

Wycombe Labour Party

Manifesto 2011

Issued free

Building Wycombe's Future

Setting the Scene

Faced with savage Government cuts Tory Councils In Bucks have rushed to slash their budgets with little regard for the social cost of their action.

In Wycombe grants to voluntary bodies are being cut, services to the elderly and disabled abandoned with a reckless disregard for consequences and libraries and Youth Clubs closed.

This is what one year of a Tory led Government, backed by Liberals and a compliant Council has brought to the people of Wycombe.

Add the prospect of losing the valued Sure Start scheme, the closure of the Connections Service that helps young people into employment, 20% VAT, cuts to housing benefits and a raft of other measures will leave many families substantially worse off.

Cameron claimed, three days before the General Election, that he would send back to their departments any

minister who put before him plans for cuts in front line services. This is but one of his many broken promises.

We want to make it clear; winning this election will present us with huge challenges. We have a Government that is hell bent on destroying our services and we'll following a Tory Council that has paid scant regard to the needs of local people.

But all of this makes a Labour Council even more important. Wycombe needs Labour Councillors that will fight for the interests of local people.

We will establish clear priorities that respond to the challenges that our communities face. We will do this in consultation with local people and partner organisations.

This manifesto sets out our ideas for making Wycombe a prosperous and vibrant place to live.

Key points from our plan

- **A better deal for families**
- **Action to support young people**
- **Cut crime and anti social behaviour**
- **More affordable housing**
- **Cut top Councillors' allowances**
- **A cleaner, greener Wycombe**
- **Security and wellbeing in older age**



Sport for all

WDC abandoned their plans for a new sports centre that had so much publicity in the weeks preceding the 2007 election. Four years later they are embroiled in a bitter local argument about whether a sports village should be built on land at Booker Airpark.

Wycombe badly needs a sports centre that it can be proud of. A centre that gives encouragement to young and old to make the most of leisure opportunities.

A centre that will develop the potential of our young people. And raise their sights to sporting achievement.

That's what the Tory Council should have provided long before the present economic downturn. And before progress got bogged down in arguments about whether Wycombe Wanderers should move from Sands to Cressex.

The public are debating whether the move should take place. We welcome public involvement in decisions that affect the future of our District. But the Council's flawed public consultation was not the way. The public have a right to all the facts including a full assessment of how the new stadium will impact on the local environment.

The Council has to ensure that local interests are properly defended. Spending £750,000 of public money facilitating a commercial development at a time when savage cuts are being made is an outrage.

We will:

- **Plan for the early development of an easily accessible multi-purpose sports centre;**
- **Oppose the use of public money to facilitate commercial developments;**
- **Ensure that the public are made fully aware of all the facts concerning any proposed development.**

Building Strong and Safer Communities

We believe that the people of Wycombe should be able to enjoy their homes, town and countryside without fear of crime and vandalism.

Creating safe and strong communities is not only a job for the police. The District Council has key responsibilities too.

The Labour Government understood the importance of community safety. Reductions in local crime figures reflect the extra resource that they provided.

The Tory/Lib Government are

cutting the police budget by 20%. They are taking big risks with the safety of our communities.

We will :

- **Ensure that community safety is given high priority at the planning stage of developments;**
- **Work to establish strong partnerships for action to combat the drug problem;**
- **Strengthen the Council's community services with the aim of building united**



and harmonious communities.

- **Use the powers that the Council has for dealing with anti social behaviour.**

Saving Sure Start

Sure Start is generally considered the jewel in a long list of Labour achievements. But it is threatened.

Threatened by the Government

and Tory Councils who have never appreciated the part that they can play in helping to improve children's life chances.

Sure Start children centres are

providing high quality early education, childcare, health, family support and help into employment for poorer families.

We are pledged to fight against cuts to children's services.



Thanks to Labour every three and four year-old is now guaranteed a free part-time nursery place.

We have to defend what has been hard won.

We will:

- **As a high priority defend children and young peoples services;**
- **We will work in partnership with all those that have this as their aim.**

Securing a thriving and buoyant economy

We are committed to the economic well-being of Wycombe. We will promote measures to help the District achieve a balanced workforce able to meet the challenges and opportunities of the modern world.

The Tory/Lib Government are taking a reckless gamble with the economy and putting recovery at risk.

We want to see a balanced planned economy to support jobs here in Wycombe. And we will work to achieve it.



We will:

- **Create the conditions that ensure that workers of the future can find homes and jobs;**
- **Work to establish a transport infrastructure that supports a flourishing economy.**

Britain enjoyed unprecedented years of economic success thanks to a Labour Government, until the global banking crisis sadly blew us off course.

Growth offers the best chance of escaping from the economic downturn. It is for the Government to establish the conditions in which this can be done. But here in Wycombe we can help to create the right environment for the local economy to flourish.

Places to Live

We are committed to the right of every person to be adequately housed. Tory policy here in Wycombe has created hardship and misery for many people.

They have spent thousands persuading tenants

that they would be better off transferring to a housing association. Money that would be better spent improving and maintaining their ageing stock.

Another case of a biased consultation.



Social housing has never been a concern of Tories or the Lib Dems.

A secure home gives families a real stake in the community and helps them make a contribution.

We will:

- **Develop a five year strategy for housing in the District;**
- **Establish an independent Housing Benefit Advice Centre to reduce homelessness;**
- **Get the best yield of affordable housing in local developments;**
- **Support regeneration of the areas of older housing in the District.**
- **Oppose fixed term tenancies**

Cut Top Councillors Pay

The economy is in a parlous state but Councillors continue to receive generous allowances. We say it's time to call a halt to this.

On top of the sums they receive for just being a councillor many add to it with special allowances. Of the current District Councillors 12 also serve as County Councillors between them they share £276,000 a year. An average of £23k each.

We will:

Halve the amount of Councillors allowances and press for them to receive an allowance from only one Council.

Families under pressure

Cuts direct from Downing Street are coming to the streets of Wycombe.

Inflation is up, living standards are down. The Tory/Lib Government decision to break promises and raise VAT this year was the wrong tax at the wrong time.

We can't promise that we will protect every service from cuts. The Government are cutting local grants by 27%. But Wycombe Labour will do every-

thing it can to protect local jobs and the vital frontline services on which people rely.

We know that families are facing a tough time; cuts to tax credits and child benefits will affect those who are already struggling to make ends meet.

We will:

Work with the public, staff and community groups to come up with new ways to do things, so that as many services as possible are kept going.



Action on Equality

It is said that a passion for equality is at the heart of democracy.

Over the years Labour Governments have introduced important measures to outlaw discrimination. But creating a society free from discrimination is not a job for the Government alone.

The District Council has a part to play in promoting equality in the services that it provides and within their workforce at all levels. But more than that they have a commitment to promote community cohesion.

Everyone should feel capable of fully participating in society and feel confident of being

treated as an equal.

Failure to achieve this increases alienation and disengagement and people are left at the margins of communities.

The District Council's action in reducing the grant of the Race Equality Council has placed its future in doubt. And shown that the Tory District Council does not understand what their role and responsibilities are.

We will embrace this task and work in partnership with those who are genuinely promoting equality of opportunity.

Labour will give support to those seeking to make Wycombe a cohesive District free from discrimination.

The District Council has a key role in promoting an equal and fair society

Labour Councillors: fighting for the interests of local people

Labour Councillors have a proud record of fighting for the interests of local people.

If there is an issue of public concern Labour Councillors are guaranteed to be around giving their support and help.

They provide advice and support to dozens of families needing help. On issues as diverse as homelessness, welfare benefits, pot holes to parking, everyone gets the best of attention.

When communities are concerned and worried about issues or changes that affect their lives Labour Councillors are there supporting them and arguing the case with those that make the decisions.

Labour considers that too many decisions are made without consulting local people. Those that do take place are invariably biased.

Our work with local communities strengthens our view that people should have more say about the environment in which they live and services they receive.

The Council should be open to public scrutiny and challenge, encourage rising expectations and harness the energy of local residents.

The Council must ensure that people are kept informed so that they can make consid-

ered judgements about performance.

Campaigning and case work are key tasks for all Labour Councillors. Our Councillors enter this election with a pledge to provide the best support possible to the communities that they represent.



Clean Green Neighbourhoods

We intend to undertake a programme of major environmental improvement.

High on our priorities will be



work to create a sustainable and pollution free environment.

We will:

- **Give a lead in the promotion of energy**

efficiency, reviewing all public buildings;

- **Support private initiatives for greater energy efficiency;**
- **Review planning restrictions that inhibit the development of small scale renewable energy schemes;**
- **Support the redevelopment of brown-field sites to preserve the District's areas of outstanding natural beauty;**
- **Undertake an urgent review of inadequate street and pavement cleaning;**
- **Oppose the sale of any Wycombe Woods.**

Young Lives

For the first time in almost a century people now worry that the next generation will be worse off than the last.

Young people already face challenges but their prospects are being made worse by this Tory/ Lib Government.

The District Council ought to working to secure the interests of young people.

But they just watch as Sure Start is threatened, the Future Jobs Fund is scrapped, Tuition Fees are trebled, and the Educational Maintenance Allowance, that has helped so



many young people on the road to success, is ended.

No wonder that young people are angry at the broken pledges of the Lib Dems and their claim that were all in this together.

We will:

- **Champion the interests of young people;**
- **Fight to save our youth services.**