

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

### IoW Lib Dems announce first tranche of local election candidates

Isle of Wight Liberal Democrats have announced the first tranche of approved candidates standing for the party for election to Isle of Wight Council.

Local party chair, Nick Stuart, says:

"Isle of Wight Council has been run by the Conservatives for the last four years. We've seen countless cuts in local services, including those for vulnerable people.

"The continuing – and very expensive – Floating Bridge saga has become shorthand for Conservative incompetence in tackling difficult issues.

"The controversial decision to see the fire service combined with Hampshire worries residents that our unique Island identity is being eroded.

"They've failed to deliver on the much promised Island Deal, meaning we suffer even more from the Conservative government's underfunding of local councils along with a soaring council tax.

"Not only will Liberal Democrat candidates will be challenging the Conservatives on their poor record, we will putting forward positive plans for the Island with priorities focused on jobs, the environment, and community. These are the themes that our existing councillors have put forward as budget amendments every year."

#### Notes:

Further tranches of candidates will be announced in due course.

Lib Dems are urging media to highlight postal voting for those concerned about voting in person due to Covid. Electoral Services can be contacted by email to [electoral.services@iow.gov.uk](mailto:electoral.services@iow.gov.uk) or by phone 01983 823380. Completed and signed forms should be returned to: Electoral Services, County Hall, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1UD.

#### Candidates:

Andrew Garratt – Parkhurst and Hunnyhill

Andrew is a maths and science tutor, with a previous career in public relations. He is the sitting councillor for Parkhurst. He has consistently lobbied the Ministry of Justice for improvements on the unadopted prison estate roads. He also carried out extensive residents' consultation on the council's £6 million St Mary's junction scheme. He believes the council



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should radically change how it engages with the public, so that residents get a real influence on decision making.

Bob Packham – East Cowes

A former engineer and long term resident of East Cowes he serves on the East Cowes Town Council. He has championed road safety from potholes to the pedestrian crossing at Osborne House. The key issues of regeneration of rotting buildings are seen in East Cowes and around the Island while the floating bridge farce is a continuing stain on Isle of Wight Council competence and reputation.



Tracy Mikich – Ryde South East

Tracy has worked in publishing, charity PR, animal welfare including Battersea Dogs Home, and for the last 15 years in award winning tourism and hospitality. She has a keen interest in children with special education needs (SEN) and raising the aspirations of young islanders.



Malcolm Ross – Haylands and Swanmore

Ryde born and Haylands resident for almost 30 years, he has served previously as an IW Councillor and is currently on Ryde Town Council and is a former Mayor. As a long-standing supporter of Ryde Carnival and the Ryde Arts Festival and founder member of CycleWight, he has a keen interest in community culture so badly missed in the last year. While for the Island, sustainable transport and green tourism are major issues.



Mark Voller – Sandown South

During a 30-year police career, he was recently involved in the planning and regulation of key local events including music festivals. He has served the community as a Magistrate and wants landscapes protected, town centres safer, and people centred. Enjoying live arts, he is addicted to pub quizzes.



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John Graney – Brading and St Helens

John Graney is a retired Legal Adviser and previously an officer in the Royal Navy. He believes that the Isle of Wight is a great place to live but could be better. What we have also needs to be protected. Central Government must be made to understand that we do actually live on an island! Issues of employment, transport, the environment, funding council services and housing (including the way that second homes distort the market), need to be seen in light of that.



Bob Blezzard – Newport West

Bob worked in local government throughout his career, before taking early retirement to become becoming a full-time carer for his elderly and disabled father. He subsequently worked as clerk to a number of local councils, including in 2019 being acting clerk to Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council. He is passionate about the need to provide youth services for our young people now the IW Council no longer makes any meaningful provision.



Nick Stuart – Brighstone, Calbourne and Shalfleet

Nick Stuart is a sports coach, former teacher and previously a Civil Service Science & Innovation specialist with experience in forensic accounting. His main concerns are the Environment from planning to climate change, supporting jobs for Islanders, and real engagement by the Council with the public, with Parish, Community and Town Councils and with voluntary bodies.



### Editor's Note:

For more information, copies of pictures etc., please contact the IoW LibDem Press Officer:

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