

FOCUS

FROM YOUR NEW FOREST LOCAL LIB DEM TEAM



THE NEW FOREST CANNOT AFFORD THE TORIES ANY MORE

FOUR YEARS OF FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT ADDS UP TO A COMPLETE LOSS OF DIRECTION

- Overspent £1.2m on multi coloured beach huts in Milford
- Abandoned the New Forest Visitor Centre, making staff redundant
- Dismantled the in-house Tourism Service
- Highest rate of tax in any Borough or Council in Hampshire
- Gives 50% tax discount to second home owners
- Provides no subsidies for local bus services
- Project Eling - £300,000 over budget and two years late
- Withdrew financial support for Night Stop homeless charity
- Spends less on art & culture than any other similar size UK Council
- Tried to push costs of CCTV onto Parish & Town Councils
- Failed to declare Eling Wharf one of the most polluted areas of Southern England and continued to allow toxic materials to leach into water course
- Not one Conservative Councillor has used the 'call in' process to review and scrutinise decision making of the Council Cabinet.
- Inadequate traffic management and parking enforcement services
- Utterly dismal recycling record
- Pushing Recreation Centres out to private management
- No overarching strategic District development plan, allowing for unwanted infill in village green spaces
- Staff redundancies leading to limited experience in planning and long delays in delivery
- Deeply fractious relationships with Hampshire County Council and other local Councils over reorganisation leading to huge expense and waste.
- Abject failure to tackle air quality control
- One of the worst housing records in the UK with nearly 5,000 people on the housing list
- Sold a central car park in Hythe for £2m to cover shortfalls elsewhere with no benefit to the town whatsoever
- Over 80% of Conservative Councillors have never spoken, not even once, in a Full Council meeting.



David Harrison (left) Leader of the Liberal Democrat Opposition on New Forest District Council writes:

“This is no joke. I believe most people would be genuinely shocked by the scale of financial mismanagement by the New Forest Conservatives over the last four years. And it’s local taxpayers’ money. Your money. A lot of the most costly errors aren’t the sort of thing that the Auditors pick up and don’t really show up in accounts.

“For example, the Tories spent over £1m on consultants about reorganising local government. These plans came to nothing. It was an almost criminal waste of money and tied up key officers for months.

“Project management is another example. Almost nothing the Tory ruling clique has undertaken has either run to plan, on budget or on time. The most extreme example is a decision to replace a row of beach huts in Milford-on-Sea which ended up costing £1.25 million more than it needed to

“Turn over this leaflet to see how we can begin to change our area.

“You have a chance to change the Council administration on the 2nd May. Please lend us your vote to make that difference.”

Working hard all year round

Our 12 pledges to you

1. Push for a return to local community policing

We think that the cuts to the police force have gone too far. Reduced numbers of police officers have led to more crime, anti-social behaviour, lower detection rate and prosecutions. We will push for more resources to make our communities safer.

2. Freeze Council Tax.

Residents have been hit by above inflation Council Tax bills for too long. We intend to follow the example of the Liberal Democrat run Eastleigh Borough Council and to freeze Council Tax to an inflation only increase in the first year and seek to do the same in following years.

3. Reduce the number of Councillors by about 25%.

The Conservatives have failed to grasp opportunities to slim down Councillor numbers in line with reductions in officers. In fact, they have increased the size of their Cabinet and paid even more in Councillor allowances.

4. Provide discounted bus travel for younger people.

We think it is unfair that older people benefit from free bus travel whilst young people, who often have to travel more, especially commuting to work, fully fund the high cost of bus travel. We plan to work with a local bus company to introduce a scheme that will help younger people.

5. Provide employment via a Community Interest Company.

We would like to provide local jobs and help improve the environment by means of establishing a company that repairs broken items.

6. Start building Council housing and support the provision of affordable homes to rent or buy as well as tackling the issue of homelessness in the New Forest.

The Conservative record on provision of affordable homes to rent or buy is shockingly bad. They have sold off half the council housing stock and never replaced it.

Liberal Democrats
DEMAND BETTER

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Promoted by Roger Stephens of behalf of New Forest Liberal Democrats, all at Melcombe, Lime Kiln Lane, Holbury, SO45 2HH

7. Oppose the development of a port at Dibden Bay.

Whilst we celebrate the success of Southampton docks and the economic benefits it brings, we are fiercely opposed to expansion of port operations at Dibden Bay and all the environmental issues that go along with it.

8. Provide more safe, off-road, cycle routes.

We propose to work with other organisations with the aim of providing many more cycle routes around the district and a better joined-up approach to cycling within the New Forest National park.

9. Initiate policies that improve mental and physical well being for local residents.

Conservative cuts to public expenditure are often a false economy when it comes to public health. Failing to prevent illness almost always costs society much more, longer term. A Liberal Democrat council will be focused on policies and practice that help prevent people from becoming sick.

10. Provide a new country park.

We don't know for sure if this can be achieved within the next 4 year term, but we are going to try! We very much like the model of Lepe Beach country park which provides an excellent facility for thousands of visitors, whilst taking pressure off the more sensitive sites in the New Forest.

11. Take direct action to improve the poor air quality in some parts of the New Forest.

We totally reject the "business as usual" approach adopted by the failing Conservative administration. We have tangible plans for action that will help tackle the problem.

12. Work relentlessly to improve waste minimisation, plastic pollution and improve the abysmal recycling record of the Conservatives running the District Council.

You would think that the New Forest should have one of the best records for recycling in the country. In fact, it has one of the worst - shameful given our National Park status.



Dear Elector

I am writing to you, not to ask for money, or help, but just a little time to think about how our local area is governed.

I have been involved in local government for over a quarter of a century. I can confidently say that the current Conservative administration in charge of New Forest District Council is by far the worst I have ever experienced.

It is time for a change. Many of the things I have witnessed I have laid out for you, the taxpayer, overleaf.

I am also sharing with you 12 specific plans that the Liberal Democrats have for improving our way of life here in the New Forest. We have thought hard about how we could be better at governing, fairer and greener.

We have some really excellent candidates lined up, with a good mix of skills, business experience and talent. My hope is that they will all be elected and have the chance to be champions for the communities they represent.

The choice is yours. I would simply ask you to think about how things could be positively better with Liberal Democrats in charge or at least providing a challenging opposition to what is a near Conservative monopoly at every level of government here in Hampshire.

The one thing you can be sure of is that by electing a Liberal Democrat Councillor, you will have somebody who is interested in the same sort of issues that you are, prepared to engage and keep you informed.

Thank you

David Harrison

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Leader, Liberal Democrat Opposition, NFDC