

Iraq War - 15 years on

March 2018 marks 15 years since the government of 2003 chose to go to war in Iraq.

Let's remind ourselves of this disastrous failure in foreign policy. Despite a rebel amendment saying there was no moral case for war against Iraq, parliament agreed to it, including Vernon Coaker MP for Gedling.

Whilst the other main parties were split, *all 53 Liberal Democrat MPs voted with the amendment.*

Seb Soar reflects on this, "I am proud to be a member of a party that took the principled decision to stand up against the illegal war in Iraq. It was the Liberal Democrat Leader Charles Kennedy who stood alone as the only leader of one of the main parties to stand against the invasion of Iraq. The aftermath of the war can still be felt in the world today, and I think it is important we still remember that."

British families mourned the loss of 179 brave service personnel, doing their duty. It is believed 203,347 in total lost their lives.

The Chilcott Report of 2016 stated that the circumstances surrounding the legal basis for UK military action were far from satisfactory. It is now clear that policy on Iraq was made on the basis of flawed intelligence and assessments, which were not challenged, and should have been.

Last year we learnt that Tony Blair will not be prosecuted for his role in the 2003 Iraq war. The Lord Chief Justice said that there was no crime of aggression in English law under which the former prime minister could be charged.

Only the Liberal Democrat Party can claim the moral high ground over this disastrous and shameful episode, one which we are still paying for in more ways than one.

Local Matters

Kenrick Road - Update

In the January Focus, we promised to update you on this contentious parking issue. The senior highways officer tells us "The restrictions have been kept to the minimum necessary to ensure visibility at the junction. The scheme will improve the junction operation with minimal anticipated migration of parking." It would seem that the consultation relied on information supplied directly to it, and not from other sources. Surely this is something that our councillors (representing us at Borough and County level) would have known about, and been proactive about, ensuring that there was co-ordination of effort. It would appear not. At a County Council meeting on 23rd November it was noted that the Borough Council were already dealing with the wider parking problem. We have contacted Gedling Borough Council Enforcement Team about Kenrick Road. Their reply (of 22nd Feb) states that they continually monitor the situation and ensure that the conditions imposed on the motor trader are not breached. What concerns us is that their reply also states that they were not aware of the decision to limit the parking restriction to 10m. Surely we should expect our council to be part of such decision making. What a wasted opportunity.

Yellow Paint and Potholes

The anticipated repairs to Porchester's roads are long overdue. Our hopes were recently raised, at the sight of contractors marking areas with yellow paint. But we will be paying more for the privilege.

The Conservative mantra of a low-tax and high-wage economy is wearing thin, as is the Conservatives boast of squeezing public spending instead of raising taxes. Our local Conservatives have been quick to celebrate the County Council's commitment to repairing our neglected roads in a £20m upgrade. What they don't explain is that the extra money for roads is part of the 2.99% increase in council tax from April. Our local Labour councillors don't seem to mention this much either, except for telling us to report any potholes to the County Council.

For a pothole to be considered a safety defect it must be at least 40mm deep in the road or 20mm deep in a footway. Providing it meets these criteria, low priority potholes should be repaired within 28 days!

The yellow paint used by contractors to mark the locations of numerous defects was applied so long ago it has now worn off. Some work has now started, but this would appear to be the start of another 'patching up' exercise. Clearly not good enough.



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