

News from Westminster

■ Demanding prisons that work



Steve at HMP Leyhill with Lib Dem Shadow Home Secretary Nick Clegg MP

I have continued to work in Parliament to make sure that our local prisons work effectively. I have visited all three local prisons in recent months (Leyhill, Eastwood Park and Ashfield) and am particularly concerned about the use of Leyhill as a “dumping ground”

because of overcrowding in the prison system. I am calling on the Home Office to make sure that prisoners sent to Leyhill are properly checked for their suitability for ‘open’ conditions.

■ Speaking up for local jobs

I challenged the Prime Minister and led a debate at Westminster on the importance of Government action to support jobs at Airbus. With the sale of the

last British shares in the company, concerns have been expressed about whether Airbus work may be moved abroad. I have urged the Government to play an active part in negotiations to secure British jobs. For the full debate, see my website – www.stevewebb.org.uk

■ Opposing the “tax on learning”

The Liberal Democrats are now the only major party opposing university top-up fees. I believe it is quite wrong that students are being encouraged to “shop around” for the cheapest courses – the ones that will leave them least in debt – instead of choosing the ones that make the best use of their talents. In the Autumn we welcomed Britain’s youngest MP – Lib Dem Jo Swinson – to UWE to talk to students.



Steve Webb speaking up for his constituents in the House of Commons

Results of the environment survey

- Working jointly with Emma Bone, Lib Dem candidate for Filton & Bradley Stoke, I have undertaken a huge survey of the views of local people on environmental issues. We have so far received more than 7,000 replies, with more coming in every day. Key messages so far have included issues both global and local including:
- the environmental waste caused by excessive packaging;
- the need for the Government to take climate change more seriously;
- the impact of litter on the quality of the local environment;
- the importance of improving recycling by businesses and not just private households.

STOP PRESS – TOP JOB FOR LOCAL MP
Following on from his campaigning work in the areas of pensions and health, Steve has been entrusted by Lib Dem party leader Sir Menzies Campbell with the task of overseeing the creation of the next Lib Dem manifesto. Steve will be consulting widely on this, and will welcome input from local residents. He will, of course, continue to speak out on pensions, health and other issues of concern to local people.

Action on climate change

I have warmly backed the Lib Dem strategy for effective action to tackle climate change. An important part of the strategy is a “Green Tax Switch” which involves raising taxes on pollution (such as gas-guzzling cars or half-empty flights) and using the money to cut income taxes on people on average and low incomes. An e-mail consultation with South Gloucestershire residents revealed a majority of nearly 4 to 1 in favour of this approach.



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Report back 2007 from Steve Webb MP & your local Liberal Democrat team



Standing up for YOU

Keeping up to date with Steve Webb MP and the local team

To find out who your local South Gloucestershire councillor is, simply e-mail your name and address to Steve at steve@stevewebb.org.uk or call the Council on 01454 868686

NEW: From January 2007 Steve is launching a new “blog” – an online diary with news and views of his work at Westminster and with the local team in South Gloucestershire; this will be in addition to keeping in touch with local people through Focus leaflets, surveys, reports, newspapers and the local TV, radio and press.

- You can give Steve your views at any time by: writing to Steve Webb MP, Poole Court, Poole Court Drive, Yale BS37 5PP; calling the constituency office on 01454 322100;
 - e-mailing steve@stevewebb.org.uk
- You can also join his e-mail consultation group where nearly 5,000 local people are regularly consulted for their views on topical issues.

Constituency Office, Poole Court, Yale BS37 5PP

Dear Resident,
I am delighted to send you my latest report on the work that my Liberal Democrat colleagues and I have been doing on your behalf over the last year. As well as covering my work at Westminster, the report tells you about the campaigning work that I have been doing in partnership with the local Lib Dem team here in South Gloucestershire.

This partnership with the local team is a vital part of my work. Our team of councillors are in touch with their local communities and can alert me to local issues that need raising in Parliament. In turn, I can get information from them about what is happening on the ground in their area. So many key local issues, such as the lack of affordable housing or the need to protect our environment, need action by both central and local government and by working as a team we have maximum impact for local people.

I hope that you find this report interesting. As ever, if you have any comments or feedback, please do not hesitate to let me know.

With best wishes,
Steve Webb MP

Steve Webb and the Liberal Democrat team standing up for you

Shopmobility: A new Shopmobility scheme to help shoppers get around is launched in Yate, with councillors **Shirley Holloway, Sandra O'Neill, Kay Crowe** and town Mayor **Margaret Marshall**.



Quiet lanes: Riders, cyclists and pedestrians back the new "Quiet Lanes" scheme supported by Lib Dem campaigner **Claire Young** and the local team.



Recycling: Council leader **Ruth Davis** joins Steve in celebrating the achievement of South Gloucestershire residents in topping the nation's recycling league tables.



Thornbury Hospital: Thornbury councillors get a huge response for their campaign to protect and improve Thornbury Hospital.

Cllr **Alan Bracey** and campaigner **Claire Young** by the railway at Westerleigh. Steve worked closely with them to help negotiate a major programme of tree re-planting with Network Rail. Steve is now working with **Alan Lawrance, Kay Crowe** and **Paul Hulbert** to deal with similar concerns near Shire Way.



Campaign Updates

■ Saving King Edmund – progress

Following last year's campaign to save King Edmund Community School, the school's pupils and staff have made real progress. A recent OFSTED report praised the leadership given by the head, and the Council has been persuaded to release cash for major new facilities at the school.



close with the Save Frenchay Hospital Group and is in discussions with the Parliamentary Ombudsman over how best to challenge these latest plans. Proposals for a new private sector treatment centre at Emersons Green, which will take the place of NHS facilities, are the subject of a separate legal challenge.

■ Saving post offices

Thousands of post offices have already closed under successive governments and now the Government has admitted that thousands more are under threat. Steve is working with Charfield postmistress and councillor **Sandra O'Neill** and neighbouring councillor **Howard Gawler** to stand up for town and village post offices. The Government has undermined post offices by taking away vital work such as pension books and TV licence renewals from post offices.



■ Mobile Phone Masts campaign

The local Lib Dem team has stepped up its campaign to change the rules for mast applications. At present, under government planning rules, masts get special treatment. Campaigning councillors **Kay Crowe** and **Alan Lawrance** want mast applications to go through the full planning process to make sure they are put in the least damaging locations. See the petition on Steve Webb's website (www.stevewebb.org.uk) as well as petitions in Focus leaflets.



■ Latest news on Frenchay

Campaigners for Frenchay were shocked to learn that even the "minor injuries unit" promised for the site is now likely to be cancelled. Steve has worked

Small schools: Olveston campaigner **Paul Harrod** backs Steve's support for protecting village schools across the area.



Steve is committed to encouraging local businesses and keeping small shops open, such as this one in Badminton, where local councillor **Sue Hope** is pictured with the postmaster



Councillors **Neil Halsall, Maggie Tyrrell** and **Clare Fardell** working closely with Steve to protect the Green Belt around Thornbury.



Steve and **Pat Hockey** are spearheading the fight to save the Frome Valley Green Belt from massive development forced on it by the Government.



Chipping Sodbury councillors **Sheila Mead** and **Linda Boon** join Steve in welcoming the additional Police Community Support Officers who have been recruited in South Gloucestershire.

■ News on Cinema 4Yate

The change in shopping centre ownership at Yate has held up plans for a cinema, but things are moving again. The shopping centre owners have promised to publish a blueprint in 2007 which is expected to include a cinema. Campaigners are also in discussion with the centre owners to see if other leisure facilities could be included.



Joining local councillors **Mike Robbins, Dave Hockey** and **Cleo Trotter** to support the Macmillan Cancer Care Unit at Frenchay Hospital.