

**Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013**

**Caring for Gloucestershire**

***Liberal Democrats***

***delivering***

***a strong economy***

***&***

***a fair society***

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*a strong economy & a fair society*

# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## *six to fix*

### **1. Repairing our roads, filling in potholes**

Liberal Democrats will invest in additional repairs to our roads and footways to repair the damage left after eight years of Tory neglect. We will release £5 million worth of surplus funds in the council's reserves to help fix the enormous number of potholes on the county's roads.

### **2. Growing our economy, investing in jobs**

The county council will work with the Local Enterprise Partnership to create more private sector jobs and apprenticeships. Liberal Democrats will support growing businesses to achieve their goals and will also work to establish new businesses in manufacturing, advanced technologies and the green economy.

### **3. Opposing a waste incinerator, protecting the environment**

We have strongly opposed the building of a £500m waste incinerator at Javelin Park on environmental and economic grounds. We will seek to use more environmentally friendly technology to dispose of the residual household waste.

### **4. Freezing on-street parking charges, cutting the price of residents' parking permits**

A Liberal Democrat council will freeze on-street car parking charges across Gloucestershire. In residents' parking permit zones Liberal Democrats will reduce the annual fee from £80 to £50.

### **5. Making sure we can trust what we eat, protecting trading standards**

The Tories have slashed spending on Trading Standards by 50% at a time when the service is under greatly increased pressure with the controversy over horse meat in beef products. It needs to be in the forefront of testing food products on sale locally. There will be no further cuts in Trading Standards under the Liberal Democrats.

### **Creating a new joint fire and ambulance service, for a safer county**

We will lobby the government to establish a pathfinder project for a joint Gloucestershire fire and ambulance service under the control of the county council.

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# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## ***A Liberal Democrat run council is best for Gloucestershire***

***Liberal Democrat Leader, Cllr. Jeremy Hilton***



Liberal Democrats have thought long and hard about how we can improve the quality of services provided by Gloucestershire County Council. Our manifesto is our plan to make Gloucestershire a better place to live.

During the past eight years the Conservatives have had overall control of the county council. Liberal Democrats have provided the constructive opposition to the Tories. We have a plan that will deliver a better future for Gloucestershire.

We certainly believe that more can be done to repair our roads that have been neglected by the Tories. This is why we will immediately release £5 million held in reserves to increase the budget on road repairs.

Creating more jobs and apprenticeships is an important objective for Liberal Democrats and we will work with local businesses to deliver a vibrant and mixed economy for Gloucestershire.

The Tories plan to award a 25 year contract to build a waste incinerator at Javelin Park saddling the county's taxpayers with a £500 million waste disposal liability. Burning our waste is old technology and we shall seek to use environmentally and economically beneficial processes to dispose of our household waste.

Motorists have been hit hard by fuel increases. To help motorists we shall freeze on street parking charges in Gloucestershire for the next four years. We shall also reduce residents' parking permits by £30 from £80 to £50 per year.

The recent controversy over horse meat in beef products shows how important it is to carry out regular inspections of our food. That is why there will be no further cuts in the Trading Standards service under the Liberal Democrats.

Innovation will also be at the heart of a Liberal Democrat run council and we shall seek the support of the government to create a pathfinder project for a combined fire and ambulance service under the council's control, to improve the emergency responses from our blue light services.

Liberal Democrats will run a council that **cares** about people, the environment, the economy and our culture. Please vote for us on 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

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# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## *caring for your money*

### **Reducing council borrowing**

Under the Tories council borrowing stands at £403 million, equivalent to 93% of the council's annual revenue budget. Through sound financial management Liberal Democrats will reduce borrowing over the period of the next council.

### **Council reserves kept to a necessary minimum**

The county council has £124 million in its reserve accounts. This is equivalent to 29% of the council's annual revenue budget. Liberal Democrats will use surplus reserves to invest in Gloucestershire's future.

### **Keeping council tax low**

Liberal Democrats have supported a council tax freeze in each of the last three years. We will drive down costs and improve services whilst keeping council taxes low.

### **Reducing salary budget for top earners**

The county council spends £6 million per year employing staff earning salaries over £50,000. Liberal Democrats will reduce the number of staff employed on high incomes saving at least £500,000 per year.

### **Council financial accountability**

A Liberal Democrat council will be more open about how your money is spent on council services. We will publish detailed information so that both councillors and members of the public can better monitor council expenditure.

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# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## *caring about jobs*

### **Growing the economy**

The county council will work with the Local Enterprise Partnership to create more private sector jobs and apprenticeships. Liberal Democrats will support growing businesses to achieve their goals and will also work to establish new businesses in manufacturing, advanced technologies and the green economy.

### **Supporting regeneration**

We will support the continued regeneration of Gloucester, Cheltenham and our market towns, ensuring that the county's rural and urban communities thrive. Regeneration will be encouraged on brownfield sites rather than on green fields.

### **Local Authority Mortgage Scheme**

Liberal Democrats will boost the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme that helps first-time buyers to find a home, securing skilled workers for Gloucestershire's economy.

### **Green Investment Bank**

A Liberal Democrat council will ensure that Gloucestershire gets its fair share of the £18 billion worth of funds held by the Green Investment Bank. We will invest in innovative green projects that secure new jobs whilst helping the environment.

### **Visit Gloucestershire**

Gloucestershire is a county with an amazing history, a beautiful landscape, wonderful cultural activities and many historic buildings. A Liberal Democrat council will work with Visit England and other tourism organisations to raise the profile of the county to enhance visitor numbers.

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# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## *caring for people*

### **Freezing the cost of meals on wheels**

We will freeze the current cost of meals on wheels (£3.50 for a hot meal and £2.50 for a frozen meal) for the lifetime of the next council.

### **Personal care budgets**

A Liberal Democrat council will make sure that where people can better manage their own care through dedicated personal budgets they are able to do so. The council will guarantee that care assessments are carried out for both service users and their carers.

### **Better public health**

In April this year the council is taking on a new duty, to improve the health of people living in Gloucestershire, with a grant of £21 million. Liberal Democrats will improve public health for everyone. The new Health & Wellbeing Board will have cross party membership.

### **A place to sleep for the homeless**

The Tories have made changes to the emergency bed provisions for homeless people in Gloucestershire. Liberal Democrats will monitor the new contract to make sure no vulnerable person falls through the gap.

### **Respite breaks for families**

A Liberal Democrat council will ensure that the county taps into the extra £400m provided by the coalition government intended for respite breaks for carers.

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# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## *caring for young people*

### **Youth activity**

A Liberal Democrat council will provide wider opportunities for young people to participate, for example, in sport, drama and music. We shall also increase the grant to district councils to support youth work in their communities.

### **Working with schools**

A Liberal Democrat council will work with all state funded schools in Gloucestershire to guarantee that educational provision is co-ordinated between the schools. The county council will work with others to ensure that school sports provision is open for public use and that valuable playing fields are not sold off.

### **Healthy children eat healthy food**

A Liberal Democrat run council will support schools to guarantee that all children can eat healthy meals when attending school. We will encourage the purchasing of food from local suppliers and farmers. The council will promote visits to county farms and support growing and cooking clubs.

### **Children's centres**

The 39 children's centres across Gloucestershire provide an essential service for both children and parents. A Liberal Democrat council will closely monitor each and every one of these children's centres to ensure the highest level of service is provided.

### **Pupil Premium**

We shall also make sure that all schools in Gloucestershire receive the maximum sum from the Liberal Democrat pupil premium (£900 per eligible pupil from April 2013) and that best practice on using this extra cash is shared between schools.

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# **Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013**

## ***caring for the environment***

### **Opposing a waste incinerator, protecting the environment**

We have strongly opposed the building of a £500m waste incinerator at Javelin Park on environmental and economic grounds. We will seek to use more environmentally friendly technology to dispose of the residual household waste. Working with the district collection authorities Liberal Democrats aim to increase recycling rates to 70%.

### **Generating green energy**

The council will invest in and generate its own energy through eco-friendly technologies, making our council buildings self-sufficient. Surplus energy will be sold to further support council services. The council will 'invest to save' in its own buildings to reduce energy requirements.

### **Protecting the Green Belt**

A Liberal Democrat council will work with district councils to protect the Green Belt to stop the coalescence of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Bishops Cleeve.

### **Prevention and preparation for flooding**

A Liberal Democrat run council will ensure that the £2.5m council tax flood levy is spent on flood protection measures. We will oppose the building of new developments in high flood risk areas.

### **Cotswold Water Park**

We will call for the development of a new regeneration masterplan to protect the Cotswold Water Park from predatory developers; ensuring public assets are safe from unwanted development.

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# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## *caring about transport*

### **Repairing our roads, filling in potholes**

Liberal Democrats will invest in additional repairs to our roads and footways to repair the damage left after eight years of Tory neglect. We will release £5 million worth of surplus funds in the council's reserves to help fix the enormous number of potholes on the county's roads.

### **It is good to cycle**

The county council will increase the network of dedicated cycle routes. We will provide more cycle parking facilities and introduce cycle hire pick up points around the county.

### **Gloucestershire Airport**

Gloucestershire Airport is the busiest general aviation airport in the country. It is good for jobs and a key transport asset for Gloucestershire. Liberal Democrats will support its continued contribution to the county's transport infrastructure and economic well-being.

### **Rail connectivity**

A Liberal Democrat council will encourage the restoration of cross-country rail services to Gloucester station and support the electrification of all lines in Gloucestershire. The council will work to improve connectivity of the bus network with the county's rail services.

### **A417 the missing link and junction 10 of the M5**

Liberal Democrats will push for comprehensive improvements to the A417 missing link (Nettleton Bottom to Air Balloon) to reduce congestion, subject to this not affecting access to Cheltenham or causing traffic to rat-run through local Cotswold villages. Liberal Democrats will support alterations to junction 10 of the M5 to allow both north and south movements.

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# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## ***caring about your safety***

### **20 MPH zones**

Speed can kill and the county council under Liberal Democrat control will introduce safety measures to reduce speed, which helps save lives. The council will encourage the introduction of new 20 mph zones in residential streets where there is local community support.

### **Creating a new joint fire and ambulance service, for a safer county**

A Liberal Democrat council will continue to back local control over the fire service by supporting the successful TriService arrangements in Gloucestershire. We will also lobby the government to establish a pathfinder project for a joint Gloucestershire fire and ambulance service under the control of the county council.

### **Making sure we can trust what we eat, protecting trading standards**

The Tories have slashed spending on Trading Standards by 50% at a time when the service is under greatly increased pressure with the controversy over horse meat in beef products. It needs to be in the forefront of testing food products on sale locally. There will be no further cuts in Trading Standards under the Liberal Democrats. We shall work with the six district councils to establish a countywide Trading Standards & Environmental Health Service.

### **Emergency planning**

The county council under the Liberal Democrats will ensure our emergency plans are kept up to date and tested regularly.

### **Protecting people**

A Liberal Democrat council will educate people of all ages about the hazards of everyday life and how they can best protect themselves from accidents. Liberal Democrats will encourage people from across the county to use the council's innovative SkillZONE facility.

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# Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013

## *caring about communities*

### **Freezing on-street parking charges, cutting the price of residents' parking permits**

A Liberal Democrat council will freeze on-street car parking charges across Gloucestershire. In residents' parking permit zones Liberal Democrats will reduce the annual fee from £80 to £50. We shall also review parking policy where it is proven to have a damaging effect on small local businesses.

### **Keep our libraries open**

No libraries will close under a Liberal Democrat council. In fact, we shall commission the building of new libraries to replace those that are not fit for purpose. Internet access in public libraries will remain free.

### **Supporting people in need**

At times of economic hardship a Liberal Democrat run council will make sure that resources are provided to help those most in need. People will be given help to improve their social, physical and economic well-being.

### **Archaeological and archive services**

The preservation and understanding of Gloucestershire's history is important to this and future generations. Many people may wish to research their own family history. We will guarantee that the archaeological and archive services are protected.

### **Keeping it local**

The county council will ensure that local community assets are fully utilised and we shall use the powers in the Localism Act to give people more say and control about what happens in their local communities. We will increase funds available in the Community Infrastructure Grant Scheme.

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# **Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2013**

## ***caring for our countryside***

### **No culling of badgers**

The council will review future farm tenancies to ensure that the culling of badgers will not be permitted on county farms. We support vaccination as a modern alternative for eradicating Bovine TB. The council will lobby the government and the European Union to achieve our objective.

### **Planting trees**

We will plant more trees across the county to improve Gloucestershire's biodiversity and to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

### **Keep our county farms**

A Liberal Democrat run council will re-establish an acre-for-acre policy to maintain the council farm estate at its current size, helping to support our tenant farmers in Gloucestershire with local food production.

### **Protecting our countryside**

A Liberal Democrat run council will work with rural communities including town and parish councils to help protect the natural landscape.

### **Maintain footpaths and bridleways**

Public footpaths and bridleways in the countryside are important as links between rural communities and also for recreation and tourism. A Liberal Democrat run council will actively maintain and enhance the existing network.