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Making the choice: that concern them



The businessman

BUSINESSES fear that whoever wins at the polls will have a tough time righting the economy in the next few years.

Barry Collins, director of Jean Barrie Contemporary Design Fireplaces, in Crews Hill, said he is disappointed with the main parties and is reluctant to vote.

"The parties just say whatever they want to get elected," he said. "I feel that Labour has ruined the country by getting us in so much debt. Running the country is like a business and

they've done it very badly. The Conservatives messed it all up last time, but I think I'll vote for them because they're the best of a bad bunch, which is unfortunate."

Mr Collins added that local businesses are all struggling and there are bleak times still ahead. "Three years ago I had four members of staff, now I'm just working on my own," he said. "I'm working from week-to-week now, whereas it used to be from month-to-month or even year-to-year."

VOTES for the main parties cannot be taken for granted by a new generation of young people who do not feel traditional political loyalties. That is the view of 24-year-old Randy Lewis, who says that Labour's traditionally guaranteed vote among the working classes has not transferred to young people.

Mr Lewis, a member of the Youth Engagement Panel which offers advice and support to young people in the borough, said: "More young people want to vote this time around, but a lot of the people who are running for office don't really understand

their lives. I've been encouraging as many people as possible to register to vote. It's easy to moan about politicians, but if you don't do anything about it, like voting, maybe you don't have a right to complain."

And Mr Lewis believes this election will be more open than ever. "When I first voted, I voted for Labour," he said. "But now things have started to change - I don't think they can bank on the black vote any more. Labour used to get the working-class vote, but times have also now moved on and the other parties are starting to appeal."



The youth worker



CONCERT DINNER

Friday 14th May

James Sherlock and Peter Foggitt form a versatile piano duo, performing great works such as Schubert's Fantasia for piano duet, extracts from Faure's Dolly Suite and Holst's The Planets.

A lively second half will include improvisations on themes submitted by the audience.

Reception at 7pm with sparkling wine and canapes, three course dinner and concert.

Price: £54.50 per person - table wines extra. Payable on booking.

Dress code: Black tie.

GARDEN OPEN DAY

Sunday 16th May - 2-5pm

Visit The Beale Arboretum to view the trees and shrubs in their glorious spring colours. At the same time support the National Garden Scheme and help us to raise money for various charities, including MacMillan Nurses. Tours available between 2pm and 5pm, with self guide tour sheets also available.

£4 Adults, children free. Afternoon teas will be available on the Bar Terrace, or in the lounge, throughout the afternoon.

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