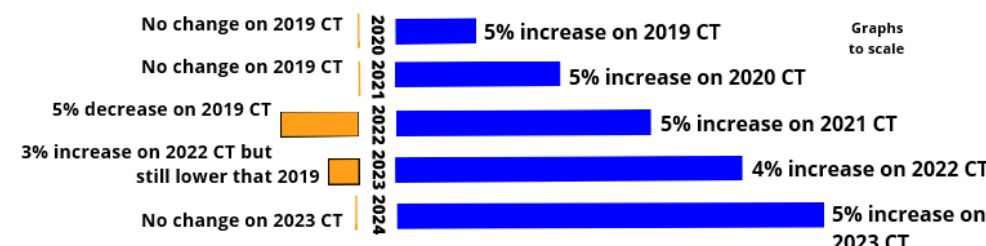
2024/5 COUNCIL TAXES

WEYMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL remains unchanged
while **DORSET COUNCIL** increase theirs yet again

COUNCIL TAX CHANGES SINCE 2019

LIB DEM led Weymouth Town

Conservative led Dorset Council



LIB DEMS have REDUCED
Weymouth Town Council
council tax overall by 2% since
2019

While Conservatives have
INCREASED Dorset Council
council tax overall by a
whopping 26 % since 2019

Dorset Council have just set your council tax for 2024/5. Their share has gone up by 5% meaning that you will be paying one of the highest council tax rates in the country. To add to this last year there was £2M put aside to help residents with the cost of living. This has been removed so there will not be so much grant funding available to help hard pressed families.

Dorset Deserves Better

BUS UPDATE



Photo courtesy of the Dorset Echo

Cllr David Harris is delighted to announce that, at a meeting he has recently had with First Bus, he was told that the no.3 bus will definitely be in the schedule starting in May. They are also experimenting with an additional bus in this service leaving town at 5.00pm to bring people home at the end

of the afternoon. There has been a slight change in other times. Again, the more people who use it, the more likely the service will stay and we might even be able to add to it.

To help improve their support for customers they now have an App, (doesn't everyone have an App?) called First Bus App. If you download it and open it for Wessex (Dorset and Somerset) you can not only see the timetables but also where the buses are at any one time. This shows you if there is a hold up.

YOUR LIB DEM TEAM FOR WESTHAM



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Cllr Gill Taylor

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BENCHES ON THE MARSH



Ryan and Alex were pleased after long campaigning that they were able to get these new benches on the marsh following multiple requests from residents who used to sit on the stone borders prior to the installation of the fences as part of the

actions taken to protect the Marsh from illegal encampments.

They both look forward to sitting and chatting to other residents in the warmer weather while out walking their dogs, Rocket and Barker, familiar to many local people, and while their children are playing in the park.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Gill has been championing housing for local people for a long time and has now secured some Dorset Council funding to help with this. Gill commented 'It is crazy that the Conservatives at Dorset Council say they are committed to affordable housing and yet they provide little funding for it. I put forward an amendment at Full Council which put £4M a year into a pot for this. This may not seem much when talking about housing but if it is used well it will go a long way and hopefully when the Conservatives are out of office in May we can add to it.'



Contact your local Westham Lib Dem Team:

Contact details for some of the councillors are on the front of this leaflet. For other Westham Councillors:

David Harris, Tim Young and Oz Kanji:

See www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk/councillors

Please get in touch if you have a point or issue you would like to discuss.

For general Lib Dem queries please email us at info@sdlibdems.org.uk

Lib Dems - working for our residents all year round

Lib Dems - keeping in touch throughout the year

CHRISTMAS SLEIGH COLLECTION

Alex and Ryan would like to thank the Lions Club of Weymouth and Portland for bringing Christmas cheer to the residents of Westham with their Sleigh back in December. They enjoyed taking part with Ryan towing the sleigh and Alex playing the role of Santa Claus. £386.25 was collected the charity would like to thank the residents who donated.



Being a councillor is not all work and no play



Liberal
Democrats

MATT BELL

The Local Champion who will stand up for South Dorset



South Dorset Liberal Democrats are very pleased to announce **Matt Bell as your Parliamentary Candidate** for the next general election.

Matt said 'I am extremely proud to be standing as the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate. **I want to champion the needs of the community in which I grew up, live, teach and raise my family. I want to provide South Dorset with a listening ear and a loud voice!**

I am looking forward to meeting many of you over the next few months and, with your support, representing you at Westminster.'

MATT'S POSITIVE PLANS FOR SOUTH DORSET

- ▶ **Economy.** Fight for all year-round innovative employment opportunities, which will encourage young people to stay in South Dorset.
- ▶ Take all necessary action to ensure we protect and conserve our **natural environment**. Campaign for clean rivers and beaches.
- ▶ **Seek major improvements in health care** including mental health care, dental provision and adult social care.
- ▶ Campaign for **proper funding for all schools**, ensuring they receive full support for pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities.
- ▶ **Support our military heritage** by ensuring that military personnel are sufficiently equipped and enabled to live with the respect and dignity they have earned through their service to the nation. Work to ensure there is always a strong moral and ethical basis for military action.

YOUR CHOICE AT THE GENERAL ELECTION

**A FRESH START
WITH
MATT BELL**



MATT BELL
Working for South Dorset



Matt at Radipole Lake earlier this year showing the obvious effect of flooding on local businesses.

MATT FIGHTS THE FILTH

Swanage, Corfe Castle, Weymouth, Portland, all have felt the impact of climate change and / or neglect by water companies; with flooding, polluted rivers and beaches.

Matt has been speaking out and acting. A petition launched by Matt in Weymouth has resulted in the authorities now working together to resolve the issue in the River Wey Valley and Radipole Lake areas.

Clean bathing water is also on Matt's action plan. He is calling for a ban on bonuses for sewage bosses and would like profits made by water companies to be used to clean up the filth that is found in our rivers and on our beaches. **Matt takes the issue of climate change and its**

impacts seriously, whilst balancing the need to provide secure and cheaper electricity, unlike our current MP.

**LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PLAN
TO CLEAN UP OUR WATER**

- ▶ **ABOLISH OFWAT AND REPLACE WITH A MORE POWERFUL REGULATOR**
- ▶ **BAN BONUSES FOR SEWAGE BOSSES**
- ▶ **ADD A COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT CHAMPION TO EVERY WATER BOARD**
- ▶ **TRANSFORM PRIVATE WATER COMPANIES INTO PUBLIC BENEFIT COMPANIES**



Liberal
Democrats

STANDARDS MATTER

Over the last few years standards in public life have plummeted as MPs have been thrown out of the commons because of their behaviour. Chaos and confusion have reigned, money has been poured down the drain with dodgy deals. This is not good government.

MATT'S PLEDGE

"I will always stand up for and maintain the seven principles of public life (commonly known as the Nolan Principles). The standards concerned are:

- **Honesty**
- **Integrity**
- **Accountability**
- **Selflessness**
- **Objectivity**
- **Openness**
- **Leadership**

No matter the policies, if these principles are lacking, we will not get better government."

ONE THING IN DORSET SOMETHING ELSE IN WESTMINSTER

People in our communities are not immune to the cost of living crisis, we have all faced increases in gas, electricity and council tax bills.

Sadly, we have an MP who utters words of sympathy in Dorset but who has shown no support for the Lib Dem windfall tax on energy companies and hence chooses to support them to increase profits rather than to cut the costs paid by all consumers including our local small business.

He has also voted in Parliament against proper funding for local councils who must deliver essential services.

**DORSET DESERVES BETTER
THAN THIS LACK OF
SUPPORT FOR THE GENERAL
PUBLIC**

BACK MATT'S CAMPAIGN TODAY

Get in touch with Matt by:

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Follow Matt on social media at:

Cllr Matt Bell for South Dorset on Facebook

@MattBellSDorset on Twitter.

www.infosdlibdems.org.uk

Let Matt know if you can help by:

- ▶ delivering leaflets in your area.
- ▶ donating to the campaign.



If you respond to this leaflet with your contact details, the Liberal Democrats, locally and nationally, may use information provided, including your political views, to further our objectives, share it with other elected representatives and/or contact you in future using any of the means provided. Some contacts may be automated. You may opt out of some or all contacts or exercise your other legal rights by contacting us. Further details are in our Privacy Policy at www.libdems.org.uk/privacy
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