



# Michael German AM Annual Report 2004



www.michaelgerman.com

Keeping you informed!

Dear constituents,

This is my annual report for 2004. It is produced at no cost to you as taxpayers and is my way of staying in touch with you and letting you know about the issues, which I have been campaigning on this past year on your behalf.

Since my last Annual Report I have been very busy. I have been out campaigning on many issues, such as the 'Axe the Tax' campaign, which took me all around the region.

If there are any matters you would like me to look into on your behalf then please contact me. My details are at the end of this report. Remember, that there are many local Liberal Democrat councillors in the area who are there to help.

Best Wishes...

## Tackling Obesity

### Local food for healthy school meals



**Healthy Option: Mike German during lunch at Overmonnow Primary School.**

Mike German is organising a scheme in Monmouthshire to promote healthy eating, to help local producers of food and respond to the demand for more wholesome, less processed food. Many parents are worried about growing obesity in our children. Local Food Procurement would use local produce in school dinners. It will benefit local producers and boost the local economy. It will also benefit children who will be eating healthy school dinners made from fresh local produce.

## FAIR TAXES NOT HIGHER TAXES

Mike German has organised street referendums across our region. Mike says, "Time and time again a huge majority of local people reject the Council Tax."



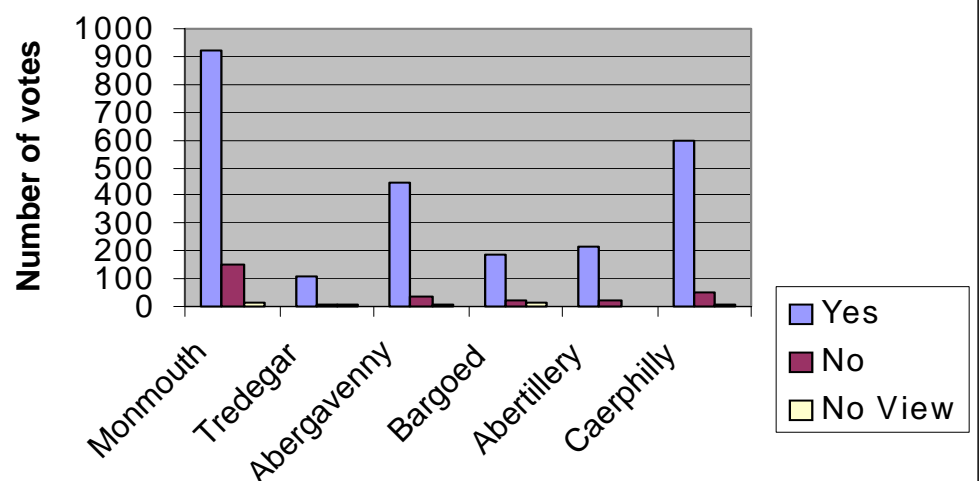
**Working for you: Mike German with Cllr Steve Bard in Abertillery. Once again a huge majority of local people rejected the unfair Council Tax.**

The current council tax system is unfair for pensioners and those on low income because it is linked to the value of your home not your income. Huge increases have meant hardship for many.

The Liberal Democrats want to abolish it. Local Income Tax (LIT) is the alternative proposed by the Liberal Democrats. It is a much fairer system because it is based on your ability to pay. It will be collected with your income tax alongside any normal tax you pay.

When the Conservatives were asked what they would replace the Council Tax with, Michael Howard replied "I don't know". The Liberal Democrats are the only party committed the Council Tax for the much fairer LIT

### Do you want to scrap the Council Tax?



#### Results from around the region

'Axe the Tax' was the clear message from the thousands who took part. They overwhelmingly voted to scrap the council tax and replace it with a fairer Local Income Tax. If you would like further information on the 'Axe the Tax' campaign contact my regional office.

# Working on your behalf

# Working for You - All year Round

## BED BLOCKING

187 beds are blocked in the Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust Area. They are taken up by people who no longer need to be in hospital but cannot receive adequate care out in their own homes.

Councils fail to provide these patients with adequate care once they are ready to leave hospital. Bed blocking has a massive impact on waiting lists for vital operations, because beds are taking up by people who no longer need to be in hospital.

This is unacceptable. Welsh Liberal Democrats believe that all patients deserve suitable healthcare, whether they are waiting for an operation or are able to leave hospital. Help with dressing would shorten waiting lists in hospitals.



Mike discusses bed blocking with a local nurse

## Saving our Post Offices

The Liberal Democrats are committed to stopping the closure of local post offices. For many people in the community, such as pensioners and the disabled, local post offices provide a vital lifeline. They are often at the heart of many communities. Welsh Liberal Democrats seek to maintain our vital post offices. Labour took away their business making it difficult for many Post Masters and Mistresses to make a living.



Concerned: discussion with a Post-mistress in Torfaen

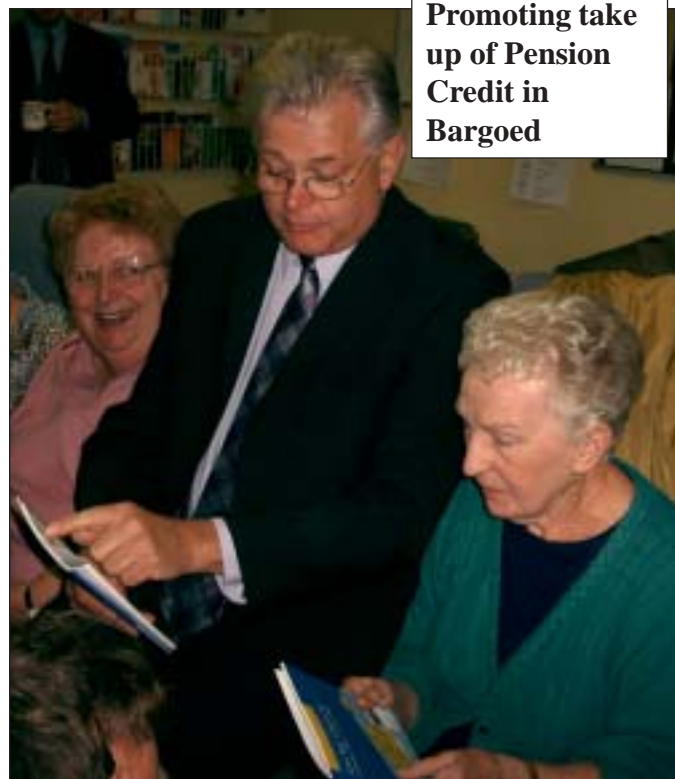
## TOP UP FEES

Top up fees are a tax on learning. We need highly skilled people for our economy to thrive. Many students currently leave University with debts of £10,000. Top up fees will add to the debt

Michael German and the Liberal Democrats are campaigning to scrap these fees. The National Assembly will have to find over £110m a year when Labour introduces the scheme in England.

Liberal Democrats oppose top up fees. We would raise the top rate of tax from 40p to 50p on incomes over £100,000 a year. That's a much fairer way of raising the money much needed by our Universities.

## Campaigning for proper Pensions



Promoting take up of Pension Credit in Bargoed

Four out of every 10 eligible pensioners has not taken up the money they are due from Pension Credit. Mike German has visited Pensioner groups in a campaign across the region to make pensioners aware that they may be eligible to claim pension credit. Mike says, "It is upsetting that thousands of the poorest pensioners may not receive the money that they are entitled to."

Please call my regional office in New Inn on 01495 740 358 if you would like information on the pension credit scheme. Alternatively you can contact the Pension Service on 0800 991 234.

## Class Sizes



Visiting a local school in Monmouthshire

"SMALLER CLASS SIZES WILL MEAN BETTER QUALITY EDUCATION" says Mike German.

The Welsh Liberal Democrats understand the importance of smaller class sizes to allow children between the ages of 7 – 11 years to receive the best they can from education.

Children receive a better standard of teaching from a class size of 25, as opposed to a class with 31 children in it.

Welsh Liberal Democrats are fully committed to reducing class sizes in primary education in Wales.

## Campaign against GM

Welsh Liberal Democrats are opposed to growing GM crops. The trials of GM maize are flawed. They were grown under different conditions to commercially grown maize crops. The full impact that commercialising the growth of GM crops will have on Wales is not known, but the public does not want them. Mike says, "In my former role as Rural Development Minister I wholly supported the policy of adopting the most restrictive approach to the commercialising and growing of GM crops."

There is a growing demand for organic food and the commercialising of GM crops would damage this demand.



Mike German backs a GM free Wales in the Assembly Chamber



## 5 easy ways to contact Michael German AM

Phone *Constituency - 01495 740358*  
*National Assembly - 029 2089 8741*

Email *michael.german@wales.gov.uk*

Post *You can write to Michael in Cardiff or at his regional office in New Inn.*

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# Working for South Wales East