

Reflections



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Thinking Differently
WHEN the 'age of austerity' began following the financial crisis of 2008-2009, the intended outcomes were to eliminate the overburdened budget deficit and to reduce mounting national debt.

This was to be achieved by a combination of cutting public spending and increasing taxes amounting to £110-billion by 2015-2016.

It has been reported that the outcomes have been positive and partially successful, although not as much as expected. By 2015-2016 the deficit had been reduced by half compared to 2010 and government debt had fallen.

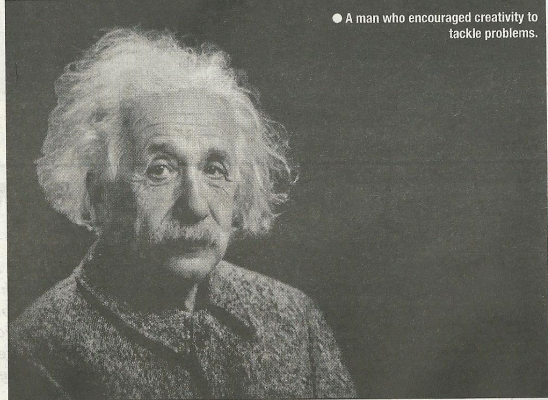
This has involved reductions in local government funding and for us here in West Devon the budget gap is predicted to get wider; from £900,000 to £3.4-million in the next five years.

The difficult scenario outlined above explains why there are further damaging cuts to many of our local charities and voluntary organisations. Although these financial cuts may appear to be the best fix for the time being, the social and relationship costs are going to be difficult to measure and hard to fix.

There are many other unintended consequences and unpredictable costs related to these cuts. There is also much uncertainty, worry, anxiety, fear and anger – all natural and instinctive human reactions.

Perhaps we could

think of more proactive responses to ensure these cuts don't have lasting negative impacts on our children, family and society. Let us start thinking differently. As Albert Einstein said: "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Innovative and creative thinking and planning must be considered to maximise the benefit with minimum loss of services. While attempting to do that let us allow ourselves to be inspired by this piece of advice from St. Paul: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).



● A man who encouraged creativity to tackle problems.