

Who

Tory candidate blasts 'snouts in trough' MPs

TOO many politicians are enriching themselves at taxpayers' expense, says Ben Jones, the Conservative candidate for Halton at the next General Election.

Mr Jones fired a verbal broadside against MPs who are milking the system and digging deep into the pockets of irate taxpayers.

He's announced a five-point pledge to win back the trust of an electorate fuming at the 'snouts in the trough' attitude of some MPs.

In his personal blog on his election campaign, he says: "MPs' expenses have been in the news and the conduct of some MPs has attracted deserved criticism."

Mr Jones says if he were elected, he would:

- Be completely open about all of his expenses and allowances, publishing full details each year;
- Only claim expenses for costs incurred doing his job as an MP, such as travel costs and office allowances;
- Provide receipts for all his expense claims;
- Not employ any members of his family; and
- Only claim expenses in relation to a second home if they were



NEW DEAL: Ben Jones, who wants to see a change in the parliamentary approach to expenses.

genuinely incurred.

He said: "The voters of Halton have a right to know how I'd behave as their MP and a right to know how all MPs are spending their money. Complete openness is the least they deserve."

"Recent events confirm my long-standing view that a culture change is needed in Westminster to regain public confidence in

politicians when it comes to their expenses.

"I'm pleased that Sir Christopher Kelly has brought forward his committee's inquiry but the time has come for more than a change of system and rules, but for a change in culture and approach.

"I've entered politics because I believe in public service. I want to make a contribution to my country and work for something greater than self-interest.

"The vast majority of MPs enter politics for the same reasons. But MPs now need to take responsibility for the mess that is parliamentary expenses and prove that is the case.

"Let's be clear - MPs should claim expenses or allowances only when they incur a legitimate cost and have receipts to prove it, not because they are 'entitled' to claim them.

"The culture of claiming allowances because they are on offer has to end. For those of us who only claim expenses we incur doing our jobs, the Westminster system is hard to stomach."

NEWS File

Tracing family roots

RUNCORN Family History Group open day at Runcorn's Egerton Saturday, May 16, from 10am-3pm.

Members will be giving free advice on how to look into your family roots and a talk at 11am by Jonathan Peppin, Chester's Record Office about census lists.

There will be an exhibition of family photos of old Runcorn and a display by Diana Leitch of Runcorn workers.

Students having fun

STUDENTS at Riverside College are taking part in a charity event at Stobart Stadium to raise funds for Barnardo's and Claire's.

The event will include raffles, a Thai ball.

Students have already collected money for the cause with a sponsored car wash and a sponsored walk up Stobart. Tickets cost £18 and are available from Riverside College campus.

For more information, contact Anne Redfern on 01928 508 600.

Entrepreneur awards

O2 HAS announced the launch of the O2 Awards - the search for the best entrepreneurs and small business owners.

The awards look for something new, a new generation of small business owners. Awards are now open for entry. Visit www.o2.co.uk/o2awards and enter by August 1 to apply.

O2 is also running a series of networking events at O2 Academies including Liverpool on July 1. Visit www.o2.co.uk/awards.

Beating water leakage

UNITED Utilities, the North West's water and wastewater company, has set a new record for beating water leakage.

Despite the coldest winter for 100 years, three months of this year saw less than one megaf litres per day compared with the previous-best quarter in 2001 of 1.5 megaf litres per day.

Cutting unnecessary leaks from the sewerage system is a major focus for water