

OUR LOCAL MANIFESTO

2024

FOR A FAIRER,
GREENER DORSET



INTRODUCTION

Our priorities for Dorset Council in the next five years are:

- **More affordable homes**
- **Better public transport**
- **More action on climate change and ecology**
- **Better support for children and young people**

MORE AFFORDABLE HOMES

What we would do

Dorset Council should directly provide genuinely affordable housing, especially for rent, and suitable for young people. We would use Council land, build new Council houses, and buy up and convert suitable existing housing. We would pay for this using the £15m the Council expects to receive from capital receipts each year borrowing, and funding interest from rents.

We will seek to use the planning system to deliver the right houses in the right places and at the right prices.

What we have done

- Played our part in creating a cross party consensus that we need Council housing
- Consistently challenged attempts to avoid providing affordable housing in new developments
- Supported the building of affordable flats and houses at Planning Committees

BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT

What we would do

Public transport is inadequate throughout our county and has all but disappeared from much of rural Dorset. We would work with commercial operators, directly provide bus services, and connect public transport services together. We would pay for this by borrowing to invest in new green buses, using our existing school transport service and securing higher revenues from increased use of the services.

What we have done

- Defended existing bus services
- Removed the ban on A and B roads in Council's old 20mph policy
- Continually supported adequate walkways and cycleways, and Electric Vehicle charging points in new developments
- After commissioning a speed survey, succeeded in getting a Speed Indicator Device installed on the busy A354 trunk road

MORE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECOLOGY

What we would do

We would press government to allow our planners to be more positive about renewable energy proposals requiring solar panels on all suitable roofs and allowing wind farms in the AONB unless there are exceptional reasons against. We would make it easier to make listed buildings sustainable. And we will support offshore wind farms.

We would bring Dorset Council's net zero target forward to 2030, do more to prepare for the climate change that is already unfolding and would take greater steps to protect and improve our natural environment and wildlife.

What we have done

- Following Green pressure, climate change is now a Corporate priority, has a £10m budget and a dedicated Corporate Director. Further pressure has led to climate adaptation and ecology being embedded in the work of the whole Council
- Cllr Kelvin Clayton's participation in Planning Committees has helped secure, with the help of our allies on those Committees, the acceptance of a number of large, controversial solar energy schemes. He has also pressed for a more creative approach to environmental improvements to listed buildings
- Played a prominent role in persuading the Council not to accept plans to build a Waste Incinerator on Portland (currently subject to appeal)
- Put forward a motion to full council on separating sewage and surface water drainage systems which was passed with cross party support
- Persuaded Dorset Council to work to reopen the SW Coast path along a half kilometre stretch in Weymouth, locally known as the Underbarn



SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

What we would do

We would work with partners to raise standards in all schools in Dorset, particularly where levels of deprivation and child poverty are highest.

We would aim to restore the network of youth services and youth clubs and provide better funding and support to community groups working in this area.

What we have done

- Highlighted the level of exclusions in schools serving our most deprived areas. The bottom four were all of the Weymouth and Portland Secondary Schools
- Cllr Clare Sutton has repeatedly pressed for the restoration of funding for Youth Clubs following swingeing cuts made by the previous Council. Working primarily with an Independent Councillor, Clare has played a key role in the creation of a £100,000 annual Youth Fund and a soon to be launched £100,000 fund to assist Youth Clubs survive the cost of living crisis

HOW WE DO POLITICS

The Green Party does politics differently:

- Our candidates bring a wide breadth of experience to the job
- We don't attack our opponents but we will criticise their policies or actions
- We work with others from all parties
- We listen to our residents and keep them in touch with what we are doing
- We are straight with you. If we disagree with you we politely say so

In pursuit of these approaches we have:

- Represented individual residents consistently, sensitively and effectively on hundreds of individual cases to give them a real voice
- In collaboration with our sole Labour colleague ensured that a Council motion condemning the Bibby Stockholm Barge included a welcome for the asylum seekers
- Played an active part with colleagues from other parties on unglamorous but necessary Council functions like licensing of taxis and pubs

- Played an active role in our local communities:

Cllr Jon Orrell conceived, fought for, and delivered Tumbledown Farm in Weymouth, a hugely innovative project that transformed a disused farm into a centre for horticulture, wildlife and training that helps many disadvantaged adults and young people.



Cllr Clare Sutton conceived of, set up and has subsequently run the Chapelhay Community Playgarden project in Weymouth, bringing in Dorset Council funding and participation, and helping numerous deprived children and their families.

Cllr Belinda Bawden has been at the heart of several significant local environmental projects in West Dorset and beyond in the last few years, including co-founding the Dorset Climate Action Network; co-developing the Carbon Literacy Toolkit for town and parish councillors, enabling the Lyme Regis Town Council to become the world's first to be accredited as a Carbon Literate Organisation; and proposing 20mph schemes to make the streets of Lyme Regis and Charmouth safer for everyone.



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Promoted by Andy McEwen for Dorset Green Party, both at Garden Cottage, Netherbury, Dorset DT6 5NB.
Printed on 100% recycled paper by Print Team (Dorset) Ltd.21 Mereside | Navigator Business Park | Portland | Dorset | DT5 1PY