

Wokingham Conservatives

Tonight Wokingham Conservatives will confirm the local campaign with me as their candidate for the General election. I will talk to the members present at the meeting about the messages I would like their help to take to the doorsteps and onto social media over the next month. They will be based on the things I have set out in recent blogs and will include a local agenda for the next five years.

Room for tax cuts

The new fiscal framework set out yesterday by the Chancellor should allow scope for some tax cuts in the next budget. It is important these are not crowded out by further increases in spending. Tax cuts are the quickest way to boost real incomes and stimulate the economy. People should be able to spend more of their own income.

As the world economic slowdown continues, led by a world manufacturing recession, it is important the UK has an economic stimulus. The US is growing faster thanks to past big tax cuts, spending increases and recent interest rate cuts. Yesterday the Bank of England once again continued their squeeze, refusing to join the ECB, Fed, and the Central banks of China, Australia, Brazil and all the others that are cutting rates to provide an economic boost.

The NHS

The important principle that people like and support is that healthcare should be free. We should all have free access to the NHS, and should expect to receive timely and good quality treatment in proportion to our health needs.

The only major departure from this was when Labour in the early years of the NHS introduced charges for prescriptions and glasses. Subsequent governments of various parties have given more exemptions to prescription charges whilst continuing with them and from time to time increasing them.

The NHS has never been a fully nationalised service. Labour's original establishment allowed GPs to be private contractors, running their services from private premises as many still do today. The NHS has always relied on

the private sector to supply its drugs, bandages, food and other supplies. For many years under governments of all three parties the NHS has employed private company contractors in various locations to clean and cook, to provide a range of services to hospitals and surgeries.

Nor has the NHS ever insisted on all its supplies coming from the UK. Where foreign companies have developed good drugs that UK manufacturers do not have the NHS is willing to import them. The NHS is also cost conscious and usually negotiates a bulk discount or special terms reflecting its buying power.

Most people do not mind the NHS drawing on the best supplies from the private sector as part of its activity, as long as the core proposition of free good quality NHS care is maintained. The present government has no intention of deviating from this. These are common principles and practices shared by Labour and Conservative governments in office.

[Appointment times for local patients](#)

I am pursuing again the issue of booking appointments with GPs, as I have had some complaints. It is important that the additional money being made available to the NHS helps local GP practices to have easy access booking systems, and pays for sufficient GPs on duty to allow early appointments.

People often cannot be sure when booking an appointment whether they have something seriously wrong and whether early treatment is needed. Anyone in need of a doctor's advice or treatment anyway wants to press on with it as quickly as possible. No-one wishes to be ill and wants treatment promptly if there is a good treatment available.

[A new fiscal rule](#)

A sensible boost to our economy is affordable whilst having a balanced budget rule for all current spending. Labour's massive spending plans would plunge us into debt on a huge scale, damaging confidence and squeezing the private sector. It would lead to higher taxes for the many.