

BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE LABOUR MEMBERS OF BROMLEY COUNCIL

**PENGE & CATOR WARD
KATHY BANCE, PETER FOOKES & JOHN GETGOOD**

MARCH/APRIL 2011 – BUDGET SPECIAL

TORY CUTS MEAN SOME COULD PAY CHARGES OF UP TO £250 A WEEK!

Monday 28th February saw the Tories in Bromley do their worst with their continued attacks on the public sector. They chose to implement cuts of over **£16 Million** with the threat of a total of over £44 Million over the next four years. We have also in effect been bribed with our own money to the tune of £3.3 Million not to increase the council tax this year. Obviously nobody wants to have to increase the council tax but the reality is that no increase is unsustainable, particularly with inflation now at over 5% and rising. Did you know that Bromley charges £300 less than Richmond for a Band D property? A modest increase of less than a £1 a week would have rendered many of these cuts unnecessary but we are not being permitted by the Tories nationally to raise council tax beyond 3.5%. We all know that the country has a deficit which does need to be managed but the reality is that we are going backwards under the Tories whilst we would have put many things on hold. With over 200 jobs going at Bromley Council, the Tories and their Lib Dem friends are implementing a work to welfare policy. One of the most outrageous proposals is to charge some people with savings who attend specialist day centres for the elderly up to £250 a week for their care there. A final decision on this is to be made by the Tory Portfolio Graham Arthur at a meeting on March 18th but he refused to rule it out at the Full Council meeting despite calls by us to do so. The Tories are also proposing to charge people who attend other day centres up to £18 a day to attend which will surely lead to their backdoor closure? In a complex move, they will be allocating money for residents to spend as a personal budget which nobody could object to but if people choose not to spend their money at the day centres, what will happen to them? When did Bromley Tories make the decision that day centres have to be self financing?

ONLY THREE CHILDRENS CENTRES LEFT IN THE BOROUGH

As you may be aware, Ed Milliband raised the issue of the fact that Bromley were only going to have three children's centres with the Prime Minister in early March. Another embarrassment for the borough given the fact that Lib Dem Minister, Sarah Teather has said that there is enough money to keep Surestart. The Tories gave a pledge that it would continue before the General Election so that is another one of their pledges that have been broken. John Getgood highlighted the issue on LBC radio. The Tories only believe that these services should only apply in the more deprived parts of the borough but surely they should be available to all parents. We have also been contacted by higher rate taxpayers who value these services.

SCHOOL CROSSING PATROLS GOING

Another victim of the cuts will be school crossing patrols of whom there are 48 across the borough. This will save £233,000 but will not come in until 2012/13. The Tories hope to get either volunteers to do this work or to try and persuade schools to pay for them.

LIBRARY CUTS COMING BUT NOT JUST YET

No decision has been made yet but a report will go to a meeting of the Renewal and Recreation Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on April 12th. The idea of a trust being established with Bexley to save £350,000 in management costs is being investigated. Up to 8 libraries in the borough could face closure. This at a time when Bromley has over £50 Million in reserves. We are not advocating getting rid of them all because they do provide a useful income. Ironic though that Eric Pickles and Bob Neill are telling councils to spend their reserves to support services!

BROMLEY TORIES ATTACK BORIS JOHNSON!

More embarrassment for David Cameron as Bromley Tories attack Boris Johnson over his proposals for funding the new Crossrail scheme.

YOUTH SERVICES TO BE DECIMATED

When Bromley residents are contacted by researchers, they always say that activities for youngsters are a key priority to stop them hanging around and getting up to no good. Bromley Tories are looking at closing four centres across the borough and retaining them in areas of greatest need. They are looking for volunteers to run the closed centres. £1.2 Million is being lost from this budget for 2011/12.

TUC DAY OF ACTION AGAINST THE CUTS – SATURDAY 26TH MARCH

Lets really show the Tories and their Lib Dem friends what we think of their cuts by joining the national march and rally on Saturday 26th March against the cuts and job losses. Meet at Victoria Embankment at 11-00am. It would be great to have a large contingent from across the borough. More details are available on www.falseeconomy.org.uk or for a local angle on all the cuts go to www.bromleyagainstcuts.blogspot.com

COUNCIL TAX LEVELS 2011/12

Amounts are the same as last year.

BAND A =	£867.42	BAND B =	£1011.99
“ C =	£1156.56	“ D =	£1301.13
“ E =	£1590.27	“ F =	£1879.41
“ G =	£2168.55	“ H =	£2602.26

BELLINGHAM BY ELECTION

A by election takes place there on Thursday 24th March following the sad demise of Clr Ron Stockbridge. Our candidate is Jacqui Paschoud. Contact Cllr.alan.smith@virginmedia.com if you are able to assist in the campaign.

CONTACTING BROMLEY LABOUR GROUP

We are always happy to take up issues that you raise with us and to keep the Tories and their friends, the Lib Dems in Bromley in check. One of the best ways of doing that is on e mail or through the council website – www.Bromley.gov.uk You can contact councillors by using the same format eg, Peter.Fookes@Bromley.gov.uk This is the same for members and officers of the authority as well. We also have our own website which can be accessed at www.pengeandcatorcouncillors.co.uk and is regularly updated almost daily by John Getgood. This site can't be accessed currently but it will be back in action very shortly. You can also write to us c/o Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH or leave a message on our answer phone 0208-460-0626.