



FURTHER INFORMATION

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Isle of Wight
Liberal Democrats

2009
Election Manifesto
for
a
‘Sustainable Island’

‘returning power to the people
and communities of the Island’

Promoted for the IOW Liberal Democrats by:
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The Liberal Democrats will:

- ⇒ **Keep Council Tax rises within the rate of inflation**
- ⇒ **freeze councillor allowances for the next four years**
- ⇒ **reduce the number of highly paid senior managers & consultants & protect front line staff**
- ⇒ **encourage all council staff to live on the Island**
- ⇒ **redress the under investment in services to young people**
- ⇒ **develop services prudently increasing front line staff**
- ⇒ **substantially reduce expenditure on PR and spin doctors**
- ⇒ **address as a priority on-going issues such as the traffic flow in Newport and the Island Gateway in Ryde**
- ⇒ **spend the full budget allocated for roads maintenance and improvement**
- ⇒ **retain weekly refuse collection**

Liberal Democrats will provide value for money

Liberal Democrats will bring sanity back into local government on the Island by employing high quality staff at all levels & across all services at the approved rates of pay for the job required.

Liberal Democrats will review the staffing structure & needs of each public service over the next four years & will ensure that services are fully staffed by qualified experienced personnel who are committed to the Island.

Liberal Democrats will limit the annual rise in Council Tax so that it does not exceed the Retail Price Index for each of the four years of the next Council.

We will draw up a list of priorities for additional support and phase in the regeneration of key services that impact directly on the lives of Island residents.

The seven pledges of the Isle of Wight Liberal Democrats to:

1. Keep Council Tax rises within or below inflation figures. Stop waste in County Hall. Freeze Councillor allowances for 4 years. Reduce the number of senior managers & use of consultants, protect front line staff & encourage all council employees to live on the Island
2. Retain our primary schools
3. Develop strategies for stimulating the economy of the Island especially in town centre by maintaining a high quality infrastructure, including roads & by providing incentives for inward investment, helping to improve employment opportunities for Island residents
4. Deliver services that enable older people to maintain independent living and healthy lifestyles
5. Revitalise, not close, centres & services for young people
6. Seek out & exploit government & European funding for the research & development of alternative sources of energy for the Island
7. Retain weekly refuse collections

The seven deadly sins of the Isle of Wight Conservatives who have:

1. Failed to deliver their manifesto promises such as with schools
2. Increased councillors' allowances against the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel
3. Increased the number of senior managers & consultants & paid obscenely high salaries whilst reducing the numbers of front line staff
4. Failed to act prudently by frittering away the surpluses they inherited to place the Council more than £30m in the red over the next three years
5. Failed to maintain their schedule of works on roads & capital schemes - £37m slippage (work scheduled but not undertaken or completed)
6. Operated a closed door policy when taking important decisions, a lack of openness & transparency
7. Reviewed waste collection services & considered the implementation of fortnightly collections

This Manifesto outlines how the Liberal Democrats will address the key issues now facing our Island

1: The Economy of our Island:

By recognising and valuing the diversity of commercial activities on the Island we will:

- ⇒ work closely with Island based business & industry to enhance competitiveness & enable them to thrive by securing the investment support they need
- ⇒ invest in the regeneration of our towns improving local infrastructure, especially roads & removing barriers to successful economic activity
- ⇒ work creatively to support shops & other commercial & social enterprises
- ⇒ re-establish a shared office in Brussels that will once again allow us to access inward investment of a million pounds a year from Europe (Cost circa £25k pa)
- ⇒ support business rate relief in hard pressed areas
- ⇒ encourage the creation of more commercial activity in rural & outlying areas by enabling farmers to diversify the uses of redundant buildings
- ⇒ provide focused support for the Island Tourist Industry & the Economic Partnership
- ⇒ develop eco friendly tourism ventures such as walking, cycling & extreme sports
- ⇒ extend Eco Island to include Dinosaur Island & a Centre for Alternative Energy
- ⇒ actively promote festivals such as music, motocross, Old Gaffers, Cowes Week , power boats & White Air
- ⇒ encourage employment of apprentices wherever possible
- ⇒ foster the development of our boatbuilding industry
- ⇒ support the engagement of a third ferry operator to increase competition
- ⇒ pursue the idea of Government subsidies for ferries

12. Council waste & inefficiency

In four years the Tories have broken nearly all of their manifesto promises and have:

- ⇒ wasted reserves and put the Council heavily into debt (minimum £30m over the next three years)
- ⇒ cut front line staff & increased highly paid directorships & consultancies among people who do not even live on the Island
- ⇒ increased councillors' allowances against the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel
- ⇒ are actively considering the implementation of fortnightly refuse collections
- ⇒ failed to adequately maintain our roads & pavements
- ⇒ Promised to raise standards in schools & failed
- ⇒ promised an "excellent Council" & have not delivered (only 2 star rating)
- ⇒ escalated management costs associated with the PFI scheme for road improvement
- ⇒ failed to invest in capital projects especially roads and the chain ferry
- ⇒ wasted £3m on the Undercliff Enquiry & lost £13m in government funding
- ⇒ spent millions of pounds on services from Westminster City Council, especially on communications and PR
- ⇒ under-invested in services to young people
- ⇒ failed to address the Newport traffic flow problems
- ⇒ Raised the 50p bus fare for young people to £1.00

The Tories have not provided value for money

This adds up to local council tax payers

paying a lot more for a lot less!

- ⇒ reduce intrusive signage
- ⇒ seek a debate on ferry subsidies through the Office of Fair Trading) OFT
- ⇒ seek a debate through the OFT on the Southern Vectis monopoly
- ⇒ extend (wherever possible) 20 mph speed restrictions past schools
- ⇒ seek trunk road status for existing major roads (this will increase government subsidies for Island roads)

10: Housing

Lib Dems will deliver:

- ⇒ council mortgages for first time buyers
- ⇒ housing for local people on land newly brought into local development plans
- ⇒ Compulsory Purchase Orders for derelict and empty properties
- ⇒ support affordable developments for local people using eco friendly technologies including the use of grey water, better insulation & energy efficient design (see climate change)
- ⇒ use Island builders wherever possible to encourage & enable them to meet a substantial part of our housing needs
- ⇒ encourage the use of Council held land for housing purposes

11: Heritage

The Liberal Democrats pledge to protect the built heritage of the Island, so neglected by the Tories. This will be achieved through the possible creation of Community Trusts to manage important public buildings such as:

- ⇒ Ryde Theatre
- ⇒ Shanklin Theatre
- ⇒ The compulsory purchase of Frank James Hospital

2: Education.

The Tories have wasted four years taking us all through an expensive sham of a consultation on Education that takes us back to where we were four years ago & still we have no decision!

Island Lib Dems are committed to:

- ⇒ retaining primary schools
- ⇒ implementing a robust two tier system of education
- ⇒ reducing school class sizes
- ⇒ communities making full use of their local schools
- ⇒ pre-school usage of primary schools
- ⇒ retaining all secondary schools to be managed by the communities they serve

Liberal Democrats pledge to support smaller schools in outlying areas & to provide the positive leadership & funding needed to deliver high quality education services.

We also pledge to extend Island links with Universities to improve access to Higher Education programmes for young people & employees.

3: Climate Change

With a strong tradition of facing up to green issues Lib Dems endorse the ambition to make the Island energy self sufficient & will:

- ⇒ introduce energy self sufficiency systems into all new public buildings & older buildings where possible
- ⇒ offer incentives to innovative businesses to locate their activities on the Island to Research & Develop (R & D) & pilot alternative energy sources
- ⇒ seek out & exploit government & European funding to support Island based R & D of alternative energy sources
- ⇒ encourage small scale private dwelling, business & community initiatives to employ alternative & sustainable energy resources
- ⇒ develop education/visitor centres at green R & D locations
- ⇒ increase levels of re-using, recycling & education
- ⇒ Extend & develop the Island gasification plant processes

4: Crime & disorder

Liberal Democrats will work with the Police Authority to develop strategies that combat the fear of crime & to ensure that crimes against the person & crimes against property are treated with priority. We shall work to ensure that the Island Police are sufficiently well resourced to meet the varied demands placed upon them.

5. Services to older people

With increasing numbers of older people on the Island the Liberal Democrats will support front line services & will:

- ⇒ continue to fund concessionary fares
- ⇒ work with the PCT to improve accessibility to health services
- ⇒ support active lifestyles through our sport & recreation facilities
- ⇒ maintain initiatives that enable independent living
- ⇒ access gov't funding to provide free swimming for older people

6. Services to younger people

Under the Lib Dems the Island Youth Service was one of the best in the country. When in power we will revitalise services to young people to provide them with safe places to meet friends and gain access to a wide range of personally challenging and stimulating opportunities through drop in centres, outreach & detached projects, mobile centres for outlying areas, activity centres & overseas cultural exchanges all with the support of qualified personnel.

For younger children we will deliver a new generation of creative play areas.

The Island Liberal Democrats pledge not to close any existing youth centres.

7: Safety & well being

Lib Dems will:

- ⇒ retain and modernise an Island based fire service
- ⇒ consult with Town & Parish Councils about the possible transfer, to them, with budgets, the Environment Neighbourhood Officers (Town Centre Managers)
- ⇒ commission more voluntary agencies to deliver local services

8: Health & Social Services

The Liberal Democrats have a fine tradition of upholding high quality health & social service provision. We will work to maintain & improve our health & social services to a level of excellence for all Island households by improving the range of services that can be delivered locally including:

- ⇒ a 'bus run' to St Mary's hospital for appointments
- ⇒ for the chronically sick who require regular treatment on the mainland we will continue to support transport needs and costs
- ⇒ mental health services, especially for younger people

9: Transport

The Tories have been divided on how to address our Island transport problems and so there has been no progress over the past four years – in fact matters have just got a lot worse! **When in power the Liberal Democrats will work hard to:**

- ⇒ make full use of available budgets to repair roads (Tories consistently underspend!) & reinstate a direct labour force to carry out year round minor repairs to roads, pavements & cycle ways
- ⇒ use Wight bus more creatively in support of isolated communities in both rural & urban settings
- ⇒ restore the 50p fares for young people in education
- ⇒ extend long stay park and ride schemes & provide more short stay car parking in towns
- ⇒ retain current (seasonal) limited parking times
- ⇒ consult with local people, business organisations & town & parish councils to take a more sensible view on where parking restrictions are placed
- ⇒ continue what we started by converting former railway lines into cycle routes & walkways connecting to an upgraded coastal route
- ⇒ re-locate public services in communities around the Island to improve accessibility & to help reduce congestion in Newport.