



Preseli Pembrokeshire Conservatives

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Date: 1 July 2004

### **Prices and Planning “double whammy” creates County homes crisis**

The homes crisis in Pembrokeshire continues to grow as increasing numbers of local people are being locked out of the housing market due to rocketing house prices and an inflexible planning system, according to Stephen Crabb the Conservative Parliamentary Spokesman in Preseli Pembrokeshire.

As County house prices spiral, many local people have considered the option of building their own homes but are finding that planning constraints often prevent any such development in their communities. This is especially true in the villages and in the coastal areas where prices have increased the most.

Speaking from the Conservative office in Haverfordwest Stephen Crabb said, “Right now there is a serious imbalance in the local housing market with people who have spent their whole lives in the County being shut out. They are facing a ‘double whammy’ of house prices which are simply too much for the first-time buyer and also a rigid planning regime which prevents new homes being built in large parts of Pembrokeshire.”

“What is especially dismaying is that many young families cannot now live in the same villages as their parents. This is having a knock-on effect in terms of breaking up Welsh-speaking communities in the north of the County and also in making child-care arrangements more difficult for working mums.”

Stephen Crabb was speaking following a visit on Friday to Nick Davies Yamaha in Eglwyswrw where he met with Nick and his wife Jayne to discuss their experiences in trying to obtain planning approval to build a house on the same property as their successful small enterprise.

Nick Davies Bikes sells, services and repairs agricultural ATVs as well as having diversified recently into building high-performance quad bikes for the growing UK race market. Nick also manufactures his own line of N-Duro ATV race axles which he exports to the USA, France and Germany. He now employs six full-time staff after beginning as a sole trader in 1991.



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Stephen continued:

“Nick and Jayne are a classic example of hard-working and successful Pembrokeshire people who want to live in their home area and yet are caught between house prices which are out-of-reach and a planning system which prevents them building their own house.”

“Nick has created six full-time jobs in north Pembrokeshire. Most of his staff are Welsh-speakers from the local community. He is exactly the kind of person the planning system should be encouraging. It is people like Nick who will hold rural communities together in the years to come. All his working life Nick has resisted the temptation to move out of the square mile where he was born, and has worked hard to build his business on his home patch, supporting the local area and culture.”

Jayne Davies said

“We are investing in North Pembrokeshire, and need to live at our premises due to the long and antisocial hours that we both work, dealing with agricultural customers, who cannot work 9-5, and other customers who are in regular jobs during the day. We also deal with suppliers and customers on the West coast of America and often need to be on-site in the middle of the night.”

“What I find so hard is that we were just told no, you cannot build and you do not need to be there. But why should Nick relocate his business from the area he grew up in? We spend on average £750 a month with our rural village post office. The whole community would suffer if are forced to move. We do not want to build a housing estate to profit from; we just want to live and work on Nick’s home patch. We should be helped not hindered.”

Stephen raised the issue of affordable housing on a visit to the House of Commons on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June where he met with Party Leader Michael Howard MP and the Shadow Secretary of State for Wales Bill Wiggin MP to discuss current priorities for Wales.

The Conservative Party is currently developing its national policy on housing and Stephen is campaigning for it to focus on creating more opportunities for first-time buyers. Stephen has also written to the Conservative Leader in the Assembly, Nick Bourne AM, as housing in Wales is a devolved matter.

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