

# Labour Rose

Church Ward-Reading East

Spring Edition - Delivered free of charge to your area

## READING TAKES A STAND AGAINST NHS PRIVATISATION

### Secretive Local Sustainable Transformation Plans would see big health cuts

South Reading is already the most underfunded health care area of the country and the Government are set to inflict further cuts under the guise of Sustainable Transformation Plans or STP's. These STP's enable restructuring of services that could see cuts and closures without any local consultation. It is for this reason that Reading's Councillors decided to make a stand and have not signed up to them. Our NHS staff do an excellent job and with resources that are being further stretched by the day.

Social care is chronically underfunded, operations are being cancelled, NHS staff have endured years of pay freezes which in reality are pay cuts and residents are being told to stay away from A&E departments. It doesn't have to be like this. The NHS is the Labour Party's proudest creation. Under Labour the pay cap would be scrapped, safe staffing levels would be returned, a £30bn spending boost would be implemented and there would be no more pharmacy cuts. Only Labour can be trusted with our NHS.



Ashley and Eileen campaigning for more NHS funding.



Ashley, Paul & Eileen outside the "rapidly improving" JMA

### Whitley schools on the up despite Government cuts

Schools in Whitley are on the rise and Councillors are doing their bit to help. Councillors & MP Matt Rodda recently visited John Madejski Academy on Hartland Road and spoke with the Principal about the recent Ofsted visit that demonstrated "rapid improvement". There was an impressive calm and students dedicated to their work. Ashley has also recently become Chair of Governors at Ridgeway Primary and is working closely with the new head on an improvement plan for the school. Elsewhere Reading Girls School has seen some

immediate improvements after beginning work with their new sponsor, the Ofsted Outstanding rated Bayliss Court School. These improvements are against the backdrop of severe Government cuts in education. Reading schools are set to lose up to £350 per pupil by 2020 with some schools in the area already having to make redundancies. Teacher recruitment has also been made worse by the Government's 7 year pay freeze which equates to a cut in wages. Our children deserve better than this.

# Councillors fight on despite cuts

Ashley, Paul & Eileen continue to fight for a fairer deal for South Reading despite huge Government funding cuts. Since 2010 nearly £50m has been cut from the Council's budget from central Government, which equates to £185 per resident (just £115 per head in Wokingham). At the same time, the Government also takes 75% of the business rates that the town's businesses raise. With 70% of the Council's budget being spent on our adults with special needs, our vulnerable elderly and our children's care, this has left us with some difficult choices to make. But despite this we have managed to find a way to repair some of our pot holed roads, we have made it possible to update the Whitley Library and move into a more accessible place. Academy Sport has received some long

overdue upgrades and our regular services such as bin collections and park cleaning have been kept up. This Government does not believe in local Government, but your Councillors believe in helping our local community.



Paul, Ashley & Eileen overseeing road improvements on Cressingham road roundabout.

# News and events from Church Ward

Ashley, Paul and Eileen helped clean up Rabson's Rec over the winter, with a real sense of community spirit in evidence. Many conversations were conducted with residents of Northcourt Avenue regarding the introduction of waiting restrictions. Parking has become a real problem and we hope a solution will soon be implemented to help. If you think your road would benefit from some form of parking restrictions, please get into contact with us. Residents and Councillors were also successful in helping stop an unwanted extension to opening hours until 5am for a fast food chain on Christchurch Road. Businesses need to be aware of their duty to be good neighbours and this case demonstrated local residents and Councillors standing up and succeeding. The most recent

edition of the South Reading calendar has also been delivered across the ward & canvassing on door steps continues. If you wish to speak to your Councillors they are available from 10.30am-12pm at the Whitley Cafe on the first Saturday of every month.



Church Ward Councillors at the monthly surgery in Whitley Cafe.

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Artists impression of new Council houses in Reading.

# Councils need to borrow to build

Councillor Ashley Pearce recently raised the issue of Reading's housing crisis with a motion at January's full Council meeting. Average rent in Reading is now over £1000 a month, first time buyers need a gigantic deposit to get anywhere near buying a property and the earnings to house price ratio is now above 10:1. Reading Council is doing what it can to help relieve this with the new homes for Reading company providing quality rental accommodation and new Council homes being built for the first time in years.

But we are being massively constrained by Government policy. The Council would like to borrow money to invest in building new houses for family. They would also like to be allowed to keep and reinvest all of the receipts from the Right to Buy scheme. Both of these things are currently not possible due to Government policy and we are calling on the Government and housing Minister to change policy so that the dream of home ownership is open to everyone.