

Malvern Matters

News and views from Malvern Conservatives

September 2006

Harriett Baldwin chosen as new Parliamentary Candidate

Local Conservatives have chosen 46-year-old Harriett Baldwin to be their candidate at the next general election, when Sir Michael Spicer stands down.

Harriett said: *"It is a great honour to be chosen to follow Sir Michael, who has worked tirelessly for local people since 1974. My husband Jim and our three children are*

excited about making our home in this glorious part of England. We want to meet as many of you as possible as we campaign across West Worcestershire for a Conservative government."

Read more about Harriett on page 2. If you would like to put a question to Harriett, please complete the reply form on page 4.



Harriett Baldwin with Sir Michael Spicer

"Tell the truth" call on Council Tax costs

Leader of the Conservative Opposition Group on Malvern Hills District Council, Serena Croad, has called for more openness over recent changes in the Council's senior staffing structure.

At first, the Liberal leader of the Council, Di Rayner, said that reducing the number of top posts would save the Council £500,000 over three years. Then it emerged that there would be a huge cost to local taxpayers to make the necessary cuts. Recently published figures show that £651,000 will be spent between 2006-09 on redundancy costs and pension enhancements, for the senior managers whose jobs are being abolished. This seems to be another astonishing case of the Malvern Liberals wasting local resources.

Serena Croad said: *"The Council should be more open and honest about its decisions, so that people can really know what is going on."*

Low marks for Malvern planners

Planning services provided by Liberal-run Malvern Hills District Council have been sharply criticised by the Audit Commission, the Government's watchdog for Local Authority performance. Following an in-depth inspection, local planners were awarded only one star (out of a possible three) for their service to the community.

The Commission said that the way planning applications were determined was neither efficient nor consistent - and that the Council had only recently publicised the service standards that customers could expect. The inspectors made a number of recommendations for improving value for money for local taxpayers.

Police forces merger ditched by Labour

The controversial proposal to merge the country's top performing police force, West Mercia, with its neighbours, West Midlands, Staffordshire and Warwickshire, has now been dropped by the government. This botched exercise, which received no local support whatsoever, is believed to have cost the taxpayer in the region of £300,000 - the equivalent of ten new PCs on the beat -

distracting senior staff from their policing responsibilities. Despite being consistently warned by Conservative shadow Home Secretary David Davis that this was an ill thought out plan, Labour insisted on trying to centralise this vital service, just when local communities are calling for more neighbourhood-based policing.

Career mum to fight West Worcestershire seat

Harriett Baldwin is the new Parliamentary Candidate for West Worcestershire.

She grew up in the heart of rural Essex and was educated at the universities of Oxford and McGill, Canada. She is married to Jim, a television producer and social and industrial historian, whose interests include canals, bridges and steam trains. Between them they have two daughters and a son.

Harriett has enjoyed a successful 20-year career in finance, specialising in currency markets for pension funds. She was on the National Council of Business for Sterling, helping to prevent Britain's entry into the Euro. In 2005, she fought Stockton North for the Conservatives, achieving a 3.6% swing. Harriett is a supporter and fundraiser for the

Centre for Social Justice, which works with charities that fight poverty in the UK. As well as being an active Conservative campaigner, Harriett also champions a range of charities that help "Make Poverty History" by giving communities the chance to help themselves. Two examples are "Opportunity International", which is active in micro-finance in poor countries and "CAMFED", which helps educate African girls at secondary level. Harriett has always worked to encourage more women to get involved in politics and to work in financial services. She is a change-maker for the charity "Working Families", which campaigns for more workplace flexibility for parents and carers.



Finding a house in West Worcestershire is a top priority for Harriett Baldwin, pictured here visiting a Malvern estate agent

Councillor Serena Croad – surgery dates

You can meet Serena when she holds her advice centres at the Customer Services Centre, Malvern Library, on the following dates (all on Wednesdays at 12.30 to 1.30 pm):

13th September, 11th October, 8th November and 6th December.

Rubbish Watch update

Many of you wrote to us, complaining about rubbish in your area. We are pursuing each case to help achieve a cleaner Malvern. Unfortunately, one of the difficulties we have encountered is that the Liberal administration at the District Council does not appear to want to address rubbish on private premises - even those which are easily accessible to the public. The Council has more than enough powers to deal with such problems and we shall be pressing them to use them. In the meantime, please keep Rubbish Watch informed of any more problems.

Richard is new candidate in Chase Ward



Richard Simmonds and his team in Chase ward are joined by Parliamentary Candidate, Harriett Baldwin

Richard Simmonds has been selected to stand as the first of three Conservative candidates in the Chase Ward for next year's District Council election.

Richard lived in the Ward as a teenager, before moving to London to study for his degree. Having graduated and worked as an economist for the NFU, he moved back to Malvern, bringing his finance business to the area and employing over 20 local people in Malvern.

As treasurer of West Worcestershire Conservative Future, Richard has helped motivate young people back into politics. He has begun meeting many local Constituents to listen to their views. He said: "I have been struck by the strength of local people's views on the doorstep. They feel that they are not being properly represented on the Council and that their Council Tax is not giving good value for money".

Labour's holiday tax idea attacked

With the summer holiday season in full swing, Harriett Baldwin has added her name to a Conservative campaign to stop Labour's latest money-making ruse - a stealth tax on British holidays.

Gordon Brown asked former Labour Councillor, Sir Michael Lyons, to produce plans for new local taxes -and he suggested a levy on local hotels, B&Bs and hostels. There are 62 of these in Malvern Hills, where tourism is a vital part of the local economy.

The new tax would be on top of existing business rates and VAT on hotel bills, adding £100 a week to the cost of a typical family holiday in Britain. Less well-off families would be the hardest hit.

Harriett Baldwin said: "The brilliant summer weather has shown what a great place

Worcestershire is to spend a short break or a holiday. But the great British holiday is under threat from Gordon Brown's latest money-making ploy. The Lib Dems have also voted for a new hotel tax. Now I fear they want to hike the price of a British break. I am adding my name to the campaign to ask the Government to think again."

Harriett Baldwin hears the concerns of Jeremy Sutton, proprietor of the Great Malvern Hotel



Your views are loud and clear

Many thanks to so many of you who took the trouble to complete and return the reply forms from the June edition of Malvern Matters. We are following up each response individually. Councillor Serena Croad said: "These issues are very important to Malvern. The Conservative Group on the Council will campaign for them to be properly addressed".

The top issues concerning you were very clear:

1. The most important issue for most of you is the need for **better health services** in Malvern: "The new Hospital in Malvern in my lifetime (I am 65)" says Mr J of the Link.

2. **Speeding and inconsiderate parking** were in second place: "The speed of many cars in Graham Road is dangerous and unacceptable," says Mrs M of Great Malvern.

3. **Litter around Malvern** worries almost as many of you: "More litter collection on the roads and areas outside shopping centres," says Mr F of Malvern Wells.

4. The Council's attempts at **recycling** don't seem to be well regarded: "They want you to recycle, but if you have a large family they don't let you have enough bags," says Ms H of Great Malvern.

Sir Michael Spicer's advice centres

Sir Michael Spicer, MP for West Worcestershire, will be available for Constituents seeking help with public service issues. Over the autumn, he will be meeting Constituents in his advertised programme that includes the dates of Saturday 23rd September, Saturday 21st October and Saturday 11th November. If you would like an interview, please contact the Association office on 01684 573469.

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Part 1

Please let us know your views

How would you like to see Malvern become “greener”?

Do you think anything should be done about the level of traffic in the town?

Have parents enough choice of state schools for their children in Malvern?

Please make sure you complete your contact details in Part 4. Thank you.

Part 2

Can we help you?

Are you experiencing a specific problem with the health services in Malvern?

Yes No

Do you want to report rubbish to “Rubbish Watch”?

Yes No

Is there anything you would like to ask our new Parliamentary Candidate, Harriett Baldwin?

Yes No

Are there any other problems we can help with?

Yes No

Details

Please make sure you complete your contact details in Part 4. Thank you.

Part 3

Would you like to know more about the Conservatives in Malvern?

Would you like to receive literature about the Conservative Party?

Yes No

Would you like to help us campaign for local issues?

Yes No

Please make sure you complete your contact details in Part 4. Thank you.

Part 4

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Email

Please complete and return this page by FREEPOST to:
**West Worcestershire Conservative Association, FREEPOST
NATW1204, Malvern Link, WR14 1BR**

