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Give Us A Fair Pint

Delivered free to 40,000 homes in
Weston and the villages.

The Gazette

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DON'T DUMP YOUR ADDICTS HERE

Weston MP John Penrose is taking on local authorities across the country in his fight to reduce the number of drug addicts being sent to the town.

He's written to councils and other organisations, including health trusts, demanding to know how many addicts they're sending for treatment in Weston. The request, made under the Freedom of Information Act is part of the *Cleaner Weston* campaign.

Last year, John launched the *Cleaner Weston* campaign to tighten up the rules on drug treatment centres and so-called "dry houses". Weston has around 10% of the country's registered rehabilitation centres, plus a potentially huge number of unlicensed hostels. The *Cleaner Weston* campaign aims to crack down

on the unlicensed hostels, leaving the town with fewer, better rehabs.

John explained: "I'm very concerned about the number



of addicts from all over the country who are being referred for treatment in Weston. Too many relapse and stay in the town, fuelling the town's crime figures."

"Many of the addicts in dodgy rehabs have been sent

there by a small number of local authorities. I want to find out which councils are the worst offenders."

"Once I have this information, I will then be going straight to the top, directly to the Chief Executive at each of those organisations. I will make them fully aware that they are using poorly managed, bad quality premises – and the problems that they are, in effect, dumping at Weston's Door. That must stop."

"We have some of the best quality and well respected Registered Residential Rehabilitation Centres in the country. I will be pressing the bosses to ensure that that any further referrals from their organisations only use those addresses."



Penrose wins key role in fight for pensioners

Weston Super Mare MP John Penrose has been appointed to the powerful Work and Pensions Select Committee in Parliament.

John said: "I am delighted to be appointed. Now I'm on the Committee, I'll be able to

work with local groups like the Senior Citizens Forum to fight Weston's corner. Two of my key priorities will be addressing the pensions time-bomb and giving disabled people better opportunities to get jobs."

The job will give him a high profile position as the committee examines the attempts of Works and Pensions Secretary David Blunkett to solve the pensions crisis.

John Penrose MP – Working for you all year round

Health Services Losing Out

Patients and health services in North Somerset are losing out on millions of pounds of vital government cash – warns MP John Penrose.



He has urged the Minister to increase support so that the Primary Care Trust hits the Government's target by 2010.

John said: "Any increase for our hard pressed health services are welcome. But the Health Secretary has got to recognise that we are losing out. At the current rate it will be at least 2014/15 before our local settlement catches up with Government guidelines."

Figures obtained by John from the Department of Health reveal that by the end of 2007/8, North Somerset Health Services will be £9.1million below the government's own target for the authority.

At the current rate of

funding, North Somerset will not get its recommended full award until 2014/15.

John has written to Health Secretary, Patricia Hewitt, outlining his concerns.

He has asked for an assurance that the funding gap for North Somerset will reduce.

"Put simply, it's just not fair. Weston area has a rapidly expanding population. We have areas of special deprivation. With all the new families moving into the area, our GP practices are going to be crammed to bursting."



MP STARTS CLASSIC CAR CHARITY RUN

Weston Super Mare MP John Penrose officially starts this year's Parliamentary Classic Car Run from the Winter Gardens in Weston Super Mare.

Over the past six years, the event has raised over £160,000 for charity. The proceeds from this year's event go to the NSPCC's FULL STOP campaign.

Star Ratings May Damage Staff Morale

John Penrose has expressed concern over the Government decision to award North Somerset Primary Care Trust a 1 star rating and Weston Area Health Trust a no star rating. Mr Penrose weighed into the debate amid fears that the ratings will damage fragile staff morale and patient confidence.

John explained: "In June, the independent "Dr Foster" information agency said the Primary Care Trust and Weston Hospital provided high quality medical."

"But how can the hospital or PCT sort out their financial problems when they're not being given enough government cash in the first place."

"Our health teams have got one hand tied behind their back. The government are giving them an impossible task. Hardworking health professional are being unfairly blamed and local patients are suffering."

John Penrose MP – Working for you all year round

HIGHWAYS AGENCY SNUB OVER JUNCTION 21

Weston Super Mare MP John Penrose has slammed comments by the Highways Agency that its job was “*not to make life easier for the commuter*” over access to junction 21 of the M5.

The controversial statement came during a meeting to discuss transport problems in North Somerset.

The meeting heard that the Highways Agency was ruling out improvements for traffic joining the M5 at junction 21.

John Penrose said: “This is a bitterly disappointing reaction. The Highways Agency seems happy for traffic to tailback miles into Weston and jam up our villages.”

“This is a snub for the 20,000+ local people who

commute to work from Weston and the villages every day. The problem is only going to get worse with unchecked new house building in the town.”

John continued: “The Highways Agency has stuck two fingers up at local commuters. We desperately need new measures to take the strain off our roads. I am going to be submitting detailed proposals for better road, rail and bus links to Bristol.”

“We shouldn’t forget that the Government’s plans for road-user and congestion charging are coming up fast. The joint local transport plan must come up with new ways to help – otherwise we’ll come to a grinding halt.”



Penrose Champions Local Lottery Funding

MP John Penrose has been championing local community groups at a meeting with the Regional Head of the Big Lottery Fund.

John said: “I was keen to sit down with the Big Lottery team and sort out the award of lottery grants to our local community groups.”

“Not so long ago, we had a number of disappointments. Far too many of our local bids were being turned down, for example our local sea cadets and Weston Cricket Club.”

“We now seem to be doing better. In May there was support for the South Weston Community Association to develop a new community hall and day

centre. In June Hutton C of E Primary School were helped to experience war time evacuation. This month there has been an award to upgrade play equipment for Blagdon Parish Council and support for veterans in the Burma Star Association.”

John added “One of the ideas I flagged up with the Lottery was the idea of locally based advice surgeries. You can’t expect community organisations to spend hours ploughing through detailed Lottery application criteria.”

“Let’s keep things simple. Let’s get specialist advice from the Lottery on preparing and presenting applications out here in the community.”

Surgeries

Every week John Penrose MP holds a surgery at different locations around the constituency.

For help, advice or to make an appointment, please contact Grace Roper in John’s constituency office on 01934 613841.

In addition to his fixed location surgeries, John also holds regular “roving” surgeries, visiting streets and neighbourhoods around the town and villages.



20,000 local people work outside the constituency every day

IMPROVE OUR RAIL LINKS OR WE FACE GRIDLOCK

Weston Super Mare MP John Penrose has called for major developments at Worle and Weston train stations to cope with increasing passenger demands.

He has made a detailed submission to the Strategic Rail Authority to improve local rail services under the proposed Greater Western Rail Franchise.

John argues that the rail network must develop to relieve growing commuter congestion and reduce traffic bottlenecks.

He said: "Weston has seen a huge increase in housing development. 10,000 new houses are already being built

on the Locking Castle and Weston Village development. If unchecked, the problem will only get worse. If we are going to beat gridlock and take some of the strain off our local roads – then the rail network needs to perform."

"There are already 20,000+ local people working outside the constituency every day. The new rail service must give all travellers, particularly Weston's many daily commuters, an alternative to the car."

The proposals include the development of Worle station, a fast link to Bristol, with longer platforms and improved facilities at the

station. Car parking at the station should be expanded and made free of charge.

John wants a minimum half hourly service to Bristol throughout the day. Bristol trains should continue through Temple Meads (to include additional stops) right through to Bristol Parkway. This would allow access to the multiple employment districts in Bristol. He also argues for an increase in 'through' London trains to and from Weston Super Mare.

In his submission, John calls for the existing single track line into Weston railway station to be made two way to improve reliability and

increase capacity to match the town's growth.

In addition, he wants improved links with the bus network, improved bicycle access and storage. He also

believes that rail freight services should be developed to limit the passage of long distance HGVs through local villages like Banwell and Congresbury.



GIVE US A FAIR PINT

Weston Super Mare MP John Penrose is backing a campaign to ensure local beer drinkers are served a fair pint.

The Government says that a pint of beer should be not "less than 95% liquid". Mr Penrose has signed a Motion in Parliament calling on the Government to define a pint of beer as 100% liquid and help to put an end to short beer measures.

According to CAMRA, Campaign for Real Ale, 8 out of 10 pints are currently sold short, 1 out of 4 pints are short by over 5%.



John Penrose MP said "We all enjoy a pint, especially now the warm weather is back. We also need to stop drinkers getting ripped off. Far from protecting a fair pint, these Government's proposals will make short measures even more likely."

"Why should drinkers be obliged to pay 100% of the price of a pint yet only be entitled to receive 95% or even less?"

What Do You Think?

Here is *your* chance to tell John Penrose MP what *you* think about any issue.

Please write *your* comments to John here....

Full name:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

Please complete the feedback form below and return it to:
John Penrose MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA