

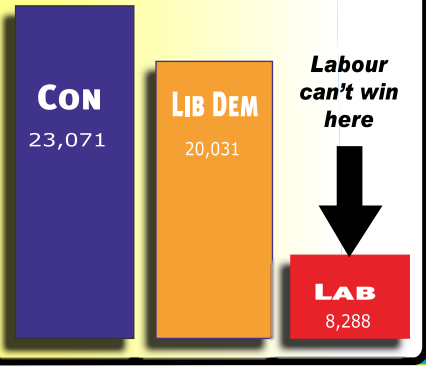
Delivered **FREE** to 45,000 homes in the Wells Constituency

# SOMERSET CLARION

THE SOMERSET CLARION IS PRINTED ON ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PAPER



How YOU VOTED IN THE 2005 GENERAL ELECTION



Nick Clegg visits Burnham page 3



What has Europe ever done for you? Report back page



Getting a 'head' of Crime page 3

# EXCLUSIVE Vince Cable on the economy



Lib Dem Economic Supremo, Vince Cable, and local Prospective MP Tessa Munt discuss the problems facing our economy

Full story page 2

# Vince Cable on the Economy

● From page one

Vince Cable, who met local residents and businesspeople recently in Pilton and Wedmore, said:

“The economic crisis means we are all worried about the future. Many struggle to get by from day to day. It’s time for action to help people and their families through these tough times.”

“The Liberal Democrats are determined to help. We’ve a simple action plan which will really make a difference, putting money in people’s pocket, cutting unfair bills, and keeping people safely in their homes.”

While Labour and the Conservatives just argue about who is to blame for past failings, the Lib Dems are focused on getting practical help for individuals and families. There are four urgent changes we’re calling for:

- 1. Cutting taxes for people on low and middle incomes** – raising the tax threshold so you’ve more money in your pocket. The Lib Dems’ tax cuts will be paid for by closing tax loopholes used by the very rich and getting tough on unnecessary and wasteful government spending.
- 2. Lowering energy bills and fighting fuel poverty** so we can all afford to keep warm this winter. As wholesale fuel prices fall – they have dropped dramatically since August – utility companies must lower people’s bills too. The Lib Dems would compel energy companies to reinvest the £9 billion profit they’ve made in kind from the Emissions Trading Scheme into cutting bills through rolling out social tariffs to more than 2 million vulnerable customers, installation of smart meters showing consumption costs, and a £500 million a year rolling programme to insulate homes properly.
- 3. Action on the housing crisis - keeping people in their homes**, so we don’t need to fear unfair and unnecessary repossessions. The Lib Dems would ensure that banks only repossess people’s homes as a last resort – and families struggling with repayments could sell all



or part of the equity in their home and rent it back from a Housing Association. We would also allow Councils and Housing Associations to borrow against their assets, buy up unsold properties and land and build to replenish the social housing stock.

- 4. Lower mortgage payments and cheaper business loans through big interest rate cuts.** People and businesses need help paying off their mortgages and loans, so we need substantially lower interest rates. These are our top priorities. You can read more about our proposals to get the economy back on track in our 7 page **Fairer Future Economic Recovery Plan**, launched at the end of September. With events developing as rapidly as they are, you might also want to read the latest news from Nick Clegg, Vince Cable and other Lib Dems on the economic news section of the Party website [www.libdems.org.uk](http://www.libdems.org.uk). Alternatively, please contact Tessa Munt by telephoning 07714 599669 or writing to her at Freepost BS8452, Somerset BA4 4BR for information.

# SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

Mendip Lib Dem Councillor Roy Mackenzie has asked the Council to provide concessionary use of swimming and gym facilities for members of the armed forces, including reservists, living in Mendip. Wells resident Lance Corporal Ben Taylor of 266 Artillery Battery (Bristol) said: “I have been a member of the reserve forces for 3½ years and it’s very important that we’re just as fit as our regular counterparts. Fitness is vital to the tough job we do. Roughly 30% of armed personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan are reservists. We get only 4 weeks’ notice before we have to leave our families to work with the regular armed forces. I can use a gym free at my unit in Bristol, but I’m not likely to travel 25 miles to use the gym for an hour! North Somerset Council provides free leisure facilities for members of the armed forces, so I contacted Cllr Roy Mackenzie to try to get the same help in Mendip.” Roy explained “We need to do what we can to enhance the fitness and morale of our troops. Just as importantly, we should show how much we value them.”



Roy and Lance Corporal Ben Taylor

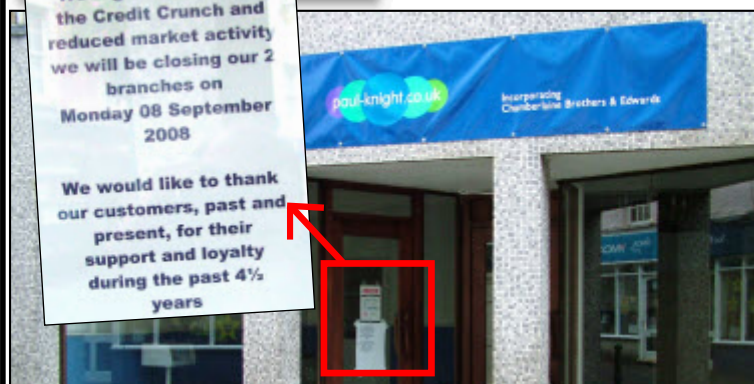
# Local Credit Crisis

Recent redundancies at Haskins, the Co-op closure and loss of other town centre traders in Shepton have heightened concerns amongst locals as to how Shepton will survive the credit crunch.

Rachel Witcombe, pictured outside yet more empty High Street



premises, said: “Not long ago, Shepton was a thriving town with a busy centre. That is not the case now. We need radical action to outlast difficult times. Parking costs have increased yet again. It costs £1.10 for two hours – which kills Shepton’s chances of attracting custom when other nearby towns have stopped charging for parking. Shepton is not a tourism destination, so Mendip should stop being so greedy with its parking charges and think about the impact its actions have on the local economy. I’m calling on Mendip Council to use its imagination, be radical and realistic and act swiftly to help those retailers already in town as well as attracting new ventures into Shepton.



We would like to thank our customers, past and present, for their support and loyalty during the past 4½ years

The crisis deepens with estate agents in Shepton Mallet closing due to the credit crunch.

# Campaign for Gurkha Justice

Prospective MP Tessa Munt had the honour of meeting veteran Tul Bahadur Pun VC, one of only 10 living recipients of this country's highest award for valour, the Victoria Cross. He fought for Britain in the Gurkha Rifles during the Second World War. Now he is fighting for the rights of his comrades to live in the UK. Tessa also met Joanna Lumley, whose father was in the Gurkhas, who pledged her support to the campaign.

In May, a Lib Dem Bill in Parliament called for changes to the Government’s immigration rules to allow Gurkha soldiers to live here after their Army service. In September, the High Court ruled the Government’s policy of deporting retired Gurkhas was unlawful and they should have a right to live in the UK. Now a new Lib Dem Bill again demands the Government changes the law.

Tessa commented “Britain has had no better friends than the Gurkhas. They have served worldwide defending our country for nearly 200 years. As part of the British Army, over 45,000 died in the two World Wars alone. They still serve in the British Army today.”

“This Government should be ashamed of itself. To deny Gurkha veterans who served Britain loyally the right to British citizenship and to live here in retirement after years



Joanna Lumley with Tessa and Peter Carroll, prospective MP for Maidstone, campaigning for the Gurkhas

of honourable service and distinguished conduct is absolutely scandalous.”

**Join us - sign up for justice**

If you’d like to join the campaign for Gurkha Justice, please complete the petition below or visit the website [www.gurkhajustice.org.uk](http://www.gurkhajustice.org.uk)

“If someone is prepared to die for our country they should have the right to live in our country.”

Nick Clegg, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

# Gurkha Justice – A Pledge

- The Immigration (Discharged Gurkhas) Bill has passed the House of Lords and will now go to the House of Commons for consideration.
- This Bill seeks to correct a long-standing injustice – that Gurkhas who retired before 1997 do not have the right to settle in the United Kingdom.
- Please take this opportunity to pledge to support this Bill in the House of Commons



I believe all retired Gurkhas should be allowed to stay in Britain and pledge to support the Immigration (Discharged Gurkhas) Bill in the House of Commons.

Name.....

Address.....

Please sign this pledge card and return it to:  
**Gurkha Justice Campaign**  
Freepost BS8452, Somerset BA4 4BR

# NICK CLEGG VISITS BURNHAM HOVERCRAFT RESCUE



Lib Dem Leader Nick Clegg and Burnham & Highbridge Parliamentary Candidate Tessa Munt joined crewmembers from Burnham's rescue hovercrafts for a training session this Autumn.

Local charity BARB – the Burnham Area Rescue Boats – operate two hovercraft – the 'Spirit of Lelaina' and 'Light of Elizabeth' with the help of volunteer crewmembers. Nick and Tessa toured the charity's Burnham seafront station and met all the crew. They then boarded the Spirit

of Lelaina for a training flight along the beach to the Burnham lighthouse.

Speaking after his flight, Nick said it was "bumpy, noisy, and exhilarating". He was full of admiration for the volunteers and their work with BARB, saying "The crew provides an emergency service over 36 square miles of deceptively dangerous mud flats in Burnham. It's fascinating to see how a community-run charity can provide an essential lifeline service here."

# Getting a 'head' of anti-social behaviour



The local Police in Street are using special mini-video equipment fitted as 'headcams' to help them gather evidence at incidents. Recorded evidence can help the accurate recall of events and can be used to illustrate what has happened in a Court or to others, for example, parents.

County Councillor Jim Mochnacz was delighted that with equal funding from Neighbourhood Watch and the Parish Council (he's an active member of both!)

Street Police can use these new 'headcams' to tackle anti-social behaviour arising in the Street area.



# Candidates chosen for Burnham and Highbridge

The Lib Dems have chosen two local Councillors, both lifelong residents of Burnham and Highbridge to contest next year's County Council elections: Rosemarie Parsons and Mike Mansfield.

Rosemarie has been County Councillor for Highbridge & Burnham South since 1997.

She lives in Fairford Close and is the County's Champion for Older People, Vice Chair of the Community Scrutiny Sub-Committee and sits on the Devon & Somerset Fire Authority.

She is proud that while she's been Councillor, the area has a new Household Waste Recycling Centre and a Children's Centre has opened in town. She spent her Community Budget of £5,000 on a children's 'swan' seat at Apex Leisure Park, new tables and chairs for a local school, funding the River Brue Arts Project and ensuring all students at King Alfred's School are able to join residential trips.

Rosemarie said: "I am delighted to be re-selected as I work hard for my area. I'll continue to listen and respond to local people's needs. I have a large, ongoing caseload of problems, and meetings to attend on behalf of local people and look forward to representing you all again in County Hall."

Mike, who ran for the Burnham North seat last time, said: "I've always wanted to represent the town I love in County Hall." Mike is a founding member and Chairman of Burnham's Twinning Association, regularly helps at Burnham's Gateway Club, has served on Sedgemoor District Council for 9 years (as Leader of the Lib Dems from 2007 – 2008), is the Burnham East member on the Town Council and is well-known for his community work.



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**To learn more about  
Good Energy call  
0845 456 1640**

Or follow the link from  
[www.libdems.org.uk/deals](http://www.libdems.org.uk/deals)

## GO SLOW

Alan Gloak is helping to slow drivers down on Glastonbury's four estates with single road entries. He wrote to every resident and was amazed at the huge backing for his 'Go Slow' campaign. Alan is asking the County Council to erect 20mph signs at the entrance to each estate. He said "It was residents who inspired this campaign. I followed it up and I'm staggered at the positive response I've received. I'm asking County Highways to act now to ensure estate roads are safe for all users".



Alan with the surveys

# At last - large lorries re-directed by SatNav!

Somerset residents will be delighted to learn that lorries will soon be able to trust their Satellite Navigation Systems not to take them down dead-end lanes or on inappropriate routes – ‘rat runs’ -through local villages and towns.



Lorries have become completely stuck and even needed heavy lifting gear to assist their removal, to say nothing of the chaos caused to the flow of traffic!

The problem of HGVs passing through villages was highlighted by Wedmore resident, Wayne Hahn, on Radio 4's PM programme several months ago. Wayne pointed out "residents in affected communities not only have the inconvenience of repairing damage when huge HGVs collide with their homes, but often have then to meet rigorous Conservation Area requirements as well. This can be extremely expensive for the unfortunate victims of these misdirected HGVs".

Tessa has welcomed the news that during a recent meeting with the Department for Transport in Westminster, Somerset County Council's pioneering work and its suggestions to improve the information presented on SatNavs provided for HGVs were agreed. Tessa observed "This should end the misery for local residents of misdirected traffic which is often taking short-cuts between the M5 and other major trunk roads. I'm glad the County Council has grasped the nettle and hammered out an agreement with the SatNav makers which will make everyone's lives easier and more pleasant."

Prospective MP Tessa Munt took the matter up with the County Highways team, requesting that the SatNav manufacturers be asked to update their maps with appropriate HGV routes.



Photo shows Tessa discussing SatNav traffic problems with Wedmore resident and businessman Wayne Hahn

# What has Europe ever done for you?



Local MEP Graham Watson with local farmer and European Candidate, Kay Barnard

Local MEP Graham Watson and Kay Barnard, local farmer and European candidate have been busy challenging 'anti-Europe' campaigners who have blamed "Europe" for Post Offices closures.

have demanded the Government direct to saving rural Post Offices."

Graham and Kay continue to take up a wide range of issues to help people across Somerset. Like other Lib Dems, they work all year round: not just at election time! You can contact both of them by email to [euro\\_office@cix.co.uk](mailto:euro_office@cix.co.uk) or by telephone on 01458 252265.



Lib Dems celebrate after a successful campaign to keep Street's West End Post Office open

"The reason many of our local Post Offices are closing," Graham points out "is because the Labour Government has been stripping away all the key public service facilities – like benefit payments - the very 'bread-and-butter' business on which our rural Post Offices rely. Thankfully, Europe recognises our local Post Offices provide a social service function and Ministers have waived the usual business competition rules to allow the UK Government to offer further support to the Post Office network with up to £630m extra funding, which Graham and the Lib Dems



Above: Kay Barnard with Glastonbury County Councillor Alan Gloak at the opening of the new Engine Turntable on the West Somerset Railway. This project was jointly funded by Somerset County Council with European funding

## GRAND CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

### WELLS TOWN HALL

6<sup>TH</sup> December 2008 – from 9.00 am until 3.00 pm

Cakes of all kinds, home made produce, books, CDs, DVDs, videos, gifts, candles, china and glass, jewellery, Christmas decorations, pictures, Handicrafts, tombola/bottle stall. For more information please call: 07765 579879

## A CARBON NEUTRAL CAMPAIGN

Tessa and the local Lib Dems recognise that political campaigning does have an environmental impact - using paper and petrol, for example. So they have signed up to an internationally recognised off-set scheme. Tessa and the Lib Dems will purchase carbon off-sets each time they campaign. The money funds green energy, energy efficiency schemes and forestry projects. For more information contact: [www.climatecare.org](http://www.climatecare.org)

## Can you help Tessa?

The Liberal Democrats don't receive money or help from big business or Trade Unions. We rely on our local supporters to help us campaign.

### Can you help Tessa by:

- Delivering a few leaflets from time to time near your home
- Putting up a poster at election time
- Make a donation to Tessa's campaign (cheques made payable to: Tessa4Wells)
- Joining the Liberal Democrats



Published and promoted by Philip Eavis on behalf of Tessa Munt and the Liberal Democrats all of Benleigh House, Pilton, Somerset BA4 4BR. Printed by Newsquest Media (Southern) Ltd at Hampshire Road, Weymouth, DT4 9XD.

Name.....

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Phone.....

E-mail.....

Return to:  
**Tessa4Wells**  
**FREEPOST BS8452**  
**Somerset BA4 4BR**