

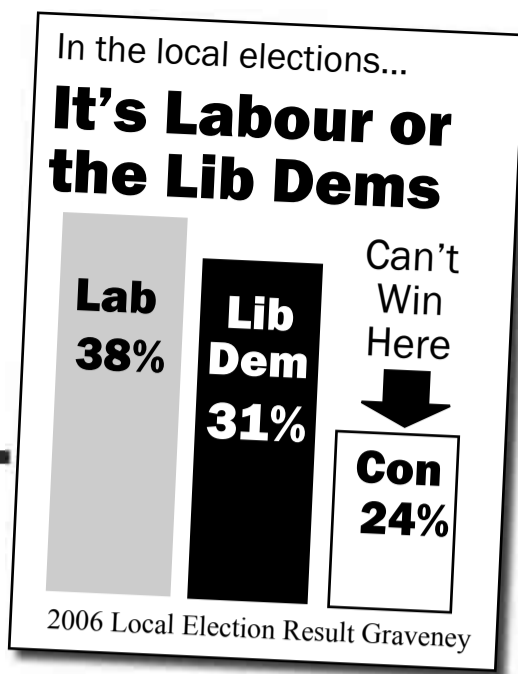
Tooting Graveney Ward FOCUS

Published & promoted on behalf of Tooting Liberal Democrats by David Patterson both at 14 Effort St, London SW17 0QR.
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Editors Jeremy Ambache, Stephanie Dearden, Jamie Gillespie, Surinder Rhode

December 2009



Local businesses face rate crunch

Small business owners in Tooting are worried that an increase in Business Rates next year could force some of them to close.

One shopkeeper told FOCUS that his rates had risen far more than his earnings. But despite this, he is unable to get any small business discounts because his business is just over the threshold.

Labour let-down

The increases have two causes. First the Government is scrapping a transitional relief scheme, which imposes big increases on businesses that have been in the same premises a long time.

Second, the Government is revaluing all properties nationwide, based on rental values in Spring 2008. This date is before the recent credit crunch took effect, and many businesses in London fear that they will be hit by increases. Government figures show that London will be the worst hit region in the country.

"The Labour government could not have picked a worse time to make these changes," says local campaigner **Stephanie Dearden**. "The local economy here in Tooting is under a lot of pressure. This could mean empty shops and lost jobs."

Surveys by the local Liberal Democrats show that business rates are one of their biggest worries. Some small businesses can claim a reduction, but many are not eligible, including the local shopkeeper that spoke to Focus.

It should be local!

The Business Rate used to be set locally by councils, but the last Conservative government made it into a national tax. It is now set by the national government, and it is the same across the whole country, based on market rental values.

"Liberal Democrats say that local councils should set the business rate, according to local conditions. And in these hard times their should be no increases at all," says Stephanie.



Jeremy Ambache and Stephanie Dearden talk to a local shopkeeper. High business rates is one of the leading complaints of local businesses. "The Government is making life harder when businesses need help," says Stephanie.



Jamie Gillespie talks to Franciscan Road: "People want to do something about speeding traffic."

Sign our 20 mph Petition!

There has been a strong positive response to FOCUS's call for a 20 mph zone in Tooting Graveney. In the November edition, FOCUS asked local residents what they thought of a 20mph zone for the residential streets of Tooting Graveney.

Jamie Gillespie said "People have responded with an overwhelming 'Yes'. Many people have told us that a 20 mph limit would make our local streets both safer and much less noisy."

The Graveney Focus team are responding by running a petition to the Council.

If you support it do tear off the petition and return it to the Freepost address shown, or drop it in at 196 Franciscan Road.

FOCUS carried out a survey of residents in the Summer, and had more responses about the speeding traffic than any other issue - though opinions were divided about the use of speed humps to slow traffic down.



20 mph Zone petition

We the undersigned call on Wandsworth Council to consider introducing a 20mph zone in all the residential streets within Graveney ward in Tooting.

Or you can sign the online version of this petition at <http://campaigns.libdems.org.uk/page1458>

Return to ...

FREEPOST RSCJ-GKUT-HCTH
Graveney Focus
14 Effort Street
Tooting SW17 0QR

Signature	Name	Address	Telephone	E-mail

Working for you - all year round!

Attacks Spark Concern over Police Presence after Dark

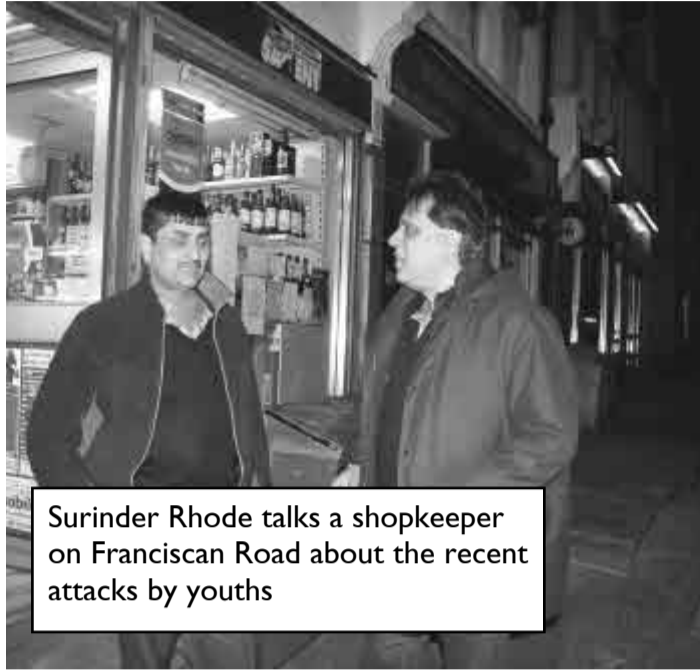
Shopkeepers in Franciscan Road have complained about the lack of a police presence after dark. Recently some groups of youths have been harassing them. Incidents have included throwing a lighted firework, and a burning rag.

"The Police presence during the daytime is much improved," reports local businessman and FOCUS campaigner **Surinder Rhode**. "But at night they aren't around as much - and that's when these attacks are happening."

These incidents in Franciscan Road are in addition to Liberal Democrat survey findings which show residents' concern about the lack of police presence after dark more generally in Tooting. Residents report this as one of the reasons they do not frequent the town centre after dark.

"There is no doubt that this is one of the reasons that it is difficult to attract good quality shops and restaurants to Tooting," says Surinder.

Surinder has talked to the Neighbourhood Police team about the problem, and they are conducting further investigation. "I have found our local police team very responsive," says Surinder. "I hope they will be stepping up patrols after dark."



Surinder Rhode talks a shopkeeper on Franciscan Road about the recent attacks by youths

Here to help you!

The Liberal Democrat Graveney Focus team can be contacted at:
 Email - graveney@wandsworthlibdems.org.uk
 Phone - 020 7223 8758
 Or use the form below

In Brief

Buses in Residential Streets

Residents in **Renmuir Street** have complained about double-decker buses using their residential street to turn around and come back around the top end of Longley Road. Residents living upstairs have bus passengers looking directly into their sitting-rooms! **Jeremy Ambache** has taken this up with Transport for London and suggested that buses can be re-routed on main roads.

Separately residents in **Longley Road** have also complained about engine noise from buses waiting at the stand - they are supposed to turn the engines off!

Screening Clinic for Men over 65

St. George's Hospital have just set up a new screening service that can be life saving. Any men over 65 can go for screening for abdominal aortic aneurysms (AAA). This is a weakening of the main blood vessel - the aorta. Men over 65 can be at risk from this condition which kills 6,000 men every year.

Although appointments are being offered to all men over 65, anyone can book an appointment is by calling the unit on 020 8266 6261.

More trees for Graveney

Wandsworth Council have responded to the tree survey carried out by FOCUS and reported in the September edition. FOCUS found many sites where trees have been lost, and others where trees could be planted to make the area more green and pleasant.

The Council said that they would plant 29 trees in the current financial year (up to March 2010), including six in **Trevelyan Road** and would consider a further 15 next year. But in many cases they said trees could not be planted because of nearby cables or other obstacles.

"We are delighted that the Council has responded favourably to many of our suggestions. This will improve the look of our streets," says **Jeremy Ambache**.



Hedges Blocking the Pavement

Several residents have contacted Graveney Focus about overgrown hedges blocking pavements, after the article on hedges in the October issue.

Jeremy Ambache says "We hope that local residents will keep their hedges and trees trimmed - so that they don't block pedestrians using the pavement."

Where this does not happen the Council have a responsibility to ensure the footpath is kept clear. The Council reminds the owners concerned. If the blockage is not cleared then the Council can undertake the hedge trimming and then bill the resident for the work! You can call the Council on 020 8871 6903.



Surinder Rhode at one of the 76 sites of missing trees discovered by FOCUS volunteers in the Summer. The Council now says it may replace half of them.

GOT A PROBLEM OR AN ISSUE...

Use the space below to tell us about problems in your area or to comment on local or national issues then return to the address below.



Return to ...

FREEPOST RSCJ-GKUT-HCTH
 Graveney Focus
 14 Effort Street
 Tooting SW17 0QR

Your details...

Name.....
 Address.....
Postcode.....
 Tel.....Mob.....
 Email.....@.....

I can help!

- I can help to deliver FOCUS newsletters in my street or nearby.
- I would like a Postal Vote application form.
- I will display a poster at election time.
- I will vote for the Liberal Democrats at the next council election.
- I enclose a donation to help pay for FOCUS newsletters
- £30 £15 Other £__

Please Make cheques payable to "Liberal Democrats"

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Tooting deserves better!