

Wyre Forest District Council Elections 2023

# Restoring Pride in Our District

The Conservative Manifesto to **unlock** Wyre Forest



Wyre Forest  
Conservatives

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## A personal message from the Conservative Group Leader



Dear Resident,

I am exceptionally proud to lead the Wyre Forest District Council Conservative Group.

The last four years of being in opposition have allowed me to reflect on everything we achieved during our 15 years in office and have given me and the team an opportunity to formulate a future, four-year vision for the District, if we are entrusted to take control.

Since 2019, the Independent/Labour/Green/Health Concern Progressive Alliance have, in my judgement, done untold damage to the Council and the District.

Their agenda has been about cuts and looking inward not outward. Despite their promises and pre-election propaganda, they have not delivered on the Crown House site in Kidderminster; there is no longer to be a cinema on the former Glades site; and they have not redeveloped Bridge Street in Stourport. All these brownfield, town centre locations are perfect for redevelopment but have been ignored while the Progressive Alliance approved a local plan with hundreds more houses to be built on the Green Belt than necessary.

Their failure to get the basics right, while behaving with total disregard for our District, is plain for all to see. Litter bins over-flowing; grass verges uncut; litter in our streets; and our town centres looking as if they have seen far better days.

I am very pleased to present a dynamic team of sitting councillors, seeking re-election together with a whole host of fresh, talented candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds, all of whom live in Wyre Forest and care passionately about our District.

As a Conservative team, I pledge that the Group I lead will make decisions in your interests to secure our common aim of providing you with efficient and effective value for money services. We will unlock Wyre Forest and make it a clean, safe and great place to live and work.

On 4th May, all 33 seats will be up for election and you will have the chance to elect a Council for four years that will work and prioritise the issues important to you. I urge you to elect a Conservative Council to ensure the District returns to being in safe hands.



**Cllr. Marcus Hart**

Group Leader, Wyre Forest District Council Conservative Group

# Our key Pledges to you

Our key pledges outline our priorities in delivering the Improvements needed to restore pride in Wyre Forest.

- 1 Double our Environmental Protection Officers**  
We will increase the number of Environmental Protection Officers from two to four to tackle littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling.
- 2 Plant 10,000 trees**  
We will plant at least 10,000 trees, during our four-year term, in our parks, nature reserves and open spaces.
- 3 Increase seasonal litterpicking**  
We will bring back litter blitz squads and seasonal litter pickers to tackle litter across our District.
- 4 Increase the number of Civil Enforcement Officers**  
Increasing our Civil Enforcement team from six to seven will enable us to better deal with illegal parking on our estates and in our villages.
- 5 Invest in our parks**  
We will work with parish and town councils to safeguard the future of our much-loved local parks and open spaces.
- 6 Reintroduce cultural events across the District**  
Using our parks and open spaces, we will provide festivals and music events (such as Bands in the Park) as well as offering a range of activities for children.

- 7 Scrap evening car parking charges and reintroduce free Car parking**  
We will end parking charges after 6pm; restore one-hour free parking to one car park in each of our three towns; and reduce the cost of annual car parking permits for over 65s.
- 8 Redevelop Worcester Street and the former Glades site**  
We will demolish empty shops on Worcester Street in Kidderminster and support the development of housing and apartments here and on the former Glades site.
- 9 Safeguard Bewdley Museum**  
Bewdley Museum is the Council's flagship museum and we guarantee that it is safe in our hands. We will look at ways to enhance its offer.
- 10 Unlock Wyre Forest House and The Hub**  
Restore open door access to Wyre Forest House and The Hub on Green Street.
- 11 Redevelop Bridge Street, Stourport**  
We commit to redeveloping the Bridge Street site in Stourport by supporting mixed use redevelopment on this brownfield site.
- 12 Working collaboratively with parish and town councils**  
We will work hand-in-hand with our parish and town councils to improve local services important to you.

# Restoring **pride** in our open spaces

Many residents tell us, whether they live on an estate, in one of our towns or in one of the rural parts of our District, that littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling are blighting their lives.

Dog fouling in our parks and on our streets simply should not happen. We need to tackle owners and if they refuse to be educated, issue them with fines. The beautiful countryside in our many rural villages is blighted by people fly-tipping waste on footpaths and at the side of the road. With more resources we can catch more culprits and fine them.

Presently, we have a very small, but proactive, team doing its best to tackle these quality-of-life issues. But it simply does not go far enough, as the team does not have the resources to do the job properly.

**The solution is simple, we need more boots on the ground** and by increasing the team from two to four that will mean an additional 74 man-hours of enforcement each and every week.

We have a small team of Civil Enforcement Officers, but they are mainly tasked with parking enforcement throughout our three town centres. **We will invest in an additional officer** specifically tasked with patrolling double yellow lines in our villages and housing estates. Priority will be given to enforcement outside of normal working hours when most of these issues arise and to date go largely unpunished.

**We need to ensure that our traffic islands, verges, parks, nature reserves and open spaces are kept clean.** We will invest in more litter pickers and ensure bins are emptied.

**We will enhance our wildflower planting schemes across the District,** including in our parks, planting even more beautiful flowers. We will invest in planting in our displays all year round, encouraging biodiversity and ensuring we are pollinator friendly.

**We will take pride in our parks** and strive for Green Flag status.

Our vision need not be somewhere over the rainbow, it can be here, in Wyre Forest, unlocking our true potential.

## We pledge to **increase officer numbers**

- ▶ Double the number of Environmental Protection Officers from two to four. Doubling our team numbers means we are able to better tackle littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling.
- ▶ Increase the number of Civil Enforcement Officers from six to seven to manage parking on double yellow lines in our villages and housing estates.
- ▶ Increase the number of litter pickers across the District.





# Rejuvenating Our **Green** agenda

As Conservatives our natural instinct is to preserve our countryside and protect our rural areas. We are blessed in Wyre Forest to have such lovely countryside.

**We believe passionately in defending the Green Belt in our District** and that is why we do not support development in it. We believe that the Labour, Green, Independent and Health Concern Progressive Alliance-led Council, and indeed the Liberal Democrats until they left the Progressive Alliance, were wrong in allocating so much land to be removed from the Green Belt. This is why, when the Local Plan was approved by Full Council on 26th April 2022, the Conservatives unanimously did not support it.

**We will not allocate any Green Belt land unless we are mandated to by Government** to meet our housing needs. Even then, we will ensure that we do not allocate one more house in the Green Belt than is necessary.

**We understand that housing is an important issue and we will ensure, as far as possible, that housing developments are built to be fit for the future,** embracing the Green agenda to ensure they are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

**We will ensure that we are much bolder in our implementation of Electric Vehicle Charging points** across our District Council car parks. We will also expand our electric vehicle fleet.

**We are committed to planting 10,000 trees** across the four-year term of the Council.

These trees will be planted in suitable sites across our District in conjunction with our partners such as The Woodland Trust and Natural England.

## Creating a greener future

- ▶ We are committed to planting 10,000 trees across the District.
- ▶ Brinton Park is our District's flagship park and has been neglected. We will invest in the future of all our parks and open spaces.

# Re-establishing **Proven** initiatives

Under a previous Conservative-led Council we had a rich programme of arts, culture and leisure activities. The Progressive Alliance, over the last four years, has decimated this, removing all of the staff and activities.

**We pledge to restore a programme of cultural events** like the under 5s play day; outdoor cinema at Brinton Park; Country & Western/Rock & Roll Festivals at the Stourport Riverside; Bands in the Park; and open-air theatre and music events at the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens in Bewdley.

**We will invest more of your money in front-line services that are important to you.** Our number 1 corporate priority will be to keep the District clean and green.

**We believe that your Progressive Alliance-led Council has let you down.** We will ensure that litter bins are emptied, streets are cleaned, parks are well maintained and highway verges are kept free of litter.

Under localism, we will work with parish and town councils to devolve some of these duties, with proper support and funding.

## Bringing life back to Wyre Forest

- ▶ Reintroducing litter blitz teams to tackle litter across our District.
- ▶ Bringing back cultural events across our District, including; Bands in the Park, music festivals and children's activity days.



Overflowing bins are blighting our green spaces. We will invest in more litter pickers and ensure bins are emptied.





# Regenerating our town centres

We are determined to regenerate our town centres and bring them back to life.

We appreciate that shopping habits and behaviours have changed over the years but as Conservatives we believe that our town centres are important.

Clearly, the private sector has a major part to play but as a Council there are small practical steps that can be taken to encourage residents and tourists back into our town centres.

**We pledge that our town centres will be clean, green, safe and kept looking good.** We will also ensure that car parking charges are fair and there will be an element of free car parking to ensure that businesses are supported and residents encouraged to shop locally.

**We will work with the Police and other partners** to ensure that our town centres are safe and that anti-social behaviour is tackled.

Our initiatives will encourage a vibrant night-time economy.

## Redeveloping brownfield sites

- ▶ We will demolish empty shops on Worcester Street, Kidderminster and build housing and apartments on this site as well as on the former Glades site.
- ▶ We are committed to redeveloping Stourport's Bridge Street car park and securing a mixed-use development on this site.
- ▶ Having secured the demolition of Crown House when we were last in office, we will deliver a new development on this site.

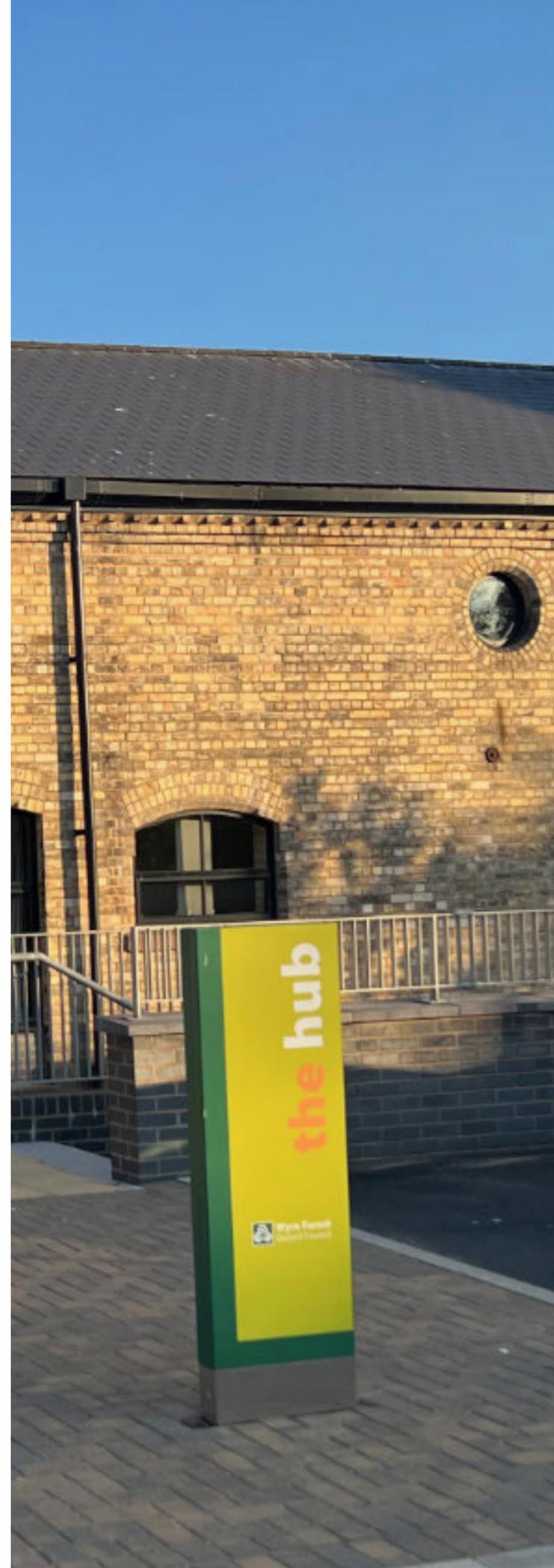
# Re-engaging and reinvesting in the community

A Conservative Council will increase openness and transparency for our decisions.

One of the first things the Progressive Alliance did when it took control was to scrap webcasting meetings of the Cabinet. We will reintroduce this and also introduce webcasting for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, together with retaining webcasting for the Planning Committee and Full Council.

**We will ensure that our buildings are unlocked and open for business.** It is a scandal that the doors to Wyre Forest House and The Hub are now locked. We will restore open door access during business hours.

**We will also have a whole sale look at the way the Council operates,** undertaking a full review of home working with the starting point that our staff teams are based in Council offices for the majority of the working week.



## Being open and transparent

- ▶ Wyre Forest House and The Hub at Green Street would once again be fully open to the public.
- ▶ Reintroduce the webcasting of Cabinet meetings and better publicise all Council meetings.

## Delivering efficiencies

- ▶ We will ensure that Council services are run as efficiently as possible, eradicating waste, bureaucracy and streamlining back-office functions to ensure that maximum resource is invested in front-line services. We pledge to drive out waste and maximise Council Tax payers' money.
- ▶ We will be more commercial in our approach to running the Council and utilise the private sector expertise within our Group.
- ▶ We will grow our income by maximising the use of our assets, buildings and land by encouraging commercial sponsorship and renting out unused office space at Green Street and Wyre Forest House.



# Removing car Parking charges

It is essential that we make our town centres as vibrant as possible and encourage our own residents and visitors into them.

In order to do this, it is important that our town centres are safe and clean and provide a welcoming environment. We will work with our partners, namely the Police and town councils, to deliver on this.

**We will ensure that our car parking charges are fair and proportionate.** We will not increase charges by inflation-busting amounts as the Progressive Alliance has done.

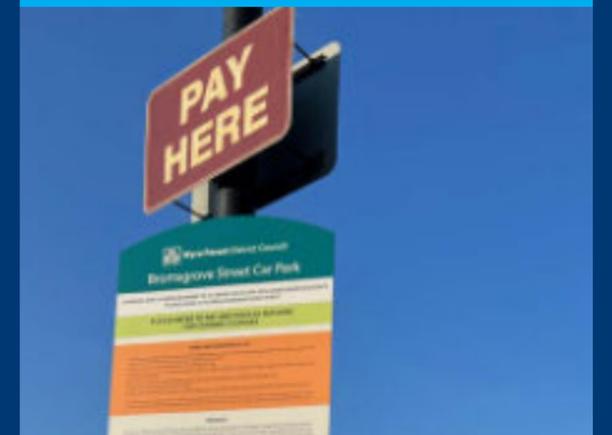
**We will reintroduce one-hour free car parking** in a car park in each of our three towns.

**We will realign the price of the over 65's permits** to 25% of the cost of a full season ticket.

**We will also undertake a full review of car parking charges** within the first year of our administration.

## Encouraging visitors to our towns

- ▶ We will scrap car parking charges after 6pm.
- ▶ We will restore one-hour free car parking in a car park in each of our three towns.
- ▶ We will reintroduce 75% subsidised annual parking permits for over 65s.



**X** Vote  
Conservative

Wyre Forest District Council elections 2023

**4thMay2023**

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