



Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter

Issue 46; March 2011

Welcoming Note

Welcome to the March issue of the Mole Valley Conservative Association's Newsletter.

To unsubscribe to this newsletter, please contact us through the website 'Contact us' page with a subject line of 'unsubscribe'.

Our aim is to provide you with a monthly update on the work of the Conservative Association and your elected representatives. We would value your feedback or comments.

We hope you enjoy reading the March issue.

A word from the outgoing Chair

Folly of enforcing Human Rights in the 21st Century



Saturday, March 26th was a beautiful day unless you were unfortunate enough to be trying to shop in Piccadilly, or to be staying at the Ritz. The groups which went on the rampage showed their total contempt for law and order. Their behaviour warrants a change of tactic by our police and, perhaps, we should learn from the French C.R.S. and meet violence with an iron fist.

The papers were again full of events in Libya, Syria, Bahrain and Yemen. The French and British aircraft are enforcing a no-fly zone and also attacking ground troops. I hope the historical relationship between the rebels in the east of Libya and the Muslim League in Egypt is fully understood. The recent trouble in Syria has, ironically, been caused by Sunni Muslims unlike Bahrain where the problems are caused by Shias. I am still fearful that the northern end of the Gulf could be Shia dominated.

We have also had the budget where the Chancellor has the impossible task of trying to stay onside with the electorate but items such as pensioners not receiving the raise of £630 in their personal tax allowance in 2012 does seem odd. The Brown bequest is so awful that all of us will suffer over the next few years.

On the local front, the County Council Leaders and paid officials seem to be hell bent on upsetting all the villages in the county. If on street parking meters were to be proposed to help local residents that would be a possible argument but to do it to raise revenue is not a sensible idea and should be thrown out – as is being argued by Conservative Councillors from Mole Valley.

This will be my last contribution to the newsletter as Chairman. I have enjoyed the privilege and now wish County Councillor Helyn Clack every success as she takes over the reins.

Mr Colin Crispin
Chairman, Mole Valley Conservative Association
March 2011



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A word from the incoming Chair

New faces and news from Mole Valley Conservative Association



I was extremely honoured to be asked to stand as Chairman of the Constituency Association following on from Colin Crispin who stands down after four years which has included Local District, County and European and of course the General Election during his appointment. Colin takes on the honorary role of President of the Association after Alan Reif who has served us so well over the years.


I am very aware of the responsibilities I have inherited and along with my core team of Deputy Chairman – Julie Iles, Deputy Chairman Political, Charles Yarwood, Deputy Chairman Membership and Nick Markham, Treasurer - we recognise the need for modernisation, efficiency and a strong focus on campaigning for the future. I am more than a little relieved that Jane Thornton has agreed to continue as our events officer as well – we have enjoyed a strong surge in our social functions much down to her hard work and enthusiasm as well as Sir Michael Pickard who has run the Patrons Club so successfully.

Our management team will be engaging with the vital branch network we have in Mole Valley and we look forward to meeting many members to discuss their views on how the Association can help to improve communication, policy debate and of course increase membership and encourage new activists as well. We will be presenting a business plan and budget to the next Executive meeting of the Association after the elections in May, which we will consult on with all members of the Association during the summer for their comment and hopefully their approval for delivery over the coming three years.

Good luck to all the Conservative Local Councillors and new candidates across Mole Valley, Guildford and Epsom and Ewell on the 5th May. We will be working hard to support them all and I urge all members to get in touch with them, their campaign managers and Association team to offer their help in winning overall control of Mole Valley Council and increase the majority in Guildford Borough Council!

Finally - apart from the very important local government elections – the roots of all elections are begun at this very local stage – we are facing a referendum with the potential to change our democratic structure forever. I urge you all to participate in this referendum and please look at this website <http://www.no2av.org/> before you vote!

From the website:

 AV is costly



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The change to AV will cost up to an additional £250 million. Local councils would have to waste money on costly electronic vote counting machines and expensive voter education campaigns. With ordinary families facing tough times can we really afford to spend a quarter of a billion pounds of taxpayers' money bringing in a new voting system? **Schools and hospitals, or the Alternative Vote – that's the choice in this referendum.**

✗ AV is complex and unfair

The winner should be the candidate that comes first, but under AV the candidate who comes second or third can actually be elected. That's why it is used by just three countries in the world – Fiji, Australia and Papua New Guinea. Voters should decide who the best candidate is, not the voting system. **We can't afford to let the politicians off the hook by introducing a loser's charter.**

✗ AV is a politician's fix

AV leads to more hung parliaments, backroom deals and broken promises like the Lib Dem tuition fees U-turn. Instead of the voters choosing the government, politicians would hold power. Under AV, the only vote that really counts is Nick Clegg's. **We can't afford to let the politicians decide who runs our country.**

Vote NO to AV on 5 May 2011

NOtoAV is a campaign that has support from right across the country. Members of the public, trade unionists and members of several political parties are part of a campaign that has a common goal. Whilst we have many different views on what system of elections is best for Britain, we all believe that the Alternative Vote (AV) system will only damage Britain's democracy.

Councillor Helyn Clack
Chairman, Mole Valley Conservative Association

News from the House of Commons Update on PMB's and Libya



Following on from last month's article about my Private Members Bill's, the Ten Minute Rule Bill on the topic of Private Medical Insurance (Pensioner Tax Relief) will have another Second Reading on Friday 13th May. Although it is highly unlikely that the opposition will let it pass through to Committee stage it is an excellent chance to highlight this important issue. My Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Bill, as I said in my last article, has made it through its Second Reading and will now move onto the Committee Stage. I have the support of the Government and the Ministry of Justice behind me which means that the original legislation will finally be extended to include 'serious injury' and the protection of victims will be further improved.

An issue which has certainly been dominating the business of the House this month is the enforcement of a no-fly zone, authorised by the UN Security Council, over Libya. On the evening of



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the 17th March, 2011, the UN Security Council voted 10-0 (with five abstentions) in favour of a draft resolution tabled by the UK, US, France and Lebanon authorising the imposition of a no-fly zone over Libya. The resolution also calls for an immediate ceasefire; for an end to violence; for measures to make it more difficult to bring foreign mercenaries into Libya; and for a tightening of sanctions on the Gaddafi regime. It authorises the use of all necessary measures to protect the civilian population and populated areas including Benghazi.

The majority of the House including me, voted in favour of the Prime Minister's motion last week to support UN Security Council Resolution 1973. The UN enforcement action we are taking is necessary, legal and right. It is necessary, because Gaddafi continues to brutalise his own people in flagrant breach of the UN resolution. It is legal, because the UN Resolution is very clear: it authorises 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians. And it is right because not only do we have a moral duty to intervene but it is also in our own national interest to do so. We should never forget Gaddafi's track record: he was the man responsible for the Lockerbie bombing, among other crimes.

The Security Council Resolution called for an immediate ceasefire between Colonel Gaddafi's forces and those who do not support Gaddafi's regime. I believe this was vital, and that the second objective – establishing a No Fly zone – was essential to that ceasefire. The third objective is to protect civilians in Libya, and again with so many at risk it is hard to disagree that this is a good case. These humanitarian objectives were agreed by the Arab League, the African Union and the United Nations Security Council.

We also need to think about the alternative. It was plain and obvious. Gaddafi was on the verge of taking Libya's second city, Benghazi, and he was quite clear what he would do promising "for those who resist there will be no mercy or compassion".

If the Government and our allies had not secured agreement at the UN and acted on it straightaway we would almost certainly have seen terrible slaughter like those in Rwanda or Bosnia. You can be sure that the UN Resolution that the Prime Minister pressed for with such urgency and the actions of our brave servicemen and woman have already saved many, many ordinary Libyans from torture and death.

If Gaddafi had taken Benghazi after the massacres we would have a huge humanitarian crisis as many thousands would have fled. We would most likely have seen the reestablishment of a pariah state just on the other side of the Mediterranean, with all that would mean: uncontrolled migration into Europe with every likelihood of the dictator going back to his old ways of sponsoring international terrorism and supporting our enemies across the world.

The UN Human Rights Commission reports that there are roughly 2,500 people arriving at the Libyan-Tunisian border daily and more the 230,000 have fled the violence. This Government will fund the International Committee of the Red Cross, enabling them to provide three medical teams to treat and provide medical supplies to 3,000 people affected by the fighting. The UK will also provide food and supplies to 100,000 of those most in need.



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Some people completely fairly point out that we do not always intervene militarily when a dictator carries out atrocities, but just because we can't and don't always intervene, that doesn't mean we should never do so. Nor does it mean we do not make clear our concerns over activity contrary to basic human rights, issues which we press hard in many different ways.

There are still many uncertainties and there is a hard road ahead. At this difficult time I believe that the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary deserve great credit for having taken such quick action to protect life in Libya, and I can promise you I will be looking at the situation each day to make sure that our mission remains focused on the objectives set out by the UN Resolution.

Sir Paul Beresford
Member of Parliament for Mole Valley

Report from Surrey County Council



As the municipal year enters the last couple of months at County Hall, the Leader of the Conservative Group and the Council reflected on the progress the Council has made at last week's County Council meeting:

On **Council Tax**, the Administration delivered its lowest ever percentage rise, of 0%!

On **Highways**, extra funds were budgeted so a start could be made on the backlog of repairs, and confirmation has been received that the lobbying of central government has paid off yet again (as it did last year) as more money will be made available for Surrey's roads and highways infrastructure.

Two **Olympic** events are now confirmed for Surrey (Cycling and the Time Trial) and the Administration will shortly be announcing the arrival of some big teams in the County for the duration of the Games.

On **Broadband** we are embracing our changing economy, and hope to achieve 100% super-fast broadband coverage in Surrey: a procurement plan is already in place, which reinforces our commitment to technology, especially where it will help our small to medium-sized enterprises as well as our big companies by enabling more employees to work from home.

On the **Economy**, where we are supporting Visit Surrey, encouraging tourism especially in the run up to the Olympics, and helping our young people into employment through initiatives like the Future Jobs Fund, which has already got 330 young people from the County into work.

On the County's **Heritage**, which we take as seriously as our residents do, the Leader pledged to support the Surrey Historic Buildings Trust but with a new enhanced role to develop in the future.



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The debate around on-street parking rages on locally with the opposition hijacking the policy before it's even out for consultation in the district.

Here in Mole Valley, consultations will begin in November with residents and businesses alike and I and my colleagues will ensure that this is debated at the Mole Valley Local Committee down to the last detail - Mole Valley Local Committee's views will be an important part of this consultation and after the cabinet's consideration any agreement for on-street parking here will then be implemented in 2012/2013.

Andrew Povey, Leader of the County Council who has told me he is listening and has confirmed that that a 'half hour period of free parking' would be the 'default position' regarding those villages and small shopping parades which have been highlighted as part of the future consultation, helping allay the fears of retailers and residents that the charges will drive business and custom away.

Local economic factors will also be taken into consideration, for example outside of empty shops and other commercial buildings. I know here in Mole Valley we need to apply these flexibilities to our town centres as well and I and local colleagues will continue to lobby for this. We must also address the problem faced by communities situated around train stations or near the airport, whose lives are blighted by commuter parking or the Gatwick overspill and who are asking for stronger parking restraints and improved enforcement.

County Councillor Helyn Clack
Member for Dorking Rural

Report from Guildford Borough Council

2011 local elections



With 'all out' elections on 5 May looming, Conservative candidates for Guildford Borough Council are now full swing into election mode and fighting hard to retain control of the Borough Council for the next four year term.

Conservatives on the Borough Council are fighting on their record in office since we regained control in 2003. This includes keeping council tax increases below inflation every single year since 2003 (including freezing council tax this year), increasing recycling to 52% and setting a target of 70% for the next council, fighting 'garden grabbing' and preserving the Green Belt.

We have selected a full slate of candidates for the Council and we are expecting a tough fight in the Town Centre seats and in the Effingham ward, the latter currently Lib Dem held, which is in the Mole Valley Constituency area. We are up for the fight and determined to hold the council. Watch this space!



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Cllr Andrew French
Deputy Leader, Guildford Borough Council

Report from Mole Valley District Council

Latest News from Mole Valley



HRH the Duke of Kent formally opened the Leatherhead Leisure Centre on the 24th March, following the conclusion of a 20-month, £12.6 million refurbishment. The day included a tour for the His Royal Highness and he was also presented with a special lifetime membership and unveiled a plaque to commemorate the occasion.

The centre now boasts some of the very best and most up-to-date fitness facilities and equipment in Mole Valley, including:

- a new state of the art gym with more than 90 stations
- an aerobics studio
- new sauna, steam and therapy rooms
- two new glass backed squash courts
- a new soft play area and crèche
- retiled pools and extended and modernised pool changing rooms
- a new floodlit Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) with four courts for tennis, netball and football

Councillor Vivienne Michael, Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing and Customer Service, said "We can be really proud of this centre and with good reason, given the level of investment and hard work displayed by everyone involved and the positive reaction we have had from users and residents."

On a similar subject, on the 19th March the Chairman of Mole Valley District Council, Councillor John Northcott, officially opened the refurbished playground at Ashted Recreation Ground. The imaginative playground, designed by Playsafe Playgrounds, was chosen by children and their families last year in a consultation run by MVDC.

The playground has two distinct play areas for different ages and has been designed to complement the surrounding landscape. New privet, birch, field maple and hornbeam trees have been planted. Volunteers have planted native flowers and the bare patches of soil around the playground have been sown with a variety of wildflower seeds.

The project began in 2010, when MVDC joined forces with the Ashted Recreation Campaign (ARC) to address the need for improved play facilities in the village. The ARC has played a vital role in the project, raising extra funds to increase the amount of equipment that could be bought.



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Turning to Council business, Mole Valley District Council have agreed to change the decision making arrangements at the Council and the new arrangements will come into operation immediately after the election in May.

Following a consultation undertaken between October 2009 and February 2010, it was proposed at a meeting of the Council's Executive on the 16th November that Mole Valley District Council will adopt the Leader and Cabinet Executive model, as set out in the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000. The decision was agreed upon at a meeting on the 8th March.

This means that the Leader will be elected by the council at its post election annual meeting. The term of office as Leader starts on the day of his or her election as Leader.

The Leader is elected for a four year period, unless his or her term of office as a councillor is shorter, in which case, the term of office as Leader will be the same as their term of office as councillor.

The Leader determines the size of the executive and appoints between two and nine members of the council to it. He or she also allocates any areas of responsibility (portfolios) to them, and may remove them from the executive at any time.

The Leader determines the scheme of delegation for the discharge of the executive functions of the council and will report to the council on all appointments and changes to the executive.

Feature Article

April 2011 Budget



The Chancellor, George Osborne, delivered this year's Budget to the House on the 23rd March 2011. Overall the Budget is approximately revenue-neutral compared with existing plans. In contrast to the June 2010 Budget, there are few large scale changes to taxation and public spending levels.

Under the last Government, national debt more than doubled to record levels – leaving us with the largest deficit in the G20; it is currently £146 billion. There was a real threat that the markets would lose confidence as a result of the deficit and the Chancellor is right to set a tough course for dealing with it.

Furthermore, interest rates must be kept down; encouragingly, the UK's market interest rate has fallen to 3.6% - virtually the same as Germany's. I am confident that Ministers have identified the right spending priorities. They are protecting the NHS, overseas aid and expenditure on infrastructure improvements.



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Growth, manufacturing and jobs are at the heart of the 2011 Budget. Corporation tax is being additionally cut by one percentage point, reducing the rate from 28% to 26%. Three further cuts of one percentage point will reduce the rate to 23% by April 2014. This will help the UK maintain the lowest rate in the G7. I also welcome the Chancellor's income tax measures. There will be real increases in the personal allowance every year and from April 2012 the personal tax allowance will increase to £8,105. 1.1 million low-paid people are being taken out of tax altogether. And no-one will enter the higher rate tax band as a result of the recent Budget.

Petrol and diesel remain a huge expense for people in the UK and to help address this, the Government has announced measures to help mitigate the effects. Labour had planned an increase in fuel duty that would have added almost another 5pence to the price of a litre of petrol from April 2011. The fuel duty escalator, announced in the Labour Budget of 2009, would allow for six further fuel duty rises for after the election. This escalator has been abolished and the Government has delayed any duty increase. It has, in fact, brought down the main duty rate by 1pence with immediate effect and introduced a fair fuel stabiliser. As part of the fair fuel stabiliser, fuel duty will increase by inflation in years when oil prices are high. In years when the oil price falls below a set level on a sustained basis, however, the Government will increase fuel duty by RPI plus 1 penny per litre.

The Government have also restored the earnings link for the basic State Pension from April this year with a "triple guarantee" that pensions are raised by the higher of earnings, prices or 2.5 per cent. This means that in April this year, the Government will increase the Basic State Pension by £4.50 to £102.15. Low income pensioners will also benefit as the majority of Pension Credit recipients will see a £4.75 increase in their Guarantee Credit.

I believe that the Government is fulfilling its commitment to increase public service pensions in line with the general level of prices as it considers the CPI to be a more appropriate measure of pension recipients' inflation experiences than RPI. The CPI uses a methodology that takes better account of consumer behaviour in response to price increases. With this in mind, it believes that it is right to use one appropriate index for uprating additional state pensions, public and private pensions and social security benefits and that CPI is a more appropriate measure of changes in the cost living of pensioners and benefit recipients than RPI. In fact, the RPI excludes the spending patterns of the poorest pensioners.

The Government estimates that re-linking the Basic State Pension with earnings will mean a typical person retiring this year will receive an additional £15,000 in extra Basic State Pension over their retirement compared with price indexation that the previous Government applied. I believe that people deserve dignity and respect in old age and I welcome the Government's decision to help those elderly people who are amongst the most vulnerable in our society. In recognition of the fact that many pensioners have contributed enormously to society, yet are struggling to make ends meet, the Government will keep universal benefits for pensioners.

Increasing VAT to 20% will raise £13.5 billion. This is money that would otherwise have to be found through cuts or other tax rises. The Government has rightly concluded that while a tax on spending is



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not an easy thing to do, raising this money from an additional National Insurance rise instead would be a tax on jobs, which is the very last thing we need. Although the Opposition now says that it opposes the VAT rise, the previous Chancellor, Alistair Darling, has admitted that he wanted to put up VAT and did not rule out a rise at the last general election. Meanwhile, the independent and respected Institute for Fiscal Studies has said that VAT is a progressive tax, because zero-and reduced – rated goods are necessities that are bought disproportionately by the poor. There will also be an extension of the small business rate relief holiday until October 2012. More than half a million eligible businesses will continue to benefit from reductions in their bills and around 330,000 businesses will pay no rates at all.

Charities are also getting a boost – Gift Aid will be claimable on small donations – up to a total of £5000 a year, without the need for donors to fill in any forms. This change applies to street donations and will make a bit difference. I am also delighted to say that every local authority in England has been able to freeze council tax. When set against what council tax could rise by, the freeze will save a family in an average band D property £72 a year. In a further help towards families, two weeks after the Budget, child tax credit will increase by £255 for lower income families.

The Government also published ‘The Plan for Growth’ alongside the Budget. The Government intends to make the UK more competitive relative to other countries. It also hopes to achieve more even growth between regions and balance between industries. The *Plan for Growth* lists four “overarching ambitions”:

1. To create the most competitive tax system in the G20;
2. To make the UK one of the best places in Europe to start, finance and grow a business;
3. To encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy; and
4. To create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe.

The Government has announced policy changes under each of these objectives:

Competitive tax system:

- A further 1% point reduction in the main rate of corporation tax from April 2011, in addition to the annual 1% point reductions already announced;
- Measures to simplify the tax system, including consultation on options for integrating the operation of income tax and National Insurance Contributions;
- An extra £1 billion annually will be raised by a crackdown on tax avoidance. Schemes which disguise remuneration, avoid corporation tax, VAT and stamp duty will be removed;
- Non-doms who have been in the country for 12 years will have their annual charge raised to £50,000. When they remit income to invest in UK businesses the charge will be removed;
- There will be a 10% but in inheritance tax for estates leaving 10% or more to charity. This will mean that charities will gain £300 million.



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Business growth:

- There will be changes to regulation, including a presumption in favour of sustainable development in planning law, scrapping existing regulation that costs businesses £350 million a year and a moratorium on all new domestic regulations for firms with fewer than 10 employees.
- An extension of the small business rate relief holiday for a further year (from October 2011);
- Scrapping plans for some new regulations, including some proposed in the Equalities Act 2010, and a public review of existing regulations;
- Changes to the planning system, including “a powerful presumption in favour of sustainable development”;
- Various proposals to increase the availability of finance to businesses.

Investment and exports:

- An extension of the capital allowances short life asset regime for plant and machinery from 4 years to 8 years;
- The creation of 21 Enterprise Zones, with up to a 100% business rate discount, new superfast broadband and the possibility of using enhanced capital allowances for zones with a focus on manufacturing;
- Reform of support for inward investment and to exporters;
- Sector-specific support measures for the key industries considered in the first phase of the Growth Review, including advanced manufacturing and construction.

Workforce:

- Funding for up to 100,000 work experience placements over the next 2 years and 50,000 additional apprenticeship places which will bring the total funded by the Government to 250,000 over the next 4 years;
- At least 24 new University Technical Colleges;
- An additional £100 million this year is going to new science facilities, and there is an increase in the Small & Medium rate of Research and Development Tax Credit to 200% from April 2011 and 225% from April 2012;
- Various measures to increase the supply of housing and therefore promote labour mobility, including a £250 million shared equity scheme in England, First Buy, aimed at helping 10,000 first time buyers get on the housing ladder for the first time.



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National news in brief

Foreign Secretaries sign letter against AV

A number of former foreign Secretaries including Geoffrey Howe, Malcolm Rifkind and Douglas Hurd, as well as the current F.S. William Hague, have signed a letter opposing the AV voting system.

The letter states that the current system of one person, one vote is enshrined in our democracy, and that "it would be a grave error to abandon this principle and replace it with a voting system which is more complex and unfair".

StartUp Britain Launched

The Prime Minister has launched a major new campaign called StartUp Britain, which will deliver support and advice for new enterprises. Over 60 leading brands, including Barclays, Virgin Media and Microsoft, have pledged millions of pounds worth of support to new entrepreneurs.

By championing the 270,000 businesses that start up every year in the UK, ministers said StartUp Britain will accelerate, inspire and celebrate Britain's start-up talent. In total, Startup Britain will deliver a benefit package that represents over £1500 in value for every start-up company in Britain.

Easing the burdens on businesses

The government is to review all health and safety laws with a view to scrapping any that put an unnecessary burden on business. Health and safety inspections are to be cut by a third, and a review of existing regulations will be published in the autumn.

Work and Pensions minister Chris Grayling called for a common sense approach to encourage growth and investment in the UK.

"Of course it is right to protect employees in the workplace, but Britain's health and safety culture is also stifling business and holding back economic growth," he said.

OECD Chief backs government's deficit reduction plan

Angel Gurría, Secretary General of the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development, has praised the government's deficit reduction strategy as "ambitious and necessary".

Mr Gurría said that the plan "strikes the right balance between addressing fiscal sustainability and preserving short-term growth. My message to the UK is, stay the course."

Responsibility deal unveiled

The Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, has unveiled the first phase of The Responsibility deal, with more than 170 organisations representing the voluntary sector, business, industry and the retail sector working together to tackle the challenges posed by obesity and alcohol misuse. "Public health is everyone's responsibility and there is a role for all of us, working in partnership, to tackle these challenges".

Supermarkets including ASDA, Co-operative, Morrisons, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose are among those that have already signed up to a broad range of measures designed to help the public be more healthy.

Food outlets including McDonald's, Pizza Hunt and KFC have pledged to remove trans fats and to introduce calorie labelling.



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Local news in brief

SCC announce that youth service budget cuts will not be so severe

SCC's West Surrey service manager David Waine announced at a Guildford Local Committee that anticipated in-year 2011-2012 budget cuts will be lower than expected.

In a report presented at the meeting, it stated that if the expected 30% cuts went ahead, it "would have a serious impact on the capacity to deliver the targets set out in this plan". Mr Waine said "We are pleased to see that since the budget has been approved, it's not likely to be anywhere near to 30%".

Residents concerned about Vodafone mast

Residents have submitted a petition containing 64 signatures to MVDC as they believe that "irreversible damage" will be caused if Vodafone are allowed to replace a mast in Fetcham with a new one, which would be two metres taller.

Their concerns are that a bigger mast "will be detrimental to the appearance and character of Fetcham village and its street scene;" and are also worried about the potential health hazards it would cause due to its closeness to houses and local schools.

Residents will not back down in parking fee opposition

Over 1800 people have signed a county-wide petition against the plans to introduce meters for short-term parking spaces. The petition says introducing charges will disadvantage local retailers and commerce at a time of economic difficulty.

SCC believes that on-street parking charges will stimulate business by increasing the turnover of cars in town centres and parades of shops. The petition is available online: petitions.surreycc.gov.uk/ParkingCharges

SCC appeal for volunteers to help children

SCC wants to find 10 people aged 18 and above, to become a friend to children aged 10 to 17 who are fostered or in residential homes.

New volunteers will attend a two-day introductory training course. Email independentvisitors@surreycc.gov.uk or call Nicola Taylor on 03456009009 to get involved.

SCC promise to build Eco Park

SCC has promised to carry on working towards eliminating the need for landfill sites by continuing with plans for an Eco Park in Shepperton, subject to approval by the Council's planning committee. SS are aiming to recycle 70% of household waste by 2014.

Thousands respond to supermarket plans

Over 3000 people have taken part in a Council poll that could decide the location of a proposed new supermarket for Dorking.

MVDC are hoping to establish people's preferences; and as part of the Dorking Area Action Plan, the Council has asked people to submit their views about the proposed locations.

The DAAP consultation will run until April 8th and once the responses have been considered a final decision will be made on the Waitrose, Morrisons, Lidl and Sainsbury's applications.