



Chichester Liberal Democrats
Chichester District Council 2023



A FAIR DEAL for a BRIGHTER FUTURE



Introduction

Chichester Local Liberal Democrats are ambitious for your District.

The Chichester Liberal Democrats are proud to offer the public a talented and representative slate of candidates.

Our plans are focused on protecting the natural environment and tackling climate change; regenerating the economy and high streets; supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis; improving health provision and exercising influence over the planning system.

The Conservative run Council has failed to tackle the issues that are at the forefront of local residents' minds. For too long the district has suffered from a lack of investment in growing businesses, public services and infrastructure.

As the largest opposition party in the hung District Council, we have shown real leadership by securing Council commitments on the environment, regeneration, biodiversity and community support. By finally taking control of the District Council, we can and will achieve considerably more. Our influence will be local, regional and national, as we provide a strong voice for our residents.

The Liberal Democrats will:

- Create a council that works with the community
- Hold Council meetings in public by default
- Review meeting times to support working residents and Councillors and reconsider evening meetings for 2024/25 onwards
- Build stronger relations with business, education, culture and community groups
- Prioritise the environment, biodiversity and water quality
- Develop visionary housing solutions
- Support our residents through the cost-of-living crisis
- Use every tool at our disposal to push for a resolution to GP, hospital, dentistry and ambulance delays
- Provide real leadership locally, regionally and nationally

Conservative Government policy and the Cost-of-Living crisis has put huge pressures on the District Council's finances. A Liberal Democrat Council will stabilise Council finances and undertake a comprehensive review of all budgets to refocus efforts on crucial community priorities.

"We must stabilise Council finances and be financially prudent whilst prioritising investment in infrastructure to create genuinely sustainable economic growth, protect the landscape and empower our communities."



A FAIR DEAL for a BRIGHTER FUTURE



Cost of Living

The Cost-of-Living crisis is having a significant impact on our residents and businesses. It is paramount that the Council keeps up support for our residents and increases it as necessary for the most vulnerable.

We will:

- Extend the “Supporting You” initiative, as required, to ensure those in most need are provided with the best advice and signposted to financial and social support services
- Recognise and support communities providing support and resources
- Work collaboratively with Community Groups providing outreach support on heating, food and advice services
- Provide additional support to local businesses to ensure they grow and thrive
- Provide advice on cost of energy bills with signposting to grants

Climate Change and the Environment

We need urgent action to tackle climate change and address the damage being done to the environment and our natural landscape.

A Liberal Democrat Council will make the environment the top priority with the Environment leadership team ensuring all aspects of Council activity give it the prominence that it requires.

We will:

- Work with environmental organisations to protect and promote biodiversity and safeguard the countryside
- Ramp up the pressure for action from Southern Water and the Environment Agency to tackle pollution in our rivers and harbours
- Seek to expand Wildlife Corridors by working with landowners, residents and, where necessary, developers
- Extend the influence of Environment Strategy Unit to cut across all aspects of Council policy and programs
- Promote wetland and grassland habitat creation
- Promote Solar and renewable energy across Council buildings
- Expand Community green spaces for allotments, community orchards and recreation
- Work proactively with the farming community to promote biodiversity and reduce the use of nitrates and chemicals on farm land
- Develop policy on water neutrality and protect local chalk streams





Housing & Communities

The public expect the delivery of the right type of housing away from environmentally sensitive areas. We also recognise the value residents place on communities and the crucial role services play in making and keeping them vibrant.

We will:

- Use any new powers introduced by the Government to assess the implications for environmental protection, landscape and infrastructure delivery policies in the Draft Local Plan
- Work with West Sussex County Council to deal with overly-congested roads
- Deliver some genuinely affordable housing for local people
- Promote low carbon developments, energy efficiency and put the protection of biodiversity at the heart of developments
- Implement Design Codes to improve building design and 'placemaking'
- Ensure major new developments are properly master-planned, including in relation to developments being delivered on other sites

Infrastructure and Regeneration

For a relatively affluent part of the country, the state of public infrastructure is a disgrace.

Recognising that the solution to these issues requires work and investment from the County Council and national government, we will:

- Strongly support plans for improved cycling and green walking routes including on the Manhood, 'Chemroute' (Chichester to Emsworth), and to and within the South Downs National Park as well as within commuting areas
- Ensure that Midhurst is given the support it needs to recover
- Focus on high street regeneration across the district
- Support the growth of the evening and night-time economy in Chichester to help local finances and make the city more attractive to the young residents and graduates we so need to retain
- Relook at the Chichester 'Southern Gateway' project, end the veil of secrecy around it and look to take opportunities for wider, cross-city regeneration
- Re-evaluate options for an integrated Chichester Transport Hub with West Sussex County Council, Network Rail and Stagecoach
- Work with partner Councils on "infrastructure first" planning reforms
- Enforce environmental standards & developer commitments
- Bring forward a program of infrastructure projects that supports communities
- Take positive steps in collaboration with West Sussex County Council to reduce traffic congestion





Health and Wellbeing

Residents prioritise health concerns above almost all else. We must ensure our residents' concerns are met. Our priorities are to ensure health and well-being services are delivered, including to those most in need.

We will:

- Commit to a strong “Social Prescribing” service, looking to enhance support for younger residents. (Social prescribing is when health professionals refer patients for specific support in the community, in order to improve their health and wellbeing, rather than treat with drugs.)
- Work with Regional Health bodies to prioritise GP and dentistry investment and minimise ambulance wait times
- Support rural bus services and promote community bus services
- Make new green foot and cycle routes a reality on and between new developments
- Strengthen outreach services into rural communities
- Promote and encourage development of sporting facilities
- Provide active support and grants to community well-being services
- Use officers of the Council to leverage national grants for energy-efficiency schemes to greatly increase take-up by private residents and Community buildings

COVID and the Cost of Living Crisis, further exacerbated by damaging Government policies have put Councils budgets in a challenging position. Income from car parks is considerably reduced since COVID and we need a fresh approach to work with local partners to boost the local economy and sources of revenue for the Council.

“Liberal Democrats will undertake a comprehensive review of all budgets. We pledge to be financially prudent whilst prioritising investment in green economic growth, protecting the landscape and empowering our communities.”

