

Make a new year's resolution not to accept second best.

Given the dramatic headlines every week it doesn't take a genius to see that things are going to be tough in the coming year. With central government spending £billions to bail out the banks and trying to keep the economy afloat, it equally doesn't take a genius to understand that at some time in the future the bills will have to be paid.

What's that got to do with us? Quite simply at some point the government is going to find it difficult to continue to fund local authorities to the extent it has in the past. That means two things, higher council taxes to try to bridge the shortfall and cuts in local government spending. It may not happen this year but at some point it is as inevitable as night follows day. In short we are all going to have to pay more to receive less in the way of services.

When the time comes where do you think the axe will fall? Will we see large cuts in local government bureaucracy? Maybe there will be cuts in the huge numbers of Kirklees employees? Perhaps the biggest cut backs will be in Huddersfield or the other larger towns, which make up Kirklees? Or just maybe it will be easier to make the cuts in the smaller outlying communities on the fringes of the Kirklees Empire. Where would you place your money if you were making a bet on it?

If you take a look at the state of our local roads and compare them to those in Huddersfield you can already see where the money isn't getting spent right now, before the really bad times come. We have just lived through one of the longest periods of prosperity in modern history and throughout that period the roads in our area have been slowly declining. Just take a ride along Station Road to Emley and you can see a road slowly going back to being a farm track. Not so slowly actually.

Skelmanthorpe needs more car parking space but can you see that getting built now? There is a real need for a greater police presence but where will the money come for that in future? Wherever you look, from education to care for the elderly, the community has a need for greater spending, not less. If we couldn't get these things in the good times the fight is going to be even tougher in the bad times.

So if you care about these things its time to stand up and shout about them to the people in authority. That's what the members of SCAG have been doing for the past few years. Sometimes we have spent months campaigning to get something done. It takes persistence and a determination not to give up and eventually we get a result.

But, in the times ahead we are going to need even more help and support. So why not make a resolution that you will start to chase the council when you see things that need to be done? It's a lot more satisfying to try to get something done than to just sit at home feeling angry about it. If we don't all stand up and shout we shouldn't be surprised if the council continues to neglect our community while continuing to look after its own interests.

So for the sake of the community start to speak up, you will feel a lot better for it.