

# FOCUS

## on Duryard & St James

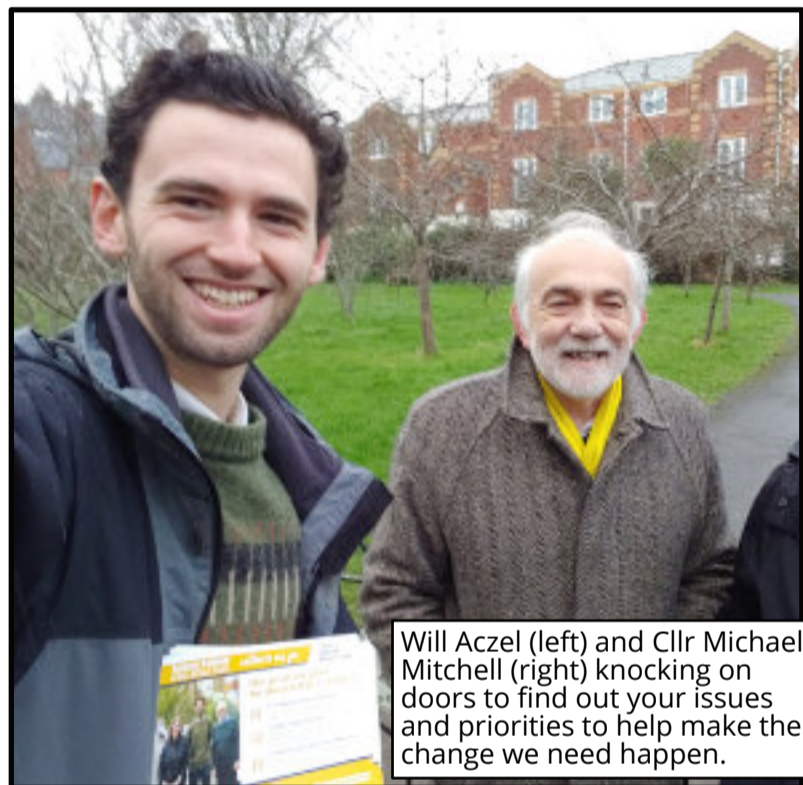
No. 144 February 2025

Community news from your local Lib Dem team:  
Cllr Michael Mitchell, Will Aczel,  
Cllr Tammy Palmer, and Cllr Kevin Mitchell



# Make your voice heard this 1<sup>st</sup> May

Vote for your local campaigners in the Devon County Council elections



Will Aczel (left) and Cllr Michael Mitchell (right) knocking on doors to find out your issues and priorities to help make the change we need happen.

Current City Councillor, Michael Mitchell, is standing for Duryard and Pennsylvania in the County Council elections. Meanwhile, the Lib Dem Parliamentary Spokesperson for Exeter, Will Aczel, is campaigning for St Sidwells and St James.

**Cllr Michael Mitchell** said: "I am pleased to have been selected to stand as the Liberal Democrat candidate for Duryard and Pennsylvania. I look forward to meeting you and listening to your concerns, including about the state of the roads, public transport, public footpaths, adult social care and Special Educational Needs funding."

"We live in a fantastic part of the city and county but, as residents, we are being let down by Labour at City Hall and the Tories at County Hall. Already, the Tories and Labour have joined forces at County Hall in voting to cancel the Devon County Council elections this 1st May to prevent the public lodging their verdict on the parties. We believe if that happens it is 'democracy denied'.

"Only the Liberal Democrats can take over control of the council from the Conservatives.

"We work hard all year round and will continue to do so on your behalf whatever happens in 2025."

**Will Aczel** said: "As someone who lives in and grew up in St James, I am honoured to stand to be your candidate for St Sidwells and St James in the Devon County Council elections this 1st May.

"I have already been taking up our county council issues and campaigning for change - including on potholes, unreliable buses, homelessness prevention funding, and Devon's special educational needs scandal.

"The Conservatives have been running Devon County Council into the ground for the past 12 years. They prevent scrutiny on their budgets, have cumulated a deficit of over £200 million just on their special educational needs budget, and have sold-off council-owned buildings to make ends meet for day-to-day spending.

"Labour offer no real alternative as they just follow along with the ruling Conservatives time and time again.

"Lib Dems provide hope for a better way, as we continue to knock on doors, listen to you, keep in touch, and campaign for change all year round."

*Lib Dems: on your side*

## Anger over Labour axing funding for front-line support



Citizens Advice Exeter faces a high risk of closure because of Labour's proposals to withdraw funding.

**Citizens Advice Exeter provides much-needed front-line expert advice and support to those who often have nowhere left to turn. Last year, they helped over 6,000 people in Exeter deal with over 20,000 issues.**

Labour-run Exeter City Council have slashed funding for Citizens Advice Exeter from £200,000 in 2022/3 to £75,000 last

year. Now, Labour propose to stop funding entirely, just offering some unspecified help with accommodation. This leaves the centre with a high risk of closure.

**Cllr Michael Mitchell**, who helped ensure this decision was scrutinised by the council, said: "Citizens Advice services should be the concern of the council and their end results save the council money."

"I am therefore disappointed that all but one Labour member of the council's scrutiny committee voted down a motion to continue funding Citizens Advice.

"No other Devon district council has decided to withdraw funding for Citizens Advice Exeter. That the only Labour-run District Council in Devon takes such a view speaks volumes about its sense of priorities, when so many in Exeter are in need of Citizens Advice free services."

## CONTACT YOUR LIB DEM TEAM



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# Community balance updates

- [Victoria St Co-living dismissed](#)
- [Cowley Bridge Road HMOs](#)
- [70 Pennsylvania Road](#)
- [King Billy site shambles](#)

**“Many have seen entire roads become student homes, and the community balance has tipped to a point that is entirely lost.”**

**-Cllr Tammy Palmer in The Telegraph, 18th Nov 2024**

**Your councillors continue to campaign about the issue of community balance.**

It is disappointing the new proposed Local Plan removes mention of community balance, whilst at the same time the council's updated policy on HMOs uses community balance as its main argument.

Recent ward planning decisions have relied heavily on community balance arguments. For example, in turning down appeals for garden HMO extensions at 70 Pennsylvania Road and 47 Union Road, the Planning Inspector quoted the St James Neighbourhood Plan reference to community balance as a key reason for refusal.

**Cllr Tammy Palmer** made the same argument at the Planning Committee that turned down the co-living development application in Victoria Street.

HMO conversions approved in Cowley Bridge Road just beyond the new Article 4 HMO restriction area supports our campaign for the whole ward's inclusion in this policy - to ensure a proactive not reactive community balance approach.



The King Billy site's medieval wall was knocked down (above) without permission or any real consequences, setting a terrible precedent. We are working to ensure lessons get learnt.

## Devon: pothole capital of the country

**From knocking on doors across the ward, your local Lib Dem team are well aware of how much you feel let down by the county council on potholes. They pose a hazard to all road users and their vehicles.**

We have been reporting potholes right across Duryard & St James, including in New North Road, Pennsylvania Road, Longbrook Street, Howell Road, West Garth Road, and Allington Mead.

Devon County Council use contractors who don't offer value for money, take a while to respond, and potholes often re-appear in the same places.

Devon Lib Dems proposed millions more investment to tackle Devon's pothole problem at last February's budget, funded by cutting the council's bureaucracy. However, the ruling Conservatives voted it down. Send them a message on 1st May they can't ignore.



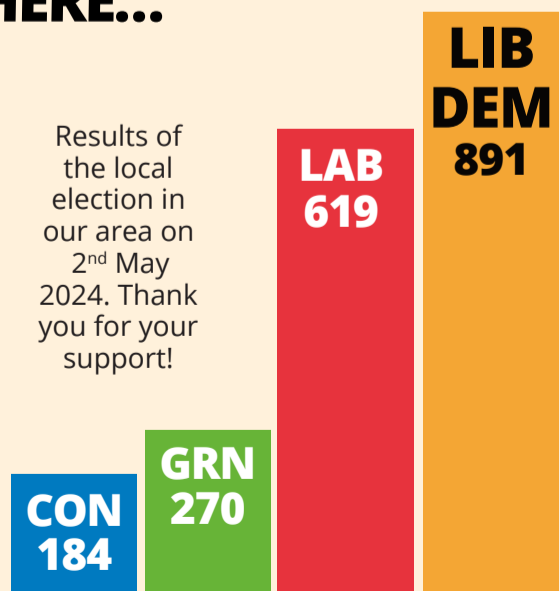
Just some of the potholes reported by the Duryard & St James Lib Dem team.

The council definitely won't clear potholes if they don't know about them, so report pesky potholes at: [devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole](https://devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/report-a-pothole) or contact the local Lib Dem team.

Printed by Election Workshop, 3 Sheffield Street, Manchester, M1 2ND. Published and promoted by Michael Mitchell on behalf Exeter Liberal Democrats all at 35A Howell Rd, Exeter, EX4 4LT.

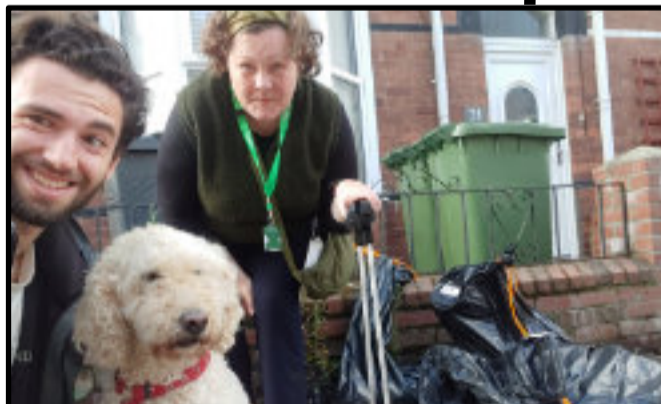
## IT'S YOUR LIB DEM TEAM OR LABOUR HERE...

Results of the local election in our area on 2nd May 2024. Thank you for your support!



## OTHER PARTIES WON'T WIN HERE

## Well Street litter-pick



**Tammy, Will, and Ayla** have been out and about litter-picking in Well Street and St James Road. Litter blights our streets, pollutes wildlife, and is worse than ever in Exeter.

The Labour-run city council have removed bins in Well Street, Powderham Crescent, and Old Tiverton Road, and Cowley Bridge Road. Plus, they've stopped street sweepers from regularly going round anywhere outside of the city centre. We've also been reporting on the issue to the University's community liaison team.

Thank you to the local residents who stopped by for engaging chats. If you're interested in a litter-pick for your area, please do get in touch and we'll help to arrange and potentially join in.

# NEWS & ACTION

## GAMBLING SHOP

Your Cllrs have been working with the local community and Sidwell Street businesses to refuse permission for a shop conversion to 24hr gambling premises. Sadly, the aim to permit clause in the Gambling Act means it was impossible to prevent.

**Cllr Tammy Palmer** battled a top team of lawyers to persuade Cllrs to agree additional conditions. Planning Committee members were won over by **Tammy** and **Michael's** arguments making clear this isn't the right location for such a business. A final decision will be made by Appeals Inspector.

**“This is a legitimate use, but not in these premises, on this site, on this street.”**

**-Cllr Michael Mitchell in RadioExe, 14th Jan 2025**

## LABOUR'S LOCAL PLAN SUBVERTS LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Over the past two years, we have welcomed the public consultation process. Now, Labour need to be accountable for what they choose to include - and leave out of - the new Local Plan. It's therefore shocking Labour have prevented any meaningful councillor input or scrutiny over its content.

This is the most important work a council produces - shaping Exeter's housing and infrastructure for the next 20 years.

After their squandered millions, failed companies, and unconsultative cuts: this is yet another example of Labour's contempt for public accountability letting down Exeter residents.

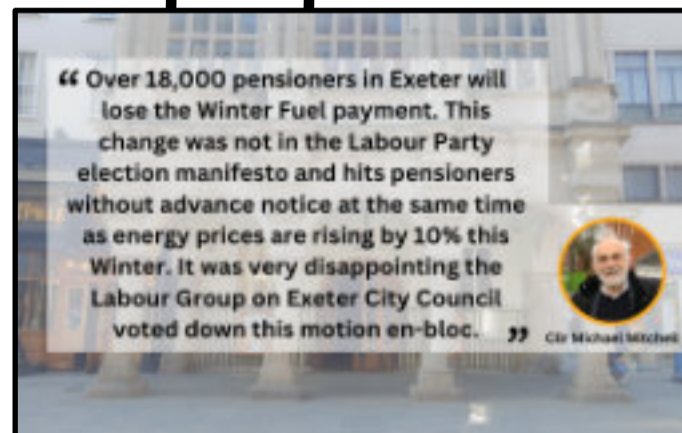
## HORSEGUARDS'S PARK CONSULTATION

Local Lib Dem Cllrs have lobbied to make Horseguards park improvements happen this financial year. The park is boggy much of the year and has seen half its play equipment removed over the years.

What improvements would you like to see? Strategically placed trees to help with drainage? Areas for wildflowers? More benches? A table tennis table? New play equipment, such as a spinner?

Please email [pgmt@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:pgmt@exeter.gov.uk) for a questionnaire and email it back to them to have your say.

## Lib Dems standing up for pensioners



Deeply disappointing our motion to Exeter City Council calling on the government for a pause and rethink over their slashing of the Winter Fuel Payment was rejected by Labour en-bloc ahead of the Autumn Budget. This is even despite some of their councillors voting for a similar motion at Devon County Council.

Exeter Labour are ready to let pensioners go cold this Winter. Their solution is challenging for pensioners to claim and still leaves many on the wrong side of the line for vital support.

Sign the petition to raise your voice: [libdems.org.uk/winter](https://libdems.org.uk/winter)