



GOSPORT LABOUR PARTY

LOCAL MANIFESTO 2018





Introduction

Over the last four years the Labour Party has changed dramatically. Led by Jeremy Corbyn and his people-first politics, Labour has become a dynamic and capable party that champions people's rights and is ready to run the government for the many, not the few.

Local parties across the UK have seen a swell of support and this has changed our organisation too. We now have a diverse group of new members working with the community and campaigning for positive change.

In this manifesto we have outlined our positions and policies drawing on the experience of our sitting Councillors and the real concerns of the hundreds of local people we have spoken to.

Central to our policies for the area is the campaign for a new A&E Department to serve Gosport, Fareham and Stubbington. Our population of over eighty thousand residents needs a reliable, nearby Accident and Emergency service to treat life-threatening conditions, something which will also bring hundreds of new jobs, investment and infrastructure to the area.

It's time to make a change for the better in Gosport. With your help we can restore local democracy and start to rebuild the much-needed services that have been stripped away.

Together, we can do this.

Handwritten signatures of party members: Daniel, Alan, James, Emma, Josh, Mark, and William.

Mark, June, Alan, Caroline, Dan, Chris, James, Emma and many others.

Just a few members of **Your Gosport Labour Party**

Housing & Homelessness

A Roof Over Every Head

Everyone should have a secure home. Rents are getting higher for many people in Gosport. Wages stagnate, while the cost of living keeps increasing. Many properties rented out by private landlords are not suitable for decent family life. Social Housing is in short supply making it harder than ever for those in desperate need to get support. For most young people in Gosport today, home ownership is an unaffordable dream.

Housing Provision In Gosport

We support Labour's national policy for a dramatic increase in council housing. However, we realise that Gosport is different to many towns. Roads, schools, shops, medical services and parking are already under the pressure of growing development.

Gosport Labour Party will devise a forward-thinking plan that prioritises new, social and affordable housing while ensuring parking, traffic and amenities get full consideration.

We will also make sure that all social housing stock - both council and housing association owned - is fully maintained with safety and fire precautions regularly reviewed and updated.

Gosport's Conservative Council's housing development policy seems to be 'Build Now, Ask Questions Later'.

With Labour running the council, residents will finally be listened to - and taken seriously.



An End to Homelessness and Insecure Housing

Frequent visitors to Gosport High Street will have noticed a worrying increase in the number of people sleeping rough in the town. We accept that there are some valid concerns over public safety. Following incidents of public drug use and other anti-social behaviour our councillors have already taken action to help protect people in town. Yet we know that most homeless people are in desperate need of support.

This heart-breaking situation cannot go on.

While other parties just want to sweep the streets clean, we are fully committed to working with social services, charities, police and other organisations to help the victims and fight the causes of poverty in our town.

What we see is only the tip of the iceberg. With ruthless cuts to support and benefits, many people and families across Gosport live from sofa to sofa or in temporary, unsafe homes.

Your Labour Party will always work towards securing a safe, permanent home for everyone.

Town Development

Building a Sustainable Future for Gosport.

In recent years there has been a huge push for new development across the area.

It is our mission to develop Gosport for people and for business. We will help to provide jobs and grow the local economy in a sustainable way, while making sure Gosport's unique heritage and environment are preserved, protected and improved.

There are projects underway at Brockhurst Gate, Haslar, Fort Gilkicker, Sultan and the Town Waterfront. However, we are disappointed by the undemocratic consultations that took place ahead of these plans, and know that many of these new developments will lead to traffic congestion, pollution and a lower quality of life for existing residents.

Gosport Labour Party believes in working hand in hand with the community to create new, exciting spaces for innovation that benefit everyone, and consult residents properly before selling off public land to developers. We will also guide existing projects forward in a way that puts local people first.

Creating Valuable Business Alliances

Unlike other parties in the area, we will not tolerate or support businesses that undervalue our residents. Every person is entitled to a real living wage and job security.

We will strive to encourage businesses that create decently paid local jobs and benefit our local talent. We will also consult on schemes to bring shoppers, tourists and other visitors back into our town and high street. Finally, we will work honestly and openly with existing local businesses to make sure they can make the most of the opportunities available across Gosport.



Preserving Natural Spaces

Gosport Labour Party is committed to keeping our unique coastline and green spaces open for the public to enjoy. In 2017 we started a campaign to secure public rights of way around Fort Gilkicker. The resulting public pressure secured a victory for all residents. However, we will take nothing for granted and will continue to be vigilant in protecting public access for the community.

The Labour Party recognises the need to protect Gosport's wonderful wild and green spaces.

These areas are vital for wildlife and for people alike, and add incalculable value to all our lives. The Council's Countryside Section volunteer groups carry out brilliant work and we will ensure that their efforts are supported.

We will protect our important wildlife and make sure that bat roosts, badger setts and all our unique and important habitats are given proper consideration. When dealing with planning applications we will consult with local experts and set up proper local environmental and wildlife protection plans.



Restoring Local Democracy

Who Really Represents YOU?

Democracy is meant to protect the interests of all of us. We elect councillors to represent us, to voice our concerns and to discuss and plan improvements for our town. This is no longer the case in Gosport.

Gosport Borough Council, like many others, has seen its income from government fall sharply in recent years. This has resulted in cuts to local services and staff redundancies. At the end of 2016, one major cost-saving measure saw most of the council's top officers (Chief Executive, Borough Secretary, etc.) made redundant and given large pay-offs, with officers from Portsmouth City Council taking over most of their functions.

Much of Gosport is now run by Portsmouth City Council officers. We do not believe this is how our council should operate.

Review Poor Decisions. Replace Failing Processes.

All local councils are supposed to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine decisions in detail. In Gosport this was scrapped as another cost-saving measure. Democracy without scrutiny isn't democracy at all.

It has become sadly common in recent times for meetings to be cancelled or to be very short. Decisions are made in advance by the Conservatives due to their majority, or delegated to officers without any open discussion at all. There are very few opportunities for real, democratic debate. Labour councillors have complained loudly and often about this.

Labour will bring back open, democratic discussion to council meetings and reintroduce the Scrutiny Committee. We cannot allow back room deals to dictate the future of our town and community.

People Before Politics

A lack of transparency and poor communication are characteristic of too many recent decisions. The sale and proposed development of Fort Gilkicker is just one example. Public access routes which have been used for decades were suddenly shut off without warning or consideration.

Individuals, families, homeowners, tenants, businesses and local employees should all have a say in shaping our town for the better.

The Gosport Labour Party promises to make communication with the public a top priority. This will bring residents back into the decision making process for the town.

Vote  Labour

Policing & Crime

More Police Back on the Beat

Crime in Gosport continues to be a real concern for residents. In 2017 alone there were 639 reports of Anti Social Behaviour, and a staggering 680 reports of violence and sexual offences.

Most worrying is the massive reduction in police officers on the streets after the closure of Gosport Police Station back in 2015.

The council has made it clear that they will not be fighting to expand the police force in the future, apparently happy to let our local force go severely underfunded and leave many areas of Gosport and Fareham unpoliced.

Gosport Labour Party will work towards increasing the number and visibility of the local police force and campaign for additional funding.

Fighting Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Gosport has been a hotspot for substance abuse for many years. The Conservative approach of trying to sweep this problem under the rug - while slashing much needed support services - has failed over and over again.

We believe that we must treat the social and economic causes of drug and alcohol addiction in the worst affected areas of Gosport.

This means providing more social and mental health programmes - not scrapping them for vulnerable adults and children with nowhere to turn.

Increasing police numbers and providing long-term solutions to the causes of crime will make Gosport safer once and for all.

Education & Teaching

More Funding For Schools.

All parents want their children to go to a good local school. Conservative cuts to school budgets have made this increasingly difficult, and every school in Gosport is affected. Reduced school maintenance, larger classes and far fewer learning support assistants providing one-to-one help are just a few signs of the impact. More and more schools appeal to cash-strapped parents for money to help balance their budgets.

We believe that education is a public service and a national priority, and Labour will always work towards providing the funding needed to achieve positive outcomes for future generations. We also recognise that successful schools require a level of autonomy and freedom to provide the best learning experience for their pupils.

Gosport Labour Party will campaign to support school staff and ensure that no child is taught in a class of more than 30 pupils.

Safety First!

A Labour Council in Gosport will also work to preserve school crossing patrols at risk due to Tory cuts, and lobby the Treasury to fund the removal of asbestos from our local schools.

We believe that all children should have opportunity to learn to swim at school. This means protecting and expanding the existing school swimming facilities, and organising subsidies to use other pools where necessary. This small step will help protect children while offering a valuable lifelong skill. Our members are involved in the local campaign to renovate Leesland School pool.

Health Services

A Demand for Life Saving Care

Gosport Labour is campaigning for a new Accident and Emergency Centre in Gosport. We have a population of 82,000 people, three senior schools, twenty-seven primary schools and one college. Despite our town's size, we remain at the back of the queue for emergency medical services.

An accessible A&E would save precious time in the 'Golden Hour' period, after which survival rates dramatically decrease. A new A&E in Gosport would also ease the immense strain on Queen Alexandra hospital and provide new jobs in the local area.

There are several potential sites, including Daedalus, where it would be possible to build a new facility, combining A&E with GP and social care provision, to serve not only Gosport but also Stubbington, Hill Head and parts of Fareham. The MoD's decision to close Haslar in the 1990s and the over-centralisation of services at QA, where access and parking are poor, have not been good for Gosport.

With your support we can achieve this new facility and save many lives for years to come.

Only Labour Can Be Trusted With The NHS

The last 10 years have seen deep, dangerous cuts to our NHS. By 2020 the NHS will face its tightest funding period since the 1950's. Social care schemes have also been scrapped by local government because of austerity.

We all hear moving stories from the everyday heroes who look after our elderly and infirm. The theme is always the same; they love what they do but they aren't coping because the system is being stretched too far. The NHS began with the Labour party and we are committed to keep this amazing service running and well-funded.



Dignity for All

We have heard members and supporters talking about cuts made to crucial services for those with disabilities. Parents of children with conditions such as Down's Syndrome and autism are being denied essential support such as physio and speech therapy. These cuts are short sighted and will lead to bigger problems in the long run.

Gosport Labour Party will actively oppose further cuts to this vital support. We will work with local providers to ensure that people with disabilities and their carers have the resources they need to lead decent, dignified lives.

Gosport Labour is also working towards getting a 'Changing Places' restroom in Gosport. Every day, disabled adults and older children are being changed on a toilet floor. The nearest restroom with suitable changing facilities is in Southsea.

We believe that no-one in Gosport should be faced with this indignity and will lobby for improved facilities across the area.

Supporting Our Military

Housing Our Armed Forces Deserve

Gosport has a long and rich military history. However, Conservative policies have stripped away the jobs, accommodation and services designed to support our military, and increased rates of homelessness and mental health issues.

The brave men and women of our armed forces and their families deserve nothing but the best. Shamefully, the government's contractor has let them down so that leaks, cracked pipes, mould, damp, a lack of heating and no hot water are common problems.

It is unacceptable that those who risk their lives to protect our country should have to put up with sub-standard living conditions.

A Labour Council will work with contractors to make sure military accommodation is built and maintained to the highest standards.

High Quality Civilian Employment

The impending closure of HMS Sultan will result in a huge loss of jobs in the town. Gosport Labour Party would like to see the redevelopment of this site into a skills training and technology park. This will create job opportunities and provide residents, including ex-military personnel, with the skills to pursue new and rewarding careers.

Gosport Labour will also set up a dedicated help-desk in the Town Hall for servicemen and women in need of affordable housing or assistance transitioning to civilian life.

Retirement & Later Years

Connecting older people with their community

The Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness is an initiative that Gosport Labour Party fully supports.

In Britain there are around one million people who speak to no-one else five days out of seven - many are older citizens. Some of our members belong to the Older Persons Forum and to Gosport Voluntary Action's Befriending team. Our Labour councillors have always maintained close links with older voters, including those in residential care.

As more Labour Councillors are elected into office, we will build stronger networks with older residents and provide support to these organisations.

Proper Consideration for Bus Travellers

We recognise that bus services also play a big role in keeping families and the older generation connected. Our Conservative council argues that more needs to be done to reduce traffic while cutting valuable public transport services at the same time.

Too often we have spoken to people who can no longer make the trip to weekly social events or friends' houses due to poor transport provision in their area. We will continue to fight for bus services and the free bus pass for all retired people.

Finally, Gosport Labour will make sure that older residents who rely on their local bus services are the first to be consulted on proposed changes to routes or new local developments that may affect their travel.

Traffic & Transport

Improving the Daily Commute

Gosport Labour recognises that for the majority living in Gosport, the A32 is a notorious problem. For those unable to find an alternative route in the morning, it is a frustrating and time consuming road. It has also been highlighted as a major source of air pollution.

Congestion charges have been suggested by other parties. However, this would penalise daily commuters with no other method of getting to work.

As a more thoughtful solution, Gosport Labour will investigate the effects of converting the A32 into a dynamic dual carriageway to ease congestion during the rush hour.

Increasing outbound lanes from one to two in the morning, and the same for inbound traffic in the evening would allow more vehicles to pass through this bottleneck.

Tackling The Parking Shortage

We know that one great annoyance for thousands of Gosport residents is the difficulty of finding a parking space.

As the population of the town grows, so do the number of two-car and three-car families. With bus services being cut and little in the way of local employment it is no wonder that households may need more than one vehicle to get to work.

We will focus on improving transport links and local employment opportunities to alleviate the need for many multi-car households, rather than rushing to introduce costly parking permit schemes.

Accessible Bus Routes for Residents

Cycle paths, better lighting for pedestrians and car-sharing schemes all help relieve congestion on the roads, but so do bus routes. Whilst the Eclipse Bus provides the most direct route between Gosport and Fareham, the 9 & 11 services offer better access for much of Alverstoke, Holbrook, Elson, Rowner & Bridgemary.

However, these services are at risk of being lost in the next round of county council cuts. Scrapping these services will have a dramatic effect on residents who rely on local bus services for transport.

We will fight to preserve remaining routes and commission plans to properly assess where public transport is needed most in Gosport.

Stronger Connections by Rail

Developing quicker, frequent and more affordable links with Portsmouth and Fareham means residents would have easier access to the rail networks there. This isn't where Gosport Labour's commitment ends though. The privatised rail networks have seen increased fares (the UK's fares are some of the highest in Europe), poor service and unreliable travel, all in the name of profit.

We believe that people should come before profit and will support Labour nationally in campaigning to renationalise the railways.

The freedom offered through affordable, reliable and quality rail travel gives people the opportunity to enjoy more control in their social, work and educational life.

Young People & Families

A Safe Place to Call home

Every child deserves the best possible start to life, and this begins with a safe and secure family home.

The Gosport Labour Party is fully committed to secure housing for all families, where children can learn and develop.

Your local Labour team also believes that support is needed for families suffering marital, financial or mental health problems, as help is often necessary to get them back on track. Alcoholism, substance abuse and gambling are common issues that can break up a family unit. Local help should be available for individual family members anonymously and at home. We will fight to bring these missing services back to our town.

Libraries and Community Services

Labour want to see libraries preserved. The Gosport Discovery Centre is a perfect example of the value that libraries provide. It offers a central location for many family activities, parent & child groups, talks and hobby evenings, as well as supplying Gosport with a comprehensive library of books and research materials. Instead of stripping away the services it provides, Gosport Labour Party will work towards creating more community classes and groups in this space. These projects will help bring the community together and provide pastimes for people of all ages.

The Gosport Labour Party also has a vision for more outdoor gyms, play facilities for children and youth projects. We will campaign to protect established youth groups, such as the scouts, especially those in danger of losing their meeting places.

Art and Cultural Projects

In its manifesto, Labour announced its intention to provide a £1bn Culture Capital Fund as part of its "Culture for All" campaign. Art, music and theatre should be community led, for the inclusion and experience of everyone. The experience, discussion and involvement in the arts play a big part in a community's identity.

Through these cultural services, we want to inspire our young people and enable them to develop the creativity, self-confidence and co-operative skills which they will need to be successful in the future.

Are You Registered To Vote?

The upcoming local elections will determine which local party controls the future of our small town. At the moment Gosport is being stripped down and sold off by Conservative councillors who appear uninterested in the wellbeing of local residents.

If you are not registered to vote yet and live or work in Gosport, be sure to apply online. It's the most important step you can take towards changing Gosport for the better. You can also apply for a Postal Vote at the same time.

Help us create a fairer, better town for all Gosport residents by registering to vote and supporting us on the 3rd May.

www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Work & Employment

Fighting Against Job Insecurity

Employment rights and protections have always been at the heart of Labour's campaigns. Creating employment opportunities for people and ensuring their welfare are absolutely central to Gosport Labour's values.

Locally and nationally, working people face the same issues: pay inequality, the insecurity of zero-hour contracts, inadequate minimum wage or the effect of public sector pay caps. Underpaid, undervalued care staff are just one example of the many employment hardships that Labour wants to confront.

In January this year we have rallied around residents working in HMS Collingwood and Fort Blockhouse who have had their working hours unfairly slashed.

This is another example of large government contractors punishing their employees in the name of higher profits. We will continue to stand with local people against organisations that treat Gosport's workforce unjustly.

UNDER THE CONSERVATIVES:

**Unemployment in Gosport rose by nearly 10% last year.
That's 4000 fewer people in work!**



Rewarding Careers, Closer to Home

Gosport Labour will champion the creation of quality jobs, providing long-term growth and stability by ensuring businesses play by the rules. We will achieve this by working with local businesses, employment services and unions to give residents the chance to work closer to home.

Promoting New Technologies

Gosport is rich in locations which could be used for co-working spaces. These are a valuable resource for dynamic small businesses to grow and develop without having to invest in permanent office space. Cost-effective desk sharing also encourages creative environments, innovative thought and co-operation.

As Artificial Intelligence takes the world into the 4th industrial revolution, we will lobby to partner with neighbouring universities and promote the foundation of a technology & science park.

Your Gosport Labour Party will help realise the town's future potential at the forefront of an exciting, digital age through new investment and skills training.

Protecting Our Environment

Our Shared Environment

Maintaining the local environment is one of our highest priorities as it has a hugely positive impact on all local inhabitants - people and wildlife. We take this so seriously that the issue is woven through every policy decision, from development to education, transport to job creation. We are clear that a responsive, joined-up and innovative long term strategy is essential.

Promoting local environmental awareness is crucial, especially among the younger generation. We want to see our children and young people more engaged in their local natural spaces. It is our job to teach them to appreciate nature and care for it.

Recycling and Waste Services

Like many residents, we are deeply opposed to the recent decision to introduce paid-for “brown bins” for garden waste. This scheme is designed only to tax people for maintaining their gardens.

We believe that the current system of offering biodegradable garden waste sacks should remain and will fight to oppose this change.

The Household Waste Recycling Centre in Grange Road is an invaluable resource for the whole town. However, the Tory county council continues to enforce new charges for its use, despite the obvious rise in fly-tipping incidents this causes.

In council we will work to remove these charges for the benefit of all residents.



Supporting Our Volunteers

Gosport has many exemplary volunteer groups caring for the parks, nature reserves and coastal areas of this town and our members have always been involved in keeping Gosport’s family-friendly spaces clean with regular litter picks. We will put these groups at the very heart of our environmental strategies.

A Labour Council in Gosport will connect with volunteer groups, taking forward their ideas on local environmental issues.

By using their expert knowledge we can better plan the maintenance of our parks and protection of our natural habitats. Further, we would support the needs of these groups through helping with funding applications, promoting events, sourcing tools and equipment, and making sure council maintenance work is coordinated effectively.

Green Spaces for All to Enjoy

We will promote and protect our fantastic green and wild spaces – parks, nature reserves and coastal areas – and will make sure that our wild habitats are sustained. We will strive to protect our shrubs and flower beds, and to encourage more new planting through community gardening groups. We will review the planning process, and fight to protect the important habitats and wildlife in Gosport.

**Vote Labour on
Thursday 3 May 2018**

GosportLabour.co.uk