



### Happy New Year

As your Green Councillors, we've been pushing ahead with local projects to make a difference in people's everyday lives. And we've been helping individuals and local businesses whose livelihoods are threatened by the Tories' short-sighted obsession with austerity.

In the coming year we'll be following up on new and existing projects. Please read on – we look forward to continuing to work with you this year to help improve our town. See our website, or contact us (details overleaf) to discuss any local issue.

**Jonathan Essex and Sarah Finch**  
Green Councillors for Redhill East



### What kind of town do you want?

The Council is trying to finalise the Redhill Town Centre Area Action Plan. The draft plan, now agreed by the Conservatives, reads as a wishlist of sites for development: more than 700 new homes, loads more shops and offices.



This means building on or selling off Council-owned sites including car parks. But it does not guarantee any youth and community facilities, or continued use of our day care centre.

Greens believe we can take a community-led approach and should support local businesses in our town. We don't want Redhill to be another, smaller, Crawley or Croydon.

Let us know what you think at [www.redhillgreens.org.uk](http://www.redhillgreens.org.uk), or by email. The Council's consultation is due to start this month.

Steve McKenna (left), a town planning expert and local Green campaigner, says, "It's clear that the town centre would benefit from a more diverse mix of uses rather than being dependent on one or two big name retailers. It is frustrating to see the Council make decisions that miss the opportunity to capture extra benefits for the wider community. If the Council wish to sell off sites, there needs to be a better strategy for doing this to ensure businesses and residents and the environment reap the rewards of new investment in the town."

### Supermarkets: what price convenience?

In August, the Council approved Sainsbury's plans to triple the size of its Redhill supermarket and put a hotel on top. We said they hadn't properly considered the impact on other town centre businesses. Now Asda also wants a massive store in Redhill – open 24 hours a day. Would this lead to the High Street flourishing or dying? We just don't know, as the Council hasn't done an impact assessment.

The Government's retail guru Mary Portas recently warned: "...critical high street and town centre services must not be simply gobbled up by the major supermarkets... We have sacrificed communities for convenience."

Sarah Finch says, "We shouldn't roll over and give supermarket developers whatever they want. The Council has refused to assess the impact of large new supermarkets on the town's businesses."

What do you think about these developments? Please let us know your views.

### Solar payback

Jonathan Essex called on the Council to install solar panels on public buildings – to raise money for community projects. The Conservative Councillors acknowledged this was a good idea but said they had "other priorities".

Jonathan says, "The Council should lead the transition to a sustainable future. Solar panels give a good return on investment – far better than the stock market."

# New Friday night youth club

Young people in Redhill now have a youth club - somewhere to go on a Friday night. The club is supported by a consortium which includes the Council, social housing providers, Surrey Police and others. Jonathan helped secure the use of the hall, on the railway bank on Marketfield Way.



So far, the funding only covers a six-month pilot – the money must be found to continue paying a youth worker to run the club. Meanwhile, we need a permanent youth and community centre in Redhill. The former youth centre on Noke Drive has been closed and left derelict for over ten years by Surrey County Council. Please join us and others in campaigning for a permanent centre for our town.

## Joined up thinking on parking and transport

At last, the Frenches Road roadworks are over. While the road was up, the bollard at the top of the road stayed up. Only now has the County Council agreed to consult on a trial lowering of the bollard. We look forward to the Council really listening to residents on this.

Redhill's traffic problems need to be looked at together. For example, residents' parking is a high priority for many, especially if the Council's plans to build on town centre car parks go ahead. We need better transport – buses, carshare schemes, and better routes and surfaces for pedestrians and cyclists. Our survey of potential improvements for walking and cycling fed into a bid for funding for transport measures in Redhill.

And finally, after years of campaigning, Surrey County Council has announced plans to introduce a residents' parking scheme in Redhill. Details to follow – contact us for updates.

### Pothole promise

In April 2011 Surrey awarded a new contract for road maintenance, and promised to fix all potholes within 28 days. Have they forgotten Redhill? Help us hold the contractor to their promise – report potholes at [www.surrey.gov.uk](http://www.surrey.gov.uk) (click on 'report it') or call **03456 009 009** – and let us know the results.

### More doorstep recycling in 2012

After years of campaigning, the Council has finally agreed to expand its recycling scheme. From 2012, plastic, glass and food waste will be collected from our homes, as well as paper and cans.

### Are more cuts really needed?

Too much "austerity"? This coming year our Council gets £1.1 million from the government as a bonus for building new homes. It also plans to save £700,000 from the expanded recycling service. So why cut canteen lunches for elderly people at Woodhatch and other centres? Why not re-invest the bonus in projects to benefit our community, as other Councils are doing?

### Elected Greens make a difference

The Leader of the Green Party, Caroline Lucas (pictured right, with Sarah Finch), has been named 'MP of the Year' in the Women in Public Life Awards.



Caroline proved "the most effective woman in the House of Commons, who has shown outstanding achievement..." She has also been named 'Best All Rounder' in the Total Politics End of Year MP Awards.

[www.redhillgreens.org.uk](http://www.redhillgreens.org.uk)

### Campaign success

In 2008, Jonathan first raised the need to better maintain some of the neglected parts of Redhill. The pedestrian tunnel under the railway was one example. This now has new lighting, and the Council has promised to tackle other 'grot spots'. **Send us your ideas for places in need of TLC.**

### Since our last newsletter we have:

- supported residents fighting to protect **green spaces** in Alpine Road, Palmer Close, Cavendish Gardens and The Frenches and elsewhere.
- opposed over-development at **Park 25**.
- helped appeal against yet more flats at **Watercolour**.
- proposed improvements to new **national planning policies**, especially to defend our Green Belt.
- seen steps taken to tackle problems at the **landfill site** and challenged speeding of lorries to and from the site.
- fought the County Council's decision to approve **Surrey's first incinerator** in the north of the county.
- helped save two mature oak trees at **East Surrey Hospital**.
- opposed a hard runway at **Redhill Aerodrome**.

### Contact us

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New surgery arrangements: 10.30-12 second Saturday of the month (except August). Upstairs in the Harlequin.