

MESSAGE TO THE RESIDENTS OF KIRKHAM BUDGET RISES AND SERVICE CUTS

As a result of poor financial management by Fylde Borough Council's ruling Conservative group there have been unplanned overspends and lost income of £1.2million this year and the Council's reserves have been raided to pay for these overspends.

They have now set the budget for 2008/09 and due to their spending plans Kirkham will go from being one of the **lowest** rated areas of the Borough to being the **highest**, seeing an unprecedented rise of **22%** in Council Tax bills, there will also be major cuts to services.

Fylde's share of Council Tax now looks to have reduced by £36 but a "Special Expenses" tax of £66.57 has been imposed on each property in Kirkham under the title of "Open Spaces Management" resulting in a large increase.

The Government has imposed a 5% cap on **all** Councils, Fylde's way of sidestepping this cap is to move a large slice of expenditure (the maintenance of parks and gardens) on to the Town and Parish Councils under the pretext of "Differential Taxation" and, as this now appears as a precept from most Parish Councils, it is not subject to the 5% cap.

They have also removed a grant of £8,419 which has always been paid to help the Town Council to administer its services which has resulted in the Town Council having to increase its precept further.

This Administration would have you believe that their difficulties have arisen because they have to budget for Concessionary Travel to the over 60's, they will also tell you that their Government Grants have been cut, this is untrue.

Proposed Threats to Rural Services

Kirkham's Swimming Pool has again been threatened with closure but, thanks to public pressure, it has now been given a reprieve of 1 year. Despite the assertion by certain Fylde Councillors that the pool has been saved, it is quite clear that this is a temporary reprieve, in reality, Fylde has handed over the responsibility for keeping it open to the Town and Parish Councils of the rural areas. We are now working to find ways to permanently retain and improve this facility which has, over recent years, been run down by the Borough, we will do all we can to try to achieve this.

Kirkham's One Stop Shop was closed on the 28th March because Fylde claim they need to make savings, the savings quoted will not, in our opinion, be found by removing rural services, savings could be achieved by reviewing staffing at the St. Annes One Stop Shop and allowing the service to continue in both the rural and urban areas. There will no longer be any Council services in the rural areas and it will be necessary for residents of the rural areas to travel to St. Annes to access any services they need. So, in addition to paying 22% more Council Tax, all rural services will be lost. **This is a disgrace.**

We feel that it is also necessary to mention here the £6-7million that this autocracy is proposing to spend on the exorbitantly expensive refurbishment of the St. Annes council offices. The council already owns suitable offices in Derby Road, Wesham, which, with a much lower spend, could provide alternative offices.

From: Kirkham Town Councillors

