

# WEST SUSSEX 2017 COUNTY COUNCIL MANIFESTO



West Sussex County Council Liberal Democrats

✓ For Social Care that cares ✓ For a stronger community ✓ For greater job security

VOTE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ON THURSDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> MAY

## A message from our leader on the County Council:

### CONSERVATIVES ARE TAKING WEST SUSSEX FOR GRANTED

The Conservatives have run West Sussex for years, but more and more people are now questioning whether they really put local people first.

You don't have to look very far to see just how the Tories are getting more and more out of touch with local people.

Whether it's closing our local rubbish tips two days a week and introducing a "Tip Tax", failing to secure from government for our schools even the average amount paid to schools across England, leading to poorer exam results, reducing elderly social care provision over the last 6 years, or wasting money on hiring and firing so many chief officers, and paying senior Tory councillors more of your money, the Conservatives just haven't got their priorities right.

The future is even bleaker, with £500m of painful Tory government NHS cuts across Sussex in the next 5 years, which will impact on GP, Hospital and Mental Health services that we all use, coupled with the chronic underfunding of Care for the Elderly. Our roads are deteriorating, our rail service is a shambles, and our young people cannot afford rocketing housing costs.

### WHO WILL STAND UP FOR WHAT MATTERS TO LOCAL PEOPLE

The Liberal Democrats are the effective opposition at County Hall. UKIP have made no impact whatever, and Labour only come from Crawley.

The Lib Dems are holding the Conservatives to account at every level, and putting our alternatives forward; challenging poor and expensive decisions, and pledged to reverse many of them such as the Tip Tax.

Please make the difference by getting more local Liberal Democrat County Councillors elected to FIGHT FOR YOU and not against your best interests.

Dr James Walsh

Liberal Democrat Group leader at WSCC

## ➤ Tackling Job Insecurity

- Zero-hours contracts and agency work are diluting the stability of paid employment, it impacting the livelihood of many resident, their mental health and families.
- Whilst it is only the government that can pass legislation, Liberal Democrats refuse to sit on our hands whilst this continues to affect residents.
- We shall enter into discussions with trade unions and local business representatives, associations and chambers of commerce to propose Voluntary Collective Bargaining Agreements.
- We intend to phase out zero-hours contracts, moving towards permanent contracts, and ensuring agency workers are hired full time after a set period of employment.
- We shall support West Sussex farmers by working with local businesses and producers to support local Fair Trade.
- Customers should be provided with clear labelling on UK produced food and other products bought in our shops, indicating that the producer has been paid a fair price.
- We shall encourage local employability initiatives such as ensuring local businesses seek local residents for apprenticeships first.
- We shall undertake an urgent investigation into County wide broadband signal problems which continue to plague residents and businesses.
- We shall work closely with local businesses, NGO's and government bodies to tackle potential problems caused by Brexit.
- We shall forge better relationships with Job Centre's to encourage residents to seek their support in job interview training, CV building etc.

## ➤ **Supporting Mental Health**

- By working in partnership with charities and medical experts, educating residents on different types of mental health issues, and providing services at a local level to deal with them, a Liberal Democrat Council will ensure that we begin to fight this silent problem.
- Particular focus is to be made towards young people, whether in school or college, to ensure that mental health problems are spotted and dealt with swiftly. Waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) must be dramatically shortened.

## ➤ **Reforming Health & Social Care**

- We shall better integrate Social Care with the NHS to ensure seamless community and hospital care especially for our ageing population, and be more responsive to individual and family needs.
- We will strive to maintain services to a high level of standard for public use, and if necessary raise council tax levels.
- We shall campaign for greater sustainability for Health & Social Care through a general taxation rise.
- We shall work with local hospital authorities and CCG's to adopt a discretionary process whereby those attending hospital for long periods of time in one day can be exempt from hospital parking charges.
- In the long term, we shall aim to encourage NHS Trusts to increase car park capacity by looking into multi-storey builds.

## ➤ Housing

- We shall work with District & Borough councils to ensure that lower cost homes to buy and rent are available for our younger people.
- We shall campaign for better quality housing stock to ensure value for money for buyers without reductions to indoor space.
- We shall consider allowing developers to create high rise flats in densely populated towns such as Crawley.

## ➤ Culture & Art

- We will support greater use of public libraries and museums to facilitate historical and cultural learning, as well as widening educational opportunities, including use of new technologies.
- We will engage in a series of public talks where the general public can attend talks specifically dedicated to discussing topical issues with experts.
- We will work in partnership with the Arts Council and charities to increase opportunities in the Arts for everyone.

## ➤ Environment

- We will continue to oppose any Fracking proposals in West Sussex.
- We will re-open Civic Amenity tips to a full 7 days a week schedule and remove the DIY waste fee.
- We will support applications and policies for more wind turbines and solar farms, reducing our carbon footprint.
- We shall push for increased sustainability requirements for all new builds.
- We shall work with Parish and District Councils to include environmental policies in Neighbourhood Plans.
- We shall improve cycling infrastructure in the County – both in towns and rural areas, making cycling more attractive and safer for all.
- We shall make much greater investment in improving rural routes such as the Downs Link which are currently very poorly maintained for both walking and cycling.
- We shall improve flood mitigation strategies including increases in tree planting and more efficient drainage systems.
- We shall campaign to obtain funding for homes affected by flooding.

## ➤ Education

- We shall continue to demand a fair Education grant from the Government to make up the £40million annual shortfall in West Sussex.
- We shall oppose the introduction of Grammar schools.
- We will reduce Primary School class sizes to 30 or below.
- We will aim to rapidly improve Key Stage 2 results in reading, writing and maths, which are currently way below the national average.
- We will introduce a County-wide campaign to improve sporting activities and provide healthy eating information in schools in line with the aims of the London Olympics legacy.
- We shall ensure school grounds are not sold off for development.
- We will push for more sports clubs to engage with deprived communities and help set up activities in youth centres.
- We will promote physical exercise and sporting activities amongst students to ensure it is seen as enjoyable and leads to life-long participation.

## ➤ Transport

- We shall continue to campaign for the government to terminate Southern Rail's franchise.
- We will work with the travel companies to investigate proposals for more flexible season tickets.
- We maintain that train and infrastructure upgrades are a priority before any further changes.
- We shall ensure that long overdue A27 improvements at Chichester, Arundel and Worthing/Lancing serve the local as well as the regional need, have proper environmental protections, lessening damage to rural towns such as Storrington.
- We will look into supporting the development of new routes to and from smaller settlements; such as the restoration of the Adur Valley line from Horsham to Shoreham.
- We plan to expand bus services in the County by bidding for powers such as available in metropolitan areas whereby the Council would become responsible for necessary bus service networks in the County, and then invite bus companies to bid to provide the actual bus services on the various timetables agreed by the Council.

## ➤ **Accountability**

- We support unitary council proposals to replace the County Council and District Councils with either one or two Unitary Councils to help improve accountability, efficiency, and save money.
- We oppose emerging plans for a costly elected Mayor with huge power over a combined Sussex, Surrey and Kent region.
- We support the devolution of more powers to Local Government, at all levels, along with a fairer funding system.
- We will ensure that our integrated Fire and Rescue Service is not taken over by the overstretched Police & Crime Commissioner, and we will press to re-open Chichester Crown and Magistrates' Courts to better serve local justice.
- A Liberal Democrat Council will work with Information Technology services to ensure that most of the Council's public discussions are broadcast live on the Council website, and that podcasts are available for those who wish to view later.
- Liberal Democrats are worried by the Human Rights implications of the PREVENT strategy and would seek to ensure that all Council obligations are reviewed and clarified.