

DELIVERING OPPORTUNITY

for the entire New Forest **NFDC Elections: Thursday 4th May 2023**

Revitalising our Village & Town Centres



✔ The way we use our Village and Town Centres inevitably changes over time, and the rise in online sales, which last year accounted for over 25% of all UK retail sales, has undoubtedly had a significant impact. But change does not mean that our Village and Town Centres cannot remain vibrant places that act as a heart to our local communities. There are opportunities, for example, the growth in home and hybrid working has increased weekday footfall and a greater awareness of 'food mile' has increased demand for locally sourced food. A Conservative Council will work with local residents and businesses, as we are doing on The Waterside, to develop a vision for our individual Village and Town Centres across the District and then bring together partners, private and public, to deliver the shared vision and maximise the opportunity for our Villages and Towns.

Protecting the open Forest & providing recreation



✔ With the open Forest at its heart, the District has a wealth of opportunity for outdoor recreation, to enjoy the unique and precious natural environment it offers. In order to protect the wildlife and habitat of the internationally designated open New Forest, some recreational activities such as barbecues, are not allowed. Your Conservative District Council has worked with partners, including the National Park Authority, Verderers and Forestry England to bring forward proposals to introduce Public Space Protection Orders, to help ensure that the open Forest is enjoyed in a responsible way. However, to guarantee that residents of the New Forest have the opportunity to enjoy a range of outdoor recreational activities, within the next four years a Conservative-run Council will develop and take forward plans to establish a new Country Park within the District. This could include provision of outdoor barbecue areas and off-track cycling opportunities in a designated area where restrictions do not apply.

Caring for the environment

✔ Having declared a Climate & Nature Emergency, your Conservative-led Council has been working hard to reduce emissions and the Council's environmental impact, for example, by getting all its electricity from sustainable sources and installing solar panels. Additionally, we've been helping residents to make positive environmental choices through the expansion of our electric vehicle charging points and working to increase the types of materials that can be recycled at the kerbside from 2025, including pots, tubs and trays.

Staying and feeling safe

✔ Over the last four years Conservative-run New Forest District Council has invested in the 24 hour monitored CCTV system, renewing all cameras and upgrading the Council's monitoring centre. Our recent resident's survey found that 96% of respondents feel 'safe' or 'very safe' in their local area during the day. We know that there are some areas where residents feel less safe, especially at night, and that's why we will increase CCTV coverage over the next four years, including extending the system to additional towns and larger villages.

Well paid jobs, employment & skills



✔ Despite the challenges faced by local employers over the last four years, unemployment levels within the District, currently at 2%, remain below the Hampshire average at 2.3% and well below the national average of 3.7%. However, average in-work annual incomes within the District are £1,600 less than the national average and £4,100 less than the Hampshire average. Over the next four years we will work with local employers, schools, colleges, and further higher education providers to ensure that lower paid residents can access the skills and training they need to increase their earning potential. We will work with partners and businesses to ensure these opportunities are available and accessible to those who are already working long hours to support themselves and their families, for example, through promoting in-work training opportunities.

Affordable homes to buy or rent



✔ By 2026, NFDC will have increased the number of Council homes to 5,176. However, over the next four years a Conservative-run Council will work with developers to ensure that over 100 new homes are made available either as 'first homes', where they are sold at a discount of at least 30% of market value and for less than £250,000 or as part of a shared equity scheme, where buyers have an opportunity to buy part of a home and pay rent on the remainder. The proportion owned can then increase over time. We will work to make the opportunity to own a home available to more of our residents.

Improving vital frontline services

✔ At a time when many other local authorities are looking to make cuts to frontline services in order to try and balance their books, because of the sound financial management of our Conservative-run Council, NFDC is continuing to invest in key services. An example of this our planned £7million new depot at Hardley, to ensure that they remain financially sustainable in the long-term. If re-elected in May, a Conservative Council will continue to spend the share of your Council Tax it receives, which is less than £3.73 per week for 2023/24 for a band D household, carefully and on the services that matter most to you.

Helping in difficult times

✔ Just as our Conservative-led Council supported residents throughout the pandemic, delivering help to vulnerable individuals and families, so too will we continue to do all that we can to help those residents most in need due to the current cost of living crisis. From early support to residents that may be at risk of homelessness, grants to community groups providing warm spaces, funding to organisations offering advice and support such as New Forest Disability, to administering our Household Support Fund which provides direct short-term support to vulnerable households in most need, we will work together with partners to help residents through difficult times.

Solent Freeport, an opportunity for the future



✔ In December last year the Government announced that it had given final approval for the Solent Freeport. The Freeport is predicted to directly deliver over 16,000 new high-quality jobs and generate more than £1.3billion of private sector investment. With over 70% of Solent Freeport located on the New Forest Waterside, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to boost the local economy and provide better paid jobs for local residents and their families. With £25million of up-front funding direct from Government and nearly £500million in tax revenue, which without the Freeport would have been allocated to Government, being retained locally over the next 25 years, a Conservative Council will work with partners to ensure the infrastructure, including major improvements to the A326, are put in place. Your Conservative-run Council is already working with local colleges, site owners and potential employers to ensure that training opportunities are available and accessible to local people, so that they can benefit from the new high-quality jobs the Freeport will bring.

Our home, the beautiful & vibrant NEW FOREST: "Old Yet Ever New"



For more information, including a link to news and our local manifesto, please go to: NewForestConservatives.org.uk

Don't forget! You will need **Voter ID** to cast your ballot on the 4th May, don't get to take it with you to your local polling station.

Want to become a postal or proxy voter? It's simple! Go to newforest.gov.uk/votebypost or call NFDC Democratic Services on **023 8028 5445** to arrange a postal or proxy vote.