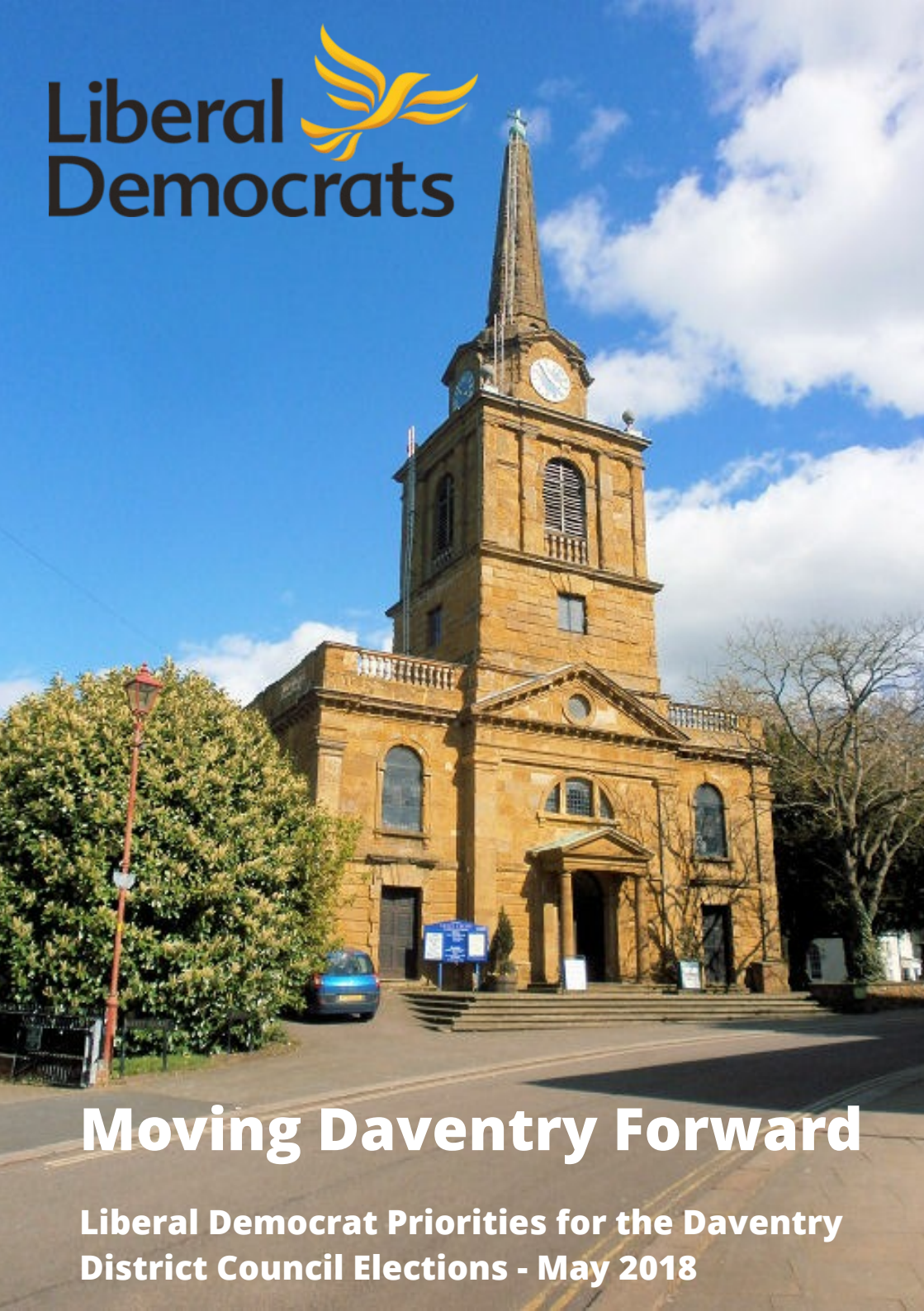


Liberal Democrats



Moving Daventry Forward

Liberal Democrat Priorities for the Daventry District Council Elections - May 2018



Dear Resident,

These local elections could well be the last ever set of elections for Daventry District Council as they are set against the backdrop of a failed Conservative run Northamptonshire County Council. This has led to the Government Inspector recommending a new 'unitary' council is set up where one council provides all the services for our area.



So it could be that councillors elected this May only serve for a couple of years until a new, very different, Council is elected in 2020.

This change will be the main priority for Daventry District Council in the next two years and Lib Dems will play their part in trying to influence what is currently looking like a 'top down' Government imposed solution.

However that doesn't mean these elections are not important because they are a key opportunity for you to help shape that future agenda.

Whilst following the results the Conservatives will, in all likelihood, remain in charge of Daventry District Council you can still use the opportunity to elect more opposition councillors to re-dress the current imbalance which sees the Council dominated by one party.

More scrutiny, checks, balances and debate are desperately needed and by electing a strong opposition you can do that. We have just seen on the County Council what happens when one party rule goes unchecked.

So I would urge you to vote for your Liberal Democrat candidate on 3rd May to help hold the Council to account and make sure whatever follows it is more representative of the people.

With best wishes,

Councillor Catherine Lomax

Liberal Democrat

Daventry District Council



Our Key Priorities:

1. New development only with new services included

Ensure that at the same time any new housing developments are completed new services are included such as schools, transport and health services.

2. Provide leadership by putting in place a strong Local Plan

The Conservatives have still not completed a new Local Plan for the District. We will prioritise this to ensure we have a robust plan in place to control future development and to make sure it enhances town and villages.

3. Spend money wisely with no tax payers money on a canal arm

The canal project needs to have a robust business plan to justify it and should not be at a cost to Daventry District council taxpayers.

4. Listen to local people

Lib Dems want to see more neighbourhood working involving Parish and the Town Councils more in decision making and drawing up future plans. We will expand the use of the People's Panel and develop new ways of consulting. We want to promote the benefits of getting involved in your local community.

5. Work towards a plastic free District

Lib Dems press the Council to take the lead in reducing and removing the use of single use plastics across the District. We expect the Council to set an example by aiming to achieve this by 2020.



Housing

- Daventry District is an area with only one town and many villages and smaller settlements, this means that the housing needs for different areas is very different. We believe that the residents of the area are best placed to decide what is suitable for their area. We are against over developing the countryside but we do understand that additional homes are needed to house the increasing population and to enable those young people who have grown up in the area to have a home there if they wish.
- In addition to this, when planning permission is given for developments then necessary infrastructure such as schools, shops, GP surgeries and road links should be part of the planning permission and should always be built and not removed from plans at the last minute as has often happened in previous developments.
- It appears too many larger houses are being built and not enough smaller homes. On the new Danetre Place estate in Daventry and Cildes Croft estate in Kilsby there are disproportionate number of five-bedroom houses. How many residents of Daventry need or more importantly can afford these homes which can be in excess of half a million pounds!
- Liberal Democrats believe there is a desperate need for more social and affordable housing to be built - as a minimum we would seek 25% in the town, and 40% in villages in any new development.
- The Conservatives have failed to enforce previous targets on affordable housing and it often seem requirements are dropped when developers claim they are uneconomical. Lib Dems would take a more robust approach to ensuring target are met.

Planning & Development

- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a way Daventry District Council can through the planning process secure vital funds from new developments to make improvements for residents. We would take a more robust approach to this than the current Conservative run council. It seems too often opportunities are missed to make key improvements through use of these funds. Residents and their local Councillors need to be involved in establishing requirements.



- The Conservatives have failed to get a new Local Plan in place and as a consequence new development in the District are still too often driven by developers rather than local people. Lib Dems would prioritise getting this in place to make sure developments are controlled and within an overall plan agreed by residents.

Daventry Canal Arm

- The Daventry Canal Arm could potentially help to improve the district. However, the initial plan was for it to be funded solely by private monies. Now the plan is to use up to £15 million of reserves and then hope the money can be clawed back from section 106 and CIL monies. This is not private money, it is money which should be used to improve essential infrastructure in the area, not in our opinion, a canal arm.
- In addition to our objection to public money being used to fund the project, the plans for the canal arm are lacking in detail, badly thought out and raise so many more questions than they answer. Lib Dems do not object to the idea of a canal arm in principle but the current plan is inadequate and the project should not need to be funded by the Council taxpayer.

The Future of Daventry Town

- The current Conservative run Council's proposals for improvements to Daventry are at best 'top down' and at worst seem to 'pie in the sky' with no real coherent overall vision that has the backing of residents.
- Whilst there are some good ideas Lib Dems want to find out what the people want, find out how we get there and then create a feasible plan to take us there.
- The Conservatives plans are all written behind closed doors and do not include the public at planning stage and then are changed multiple times with the people of the district rarely being consulted and sometimes not even informed.



Waste and Recycling

- The new '1,2,3' waste and recycling service to commence in June, and provided through Norse, is a welcome step in the right direction following the end of the previous contract with Amey.
- The amount of litter and rubbish in public places, parks and roadsides is still at unacceptable levels and the clear up must be improved with the introduction of the new service. The County Council and Highways Agency are failing to clear up roadside rubbish and the District Council should take the lead in clearing up 'grot spots' and pass on costs to those responsible.
- Lib Dems want to see greater emphasis on 'reuse and reduce' and believe the Council has a key role in providing leadership towards a more environmentally sustainable future.
- As part of showing environmental leadership we believe the Council should aim to become plastic free by 2020 and should work with local retailers and businesses to reduce the use single use plastic across the District.

Country Park

- Better maintenance is needed as a lot of the bridges and play equipment is in a poor state and in many ways it would be better to improve this rather than create the canal arm. The Country Park has retained its Green Flag status which is fantastic so we should use this to attract more visitors and improve the facilities available.
- The proposed extension to the County Park needs to be properly maintained and the District Council needs to work alongside Norse and collaborate with Daventry Town Council to achieve this.

Council Tax

- We believe that the council should be honest with people and raise taxes if and when necessary, the precept should be increased, decreased or kept the same to fund the needs of the people.
- The current Conservative run Council as well as a previous Labour run one have not been honest in raising Council tax to pay for future demands on services. We believe that tax payers should receive value for money but if the council can provide enhanced services by spending more then tax should increase.
- Lib Dems believe that the District Council should hand over responsibility to Daventry Town Council for managing the facilities covered by the Daventry Town Special Expenses (council tax levy).



A new Council

- Liberal Democrats believe in a model of devolved government where the national government makes the laws and locally elected bodies deliver the services at the most appropriate level without the duplication we currently have. We want, as much as possible, to devolve decision making to local communities on issues that affect them and by so doing see it as a way or re-invigorating our democracy by bringing it closer to the people.
- Lib Dems also want to see the introduction of Proportional Representation for local Council elections (as in Scotland) to ensure that the Councillors elected are more representative of the whole community and to avoid the dominance of any particular political party.
- Lib Dems are convinced that Unitary Local Government (single council) would deliver real benefits across Northamptonshire and we have been consistently saying this for years. We called for the County Council to be scrapped in our 2017 County Council elections manifesto.
- However we are concerned about the proposals from the Government Inspector which could see both Daventry District Council and South Northants District Council become part of a large West Northamptonshire Council to include Northampton. We believe this could see resources focused more on the needs of Northampton town to the detriment of Daventry and the rural areas.
- Our ideal solution would be for Daventry District Council to take on many of the services provided by the current County Council (i.e. and to become a unitary council). With this approach we would see that some services such as adult social care, (education), major roads and highways would be managed in partnership with other councils in, and bordering, Northamptonshire (as currently happens with South Northants and Cherwell councils).
- Overriding any proposed solution must be that the residents and people affected must be involved and agree what is right rather than it being imposed by politicians.

**For details of your Lib Dem candidate standing in these elections and to provide feedback on these priorities please go to :
www.daventrylibdems.org.uk**