Manfesto 2017
Getting our county back on track

www.gloslibdems.org.uk
Getting our county back on track
after 12 years of Conservative control

The Gloucestershire Liberal Democrats’
manifesto for the 2017 County Council election

The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.

We believe in giving everyone a fair start so that people can build on their own lives and follow their dreams.

We believe in having an NHS and Social Care service which meets everyone’s physical and mental health needs.

We believe in devolving power to the lowest possible level because local communities know their area best and we want to cut out the wall of bureaucracy which stops things being done.
Dear Gloucestershire resident

Our county is a great place to live and work. I’m proud to have made it my home 30 years ago.

However, I know that over the last 12 years we have all been badly let down by the Conservative run County Council.

We have asked residents all over our county how they think the council has been doing and what the priorities should be. The response has been loud and clear.

People feel that the council has become remote. They think that the state of the roads and pavements is a disgrace. They are also very worried about the state of the local NHS and care service. Meanwhile, the Conservatives have lavished millions on their unwanted massive incinerator and paid expensive lawyers hundreds of thousands of pounds to keep their contract secret with the private company building the monstrosity.

Liberal Democrat councillors and campaigners have worked with residents to oppose these policies but again and again the Conservatives have ignored local people and have run out of steam after 12 years in power.

We are determined to change this. Liberal Democrats will put residents first and have 3 key priorities:

1. Taking back control of our roads so they’re fixed properly whilst protecting the environment.
2. Boosting Gloucestershire’s economy and making the Council more efficient.
3. Creating safer, stronger and healthier communities.

These are the key messages you will find in this manifesto and we will deliver on them if elected.

Our councillors and candidates bring a range of skills and experience, from small business owners, to working mums and retired College heads. You can find out more about your local candidates at: www.gloslibdems.org.uk.

If you want change on May 4th and a Council focused on listening and delivering on local priorities, vote for the Liberal Democrats.

County Councillor Paul Hodgkinson
Leader, Gloucestershire Liberal Democrats
The Conservatives have run Gloucestershire County Council for the last twelve years. This is their record of failure....

**Roads and Pavements**
You only have to look at the state of our highways to see the potholes and cracked footways. The private contractor which Tory bosses gave the county’s roads contract to took 2.5 years just to start hitting the targets they were set. They want to rubber stamp an extension to this contract — we say no.

**Buses**
Every year bus services have been cut. Some villages now have no public transport at all, leaving those without cars cut off and stranded. At the same time they spent half a million pounds on designing a new bus lane in Cheltenham which no one wanted and which has been abandoned.

**Environment**
Under the Tories recycling rates have actually fallen and for the last 4 years they have missed the targets they set themselves to recycle more than 50% of the county’s waste. They have also forced through an unpopular and huge incinerator near Gloucester and Stroud which is costing the taxpayer many millions of pounds.

**Vulnerable residents**
The Conservatives have cut the amount of money going into Social Services at a time when the demand for care has exploded. They also cut cash going to children and adults with learning disabilities. But they managed to find £1 million on a brand new phone system for the Council.

**Young People**
Gloucestershire used to have its own youth centres and dedicated youth workers. These have been cut to nothing so that young people have had no vital youth clubs and organisations to combat boredom and anti social behaviour.
Three key reasons why Gloucestershire is better off with the Liberal Democrats.

1. We will take back control of our roads so they’re fixed properly and we will protect the environment.

2. We will boost Gloucestershire’s economy and make the council more efficient.

3. We will create safer, stronger and healthier communities.

We believe in protecting and enhancing the environment. The Conservatives have wasted your money on a massive incinerator and failed to sort out our County’s roads.

We believe in Gloucestershire. We want a cost effective council that is the driving force for a strong economy in our beautiful county.

We believe in public services. The NHS under a Conservative government is in crisis. Locally, the Conservatives have axed valued community services.

And most importantly we believe in devolving power to the lowest possible level because local communities know their area best and we want to cut out the wall of bureaucracy which stops things being done.
1. **We will fix the roads by taking back control of them and we will protect the environment**

We believe in protecting and enhancing the environment. The Conservatives have wasted your money on a massive incinerator and failed to sort out our County’s roads.

**AND WE WILL:**

- Bring all or part of road maintenance back in house and invest in additional repairs to our roads and pavements, repairing the damage left after twelve years of neglect. We will release surplus funds from the council’s reserves to fix more potholes on our county’s roads.

- Create a revenue budget specifically for the maintenance of pavements and other footways across the county.

- Devolve the budgets, setting of priorities and administration of highway maintenance to those districts and communities who wish to take control of their own highway maintenance.

- Ensure a fairer share of the pay and display revenue that is collected in a particular district goes back to that district for road and pavement repairs.

- Continue to provide free residents’ parking permits for all Vehicle Excise Duty Band A electric vehicles for the life of the new council.

- Increase recycling rates by working with and supporting district councils.

- Oppose fracking extraction in Gloucestershire and support those safe, clean alternatives that provide low carbon energy.

- Oppose the culling of badgers in any area of the county and encourage tenant farmers on council owned land not to use snares as a form of pest control.

- Increase the network of dedicated cycle routes and improve existing ones. Provide more cycle parking facilities and introduce cycle hire pick up points around the county.

- Plant and properly maintain our highway trees across the county to improve Gloucestershire’s biodiversity and help reduce carbon dioxide levels.
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1. Fixing the roads

- Actively maintain and enhance the existing network of public footpaths and bridleways in the countryside and towns - some of which have become impossible to use.

- Improve public transport by protecting the bus services budget for the life of the new council and work with districts to encourage greater use and increase passenger numbers.

- Maintain flood alleviation schemes in those areas close to homes that are at risk of flooding.

- Move the County Council's vehicle fleet away from environmentally damaging diesels by substituting electric cars and vans.
2. We will boost Gloucestershire’s economy and make the council more efficient

We believe in Gloucestershire. We want a cost effective council that is the driving force for a strong economy in our beautiful county.

AND WE WILL:

• Ensure the Conservative Government keeps to its commitment of solving the A417 Air Balloon Missing Link problem.

• Campaign for M5 Junction 10 improvements to allow both north and south access.

• Progress with completing the Gloucester South West bypass by removing the bottleneck at St Ann’s Way Junction.

• Raise additional revenue through more solar panels on County Council buildings.

• Support the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership and establish the role of the County Council in terms of Gloucestershire’s economic development and regeneration.

• Promote and market Gloucestershire’s unique identity across the UK and internationally by working with organisations such as Marketing Gloucester and other outside bodies such as the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association Ltd.

• Keep pace with Gloucestershire’s growing population by working towards introducing more trains, more stations and better facilities for commuters.

• Continue to recognise that Gloucestershire Airport is good for jobs and support its continued contribution to the county’s economy.

• Ensure all parts of the county not yet covered by faster broadband receive a faster service.

• Work with mobile phone companies and local communities to address mobile phone ‘not spots’ in our county.

• Support ‘The Growth Hub” in proactively helping businesses across Gloucestershire.
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3. We will create safer, stronger and healthier communities

We believe in public services. The NHS under a Conservative government is in crisis. Locally, the Conservatives have axed valued community services.

AND WE WILL:

• Work towards further integration of health and social care services making sure patients get the joined-up services they need.
• Champion children and young people’s mental health by investing in services to support them.
• Lobby the Government to provide more money for the NHS to stop cuts to our local hospitals and campaign to improve ambulance response times.
• Use good practice from other councils to create new measures to tackle loneliness and isolation amongst older people.
• Ensure a higher percentage of older people receive a full re-assessment of their social care needs within 12 months.
• Maintain a County Council Fire and Rescue Service and support the fire prevention and social care work that they do.
• Proactively reduce the number of accidents on our county roads by encouraging close working between the Road Safety Partnership and Gloucestershire Police.
• Encourage the introduction of new 20 mph zones in residential streets and villages where there is local community support.
• Work better with Gloucestershire primary, secondary and special needs schools to ensure there are enough of the right spaces to meet local need.
• Boost eligible take up of free school meals as figures show in January 2016 the number of pupils known to be eligible for and claiming FSM decreased by 300 compared to January 2015.
• Keeping our county library services available for all in the community.
• Ensure there are no further cuts to Trading Standards following a massive reduction of nearly 60% since 2010/2011.
This manifesto is more than just hopes and ideals. It is a blueprint to getting our county back on track after 12 years of Conservative control.

We want the whole of Gloucestershire to move forward with pride and confidence. We’ve seen the impact of Conservative Government cuts making our financial circumstances difficult, our roads neglected, our Health Service in crisis and our economy held back by poor public transport. Enough is enough.

Gloucestershire will not be held back — and under Liberal Democrat leadership after May’s election, the county will go from strength to strength to being back on the right track.