

BUDGET 2015: WHAT GEORGE DIDN'T MENTION...



George Osborne's Budget was designed to get the Tories elected in May and is more notable for what it doesn't say than what it does. There are subsidies for first time home buyers and next year the personal tax allowance goes up by £200. Income from savings of up to £1000 will be tax free.

The effect on most people will be small, as little as the penny off the price of a pint. If you don't earn much you won't benefit much and few get anything close to £1000 from their savings. The help-to-buy ISA will add to the competition for houses and is likely to push up prices.

Not mentioned are the continuing cuts to government spending, cuts to local services, as well as to pay and pensions in the public sector and out-sourced companies.

These be bigger than anything seen over the past five years. Osborne's claim that "the sun is starting to shine" is as phoney as his smile. Insecure, short term and badly-paid jobs are now the norm for the indebted young and the not-so-young. More food banks will open. Targets for shifting people off benefits will be upped and more pressured into dubious self employment. We will have to work

longer to get our shrunken pensions. In the meantime fraud and deception by the banks is uncovered but no-one goes to jail and bankers get bonuses. The sun is shining ever more brightly on the rich. George didn't mention that.

GEORGE DOESN'T CARE

Cuts hurt the most vulnerable. To save £11.5m Suffolk County Council sold its care homes, including Blyford and Stradbroke Court in Lowestoft, to private equity company CareUK.

After scandals and delays CareUK opened new homes including Britten Court in Lowestoft. As we predicted the majority of experienced staff have left, training has been downgraded and new staff are paid up to £2 per hour less. Residents and staff will pay for these cuts and CareUK will profit.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust, which deals with patients with mental health issues, faces additional cuts of £44m over five years, has suffered botched reorganisations, a failed attempt at semi-privatisation and is now in "special measures". Its Chief Executive had his pay bumped up by 35% when he joined; average staff salaries have shrunk by 18% in three years.

Suffolk County Council has cut £5m from older peoples services, £5.1m from Children's and Young People's Budget and £4.1m from Health and Social Care. The County is rapidly divesting itself even of our schools.

So why is George smirking?

We didn't vote for these cuts and this is our alternative*...

End tax dodging believed to cost £150 billion a year

Tax the rich

Stop the disastrous foreign wars, expenditure on weapons of mass destruction and invest in green jobs

Stop the bankers paying themselves obscene bonuses

Levy a Robin Hood tax on bank turnover

*Resolution passed at LCAC launch rally - 2 March, 2011



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THE BIG QUESTION THAT WASN'T ANSWERED

ELECTION
SPECIAL 2

We are told that cuts to wages and conditions at work, to pensions and benefits, to services as well as the privatisation of public services are necessary because "the money isn't there".

Yet the country is richer than ever before, much richer than after the Second World War when the NHS was created and the railways, along with other utilities, were nationalised. The problem is who has got the money. Money has been flowing into the pockets of the rich for forty years and cuts and austerity is making matters worse.

Matthew Payne, the minister chairing last week's Lowestoft Question Time, failed to select any questions about cuts. Fortunately an LCAC member managed to get our question (see right) heard in the short time allocated to questions from the floor. Opposition to austerity and inequality were not in the candidates' replies. All parties, barring the Greens who would introduce a rate of 60% on salaries over £150,000 pa., plan more of both.

A future Tory govt would make it illegal to ask millionaires to pay more income tax. UKIP would cut tax for those earning between £45,300 and £55,000. Assets up to £325,000 are already free of inheritance tax but the Tories would raise that to £1m and UKIP scrap it altogether. So the already rich could pass on their wealth to their families while £12bn of welfare cuts on the poorest families would double food bank visits to 2million.

Overleaf are reports of meetings with Labour Candidate, Bob Blizzard and Green Candidate



Graham Elliott. A vote for Bob Blizzard could be important in defeating the incumbent Tory. A vote for Graham Elliot could be a marker to show that Labour isn't doing enough.

The Unanswered Question

Inequality in Britain has reached pre-First World War levels. In five years of coalition government the number of billionaires has doubled while one in four children live below the poverty line.

Shouldn't a future government substantially increase taxes on the richest rather than imposing more cuts on the rest?

www.lowestoftagainstthecuts.org.uk