

# LET'S KEEP GLOUCESTER ON THE UP!

The Conservative Manifesto for  
the Gloucester City Council  
elections on 5th May 2015



Conservatives

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# A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP LEADER

Conservatives have run the City Council, albeit as a minority administration, since 2004. We've made good progress in that time, but there is still a lot more we want to achieve for Gloucester.

We've kept council tax rises down, including freezing it for five years, delivered well over £700 million of regeneration, dramatically improved recycling rates and cut car parking charges.

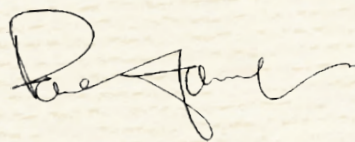
We are now on the verge of achieving something very special in Gloucester, with many regeneration schemes, large and small, on the verge of delivery.

The new bus station is on site, with the revised Kings Quarter scheme to follow on from it next year. Bakers Quay has been acquired, planning permission granted and a start on site due later in the year. We are working with the County Council to deliver the regeneration of the Quayside and Blackfriars area, which can make such a difference to our city centre.

We have led Gloucester through some tough times – the floods of 2007, the worst recession for 60 years and the public spending cuts of recent years – but the city has taken this all in its stride and has emerged all the stronger from the challenges we have faced. We have shown through the delivery of last year's Rugby World Cup that we can play a part on the global stage and this should give us renewed ambition.

We trust our communities and look to build on their strengths rather than focus on what they lack – and we are determined to make sure every area of Gloucester benefits from the city's economic success.

These all-out elections are important. They will set the direction of the city for the next for years. Let's not go back to the bad old days of the past. Please support your Conservative candidates on 5th May and let's keep Gloucester on the UP!



Conservative City Council Leader Paul James

**CLLR PAUL JAMES**  
**CONSERVATIVE LEADER OF GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL**

# YOUR MONEY - OUR PLEDGES

## KEY PLEDGES

- Low council tax
- Competitive parking charges
- More joint working with other councils
- Review of office accommodation

**Council Tax** – We froze the City Council’s element of the Council Tax for five years in succession. The average council tax rise under the Conservatives over the last 12 years is 1.8%. The previous decade under the other parties it was 10%. Public consultation this year revealed a preference for a modest council tax rise to protect services. This will continue to be our approach as long as the public’s view stays the same.

**Parking** – We will keep parking charges, which we have cut substantially in recent years, as low as possible, making sure they remain good value compared with similar towns and cities. We will introduce Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) machines in our multi-storey car parks, so you pay on exit instead of in advance, to improve operations and encourage people to stay longer. We will undertake a city centre parking review regarding the amount and location of parking.

**Working with other councils** – We are sharing more and more services with the County Council and neighbouring district councils and will continue to do so where we can demonstrate savings or service improvements. The joint post of Managing Director of the City Council/Commissioning Director of the County Council is an example of this.

**Office accommodation** – The City Council has shrunk in recent years and no longer needs the amount of office space it once did. We have already leased three floors of North Warehouse to Regus to provide offices for small businesses. We still have too much space, so will review the options of consolidating at our existing location, moving elsewhere in the city centre to spearhead regeneration or sharing with another organisation.



# THE ECONOMY AND REGENERATION — OUR PLEDGES

## KEY PLEDGES

- More students living in the city centre
- Supporting city centre projects
- New gate street paving
- The new bus station delivered
- Reinstating City Centre Enforcement Officers

**Business Growth** – Growing Gloucester’s economy will continue to be a top priority for a Conservative council. We will work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and other key partners to bring jobs and investment to the city. We will work to attract key growth sectors to the city, such as energy, digital and cyber security. We will work with the University of Gloucestershire to implement their plans to bring their Business School, with an extra 2000 students, to the city. We will ensure as many students as possible live in the city centre.

**Regeneration** – We will deliver our recently-adopted Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy, including many of the projects listed in this manifesto but also important schemes like Bakers Quay, new housing in the city centre and along the canal and our hit-list of vacant sites and buildings. Our plans to bring brownfield sites back into use for housing, as part of the Housing Zone status granted by the Government, will help to relieve pressure on greenfield sites elsewhere in the city. We will consider how the Government’s Starter Homes programme can help us deliver our ambitions.

**City Centre Investment Fund** – We will continue to deliver key projects to support the city centre from the £2 million fund we set aside for this purpose. We will review the progress of the various projects to ensure they still deliver the best value for this money and continue to be appropriate in the changing world of city centres.

**Gate Streets** – We will prioritise the use of capital receipts going forward to replace the tired paving in the city centre with a high quality finish, in particular Eastgate and Westgate Streets.

**The City Centre** – We will explore how Gloucester can be at the vanguard of the digital high street. We will trial a land train running between Gloucester Quays and the city centre this summer and will look at other possible transport links. We will reinstate city centre wardens to deal with enforcement of dropping litter, riding bicycles through the gate streets and antisocial behaviour.

# THE ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OUR PLEDGES

## KEY PLEDGES

- A new Kings Quarter scheme with consultation immediately after the election, a planning application by the end of the year and a chance for the public to have a stake
- Regenerating Blackfriars and Quayside
- An improved railway station
- “Purple Flag” status for the evening economy

**Kings Quarter** – We will deliver the new bus station as phase one of Kings Quarter; having secured £6.4 million of Government funding this has now started on site. We will deliver the revised Kings Quarter scheme as a gateway to the city centre, including a new Indoor Market, replacement car park, some shops, restaurants and cafes/bars, a hotel and some residential use. We will start public consultation straight away after the elections and aim for a detailed planning application by the end of the year. We will look to involve local people as much as possible in this scheme – helping to shape it, to work on it and even to invest directly in it.

**Railway Station** – We will implement improvements to the Railway Station, such as the new car park in Great Western Road and improvements to the station building and forecourt, in partnership with others and subject to the successful outcome of funding bids.

**Blackfriars & Quayside** – Having secured £4.1 million of government funding to progress the regeneration of the Blackfriars and Quayside area of the city, we will press ahead with our plans. We will work with City & Country, the new owners of the former Gloucester Prison site, to ensure our plans complement theirs.

**Evening Economy** – We will continue to make our night-time economy safer and more diverse, aiming to achieve “Purple Flag” status for Gloucester – an accreditation that acknowledges excellence in the management of the evening economy – following on from our launch of “Best Bar None” scheme for licensed premises, which won the national “Best New Scheme” award.

# LEISURE, SPORT & CULTURE – OUR PLEDGES

## KEY PLEDGES

- A new cultural venue for the city
- Building the Rugby World Cup legacy
- A major History Festival in 2018

**Cultural Venue** -We will deliver a new cultural venue for the city, for performances and conferences. This will by its nature be a long-term project and, as yet, neither a site nor a design has been agreed but we have had early discussions with potential interested parties. We will consult with the public on what form this should take and build a case to secure external funding.

**Rugby World Cup** – We will maximise the legacy, in terms of the economic benefit, volunteering, sporting participation and improved facilities, from the Rugby World Cup. Just because the tournament is over, it doesn't mean our work is done – indeed, far from it.

**Tourism** - We will implement the Visitor Economy Strategy to build Gloucester's tourist industry. Much has been delivered including the Rugby World Cup and improved city dressing and signage but we will continue to deliver all the remaining actions including a new cultural venue and increased hotel accommodation to help grow our visitor economy.

**Making the most of our history** – We will continue to enhance our museums so that the Museum of Gloucester will tell the story of Gloucester more effectively and the Gloucester Life Museum will show us how past people of Gloucester lived. We will re-open the Roman remains at the King's Bastion under Kings Walk for the 2016 Heritage Open Days and will re-open it on a regular basis by September 2017.

**Festivals & Events** – We will continue to develop the city's portfolio of events like the Tall Ships Festival, History Festival and Summer of Music, Art and Culture to name but a few. We will ensure that the city maximises the benefits from the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the coronation of Henry III this year and the 1100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Aethelflaed and her burial at St Oswalds Priory, and the 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Siege of Gloucester, in 2018.

# LEISURE, SPORT & CULTURE – OUR PLEDGES (CONTINUED)

## KEY PLEDGES

- A cultural hub at Kings House
- A permanent Tall Ship for the Docks
- A major History Festival in 2018
- A sports hub for the south of the city
- Support for Gloucester City AFC playing back at Meadow Park

**Art & Culture for all** – We have delivered a new Cultural Strategy which identifies a vision of ‘Putting Culture at the Heart of Gloucester for the Good of All’. We will work with partners to deliver that strategy and bring funding for Gloucester to grow Art & Culture, which will deliver many benefits including economic.

**Art & Culture Hub** – We will continue to work with partners to ensure we have an active Art & Culture Hub in Gloucester. We have opened phase 1 in Grosvenor House and phase 2 will open in Kings House.

**Tall Ship for the Docks** – We will work with partners to provide a permanent Tall Ship in Gloucester Docks, ideally one specially-built which will provide employment and training opportunities for local people.

**Sports Hub for South of City** – We will work with partners to deliver a sports hub at Blackbridge including a new training facility for Gloucester City Football Club.

**Gloucester City Football Club** - We will work with all interested parties to help Gloucester City Football Club to return to their Gloucester home for the start of the 2017/18 season and have made regeneration funding available to the Club to help this happen.

**Robinswood Hill Visitor Centre** – We will make more of Robinswood Hill for tourism, conservation and leisure purposes, including delivering a new visitor centre.

**Parks** – We will continue to deliver the Public Open Space strategy, including planting 5,000 new trees, refurbishing two play areas each year and delivering £200k per year of investment.



# COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT — OUR PLEDGES

## KEY PLEDGES

- Building new housing
- Protecting Gloucester from flooding
- More recycling
- Building on the strengths of communities
- Continue to tackle the seagull problem

**Housing**– We have successfully completed the transfer of the Council’s Housing Stock to Gloucester City Homes, paving the way for greater investment and new homes to be built. We will continue to work with GCH and other partners to meet the city’s housing need.

**Crime** –We will work with the Safer Gloucester Partnership, the CitySafe Manager, the Police, businesses and residents to bring crime down. Our key priority will be to work with our partners and communities on a strategy to tackle knife crime to include a focus on prevention, enforcement, education and community building.

**Flooding** – We have successfully delivered numerous flood alleviation projects across the city and will continue to invest to protect our homes and businesses.

**Recycling** – We are widening the range of recyclable materials that we collect at the doorstep and will expand that further when the vehicle fleet is renewed next year.

**Environmental crime** - We will continue to raise standards in the City, encouraging responsibility in communities, education and prevention and to take robust action against perpetrators of Environmental Crimes when necessary.

**Communities and localism** – We will use Asset Based Community Development principles across the Council’s work, building on the strengths of communities. We will work with, support and listen to our communities and use the provisions of the Localism Act wherever possible for their benefit. We will join up physical and social regeneration, so that everyone in the city benefits from the huge amount of investment we are attracting.

# COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT — OUR PLEDGES (CONTINUED)

## KEY PLEDGES

- Support the Voluntary Sector
- Increase Community Budgets
- Better Manage the Seagull Menace

**The voluntary sector** – We will continue to support voluntary and community groups financially and will help them to lever in funds from other sources. We will strengthen our partnerships with advice agencies to ensure residents have access to support.

**Community budgets** – We will double the £1000 a year budget for councillors to spend in their wards that we introduced last year.

**Seagull programme** – We are taking a new approach and bringing more resources to managing the city's seagull problem and we are in year two of an intensive three year programme of egg and nest removal.

# WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED TOGETHER SINCE 2004

## Your money

- **Kept council tax rises down** – an average of less than 2% a year against 10% a year average for the previous 10 years when the other parties ran the Council. Council tax frozen for 5 years.
- **£9 million savings delivered** over the last 6 years, mainly through efficiencies, in order to protect frontline services.
- **Council management and accommodation costs reduced.** Three floors of North Warehouse now occupied by office provider Regus. Reception at Herbert Warehouse refurbished to provide a better service to customers.
- **More services shared with other councils**, particularly the County Council, to reduce costs.
- **Car parking charges cut.** Under Labour it cost £20 per day to park in Gloucester. It now costs a maximum of £6 in City Council car parks, with as little as £2 in some. Automatic Number Plate Recognition system being introduced to provide a more modern experience for customers.

## Regeneration

- **St Oswalds Park** – former cattle market transformed into successful retail and leisure park, with residential elements including extra care village.
- **Docks warehouses** restored, new build taken place and new public spaces created.
- **Gloucester Park** transformed with £1.2 million of funding, including new bandstand, toilets and landscaping.
- **Gloucester Quays** scheme delivered, including latest phase of new cinema and restaurants.
- **Pedestrian linkages** work between Gloucester Quays and the city centre completed
- 20 years of dereliction on the **Railway Triangle** ended, with new Morrisons supermarket opened and further phases underway.
- Former **Golden Egg** acquired from Aviva and demolished. Paving along Kings Walk renewed. Funding for bus station secured and now on site. Land acquisition for Kings Quarter scheme undertaken in multi-million pound deal and revised scheme coming forward to include new indoor market, car park, shops/bars/restaurants, a hotel and residential components.

# ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2004 (CONTINUED)

- **Took on city centre assets from now defunct Regional Development Agency**, including the Fleece Hotel, where urgent works have been carried out to save the most historic parts. Laser survey underway to establish detailed condition and negotiations undertaken with consortium of local businesspeople to bring about its restoration. Other former RDA assets at various stages of regeneration.
- **Former Gloscat college sites in Brunswick Road currently being redeveloped** by Linden Homes to create a new residential quarter in the city centre. Many are now occupied and properties on the site are selling well.
- **Restoration of historic buildings - 66 Westgate Street (former Teapots)** with Council grant, Robert Raikes House, St Michael's Tower, St Oswalds Priory. Blackfriars Priory opened as venue for events and exhibitions. Trust set up to manage and restore Llanthony Priory, which has now been awarded a £3 million stage two Heritage Lottery Fund pass.
- Other **successful Heritage Lottery Fund bids** including the Cathedral's Project Pilgrim (£4 million), Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, Gloucester Waterways Museum, Gloucestershire Archives and St Mary de Crypt (stage one).
- **£2 million City Centre Investment Fund created** for projects to support the city centre, including business grants, property grants for repairs, new Christmas lights, car park improvements and many other items.
- **New Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy** adopted in 2015.
- Government Growth Deal funding of £4.13 million secured for new **Blackfriars** masterplan which is currently underway.
- Developer and finance secured and planning permission granted to end twenty years of dereliction at **Bakers Quay**.
- **Regeneration Hitlist** created to focus on vacant and derelict sites and buildings in the city, with remarkable success. Examples include Albion House in Southgate Street, the Fiveways site at Southgate Street/Trier Way, Bakers Quay and the former M&S store in Northgate Street.
- **£1.2 million Townscape Heritage Initiative** programme two years into a five year plan to improve Southgate Street. Funding includes £900k from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

# ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2004 (CONTINUED)

## Culture, Leisure, Sport and Events

- **Re-opened the Folk Museum** after it was closed by the previous administration.
- **£ 1 million museum refurbishment project completed**, including ground floor at the City Museum and new Education Building at the Folk Museum. Museums now rebranded as the Museum of Gloucester and the Gloucester Life Museum to better reflect their roles.
- **Secured Rugby World Cup Host City status** for 2015 and delivered our part of the tournament – four matches at Kingsholm, the fanzone, dressing the city, plus a cultural programme alongside it (with £85,000 of Arts Council funding), the Scrumpty Trail and a museum exhibition.
- **Tall Ships Festival** held in 2007 and every two years since. First major History Festival held in September 2012 and annually thereafter. Successful portfolio of events for the city put together with partners, including Food Festival, Springfest, Victorian Market and Crucible sculpture exhibition, Gloucester Day and Summer of Music, Art and Culture (SoMAC).
- **Christmas activities developed** – new lights, switch-on event/lantern procession, Tree of Light, Christmas markets, Best Dressed Window Competition.
- **Creation of Aspire Leisure Trust** to manage GL1 and Tennis Centre. Cost to taxpayer dramatically reduced
- **New outdoor market and car boot site** opened at Hempsted Meadows. Currently operated very successfully by private contractor.
- **Blackbridge athletics track refurbished** with grant funding from Sport England and others. Plan for new sports hub on adjoining site.
- **Creation of Marketing Gloucester** to promote the city. New visitor economy strategy adopted.
- **New “Welcome to Gloucester” signs** on gateways to city.
- **Many new blue plaques added or refurbished**, including for William Henley, Colonel Massey, Jemmy Wood and George Whitefield.
- **Culture Board formed** of key players and new Cultural Strategy adopted.



# ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2004 (CONTINUED)

## Community

- **Recycling rate increased** from 7% to around 40%. Green box recycling extended across the whole city, plastic bottles, card, aerosols and tetrapaks now collected, garden waste collection introduced and separate food waste collection.
- **£40m of investment in “Decent Homes”** programme, making 100% of our former council houses meet the standard. Housing stock transfer to Gloucester City Homes completed after endorsement by tenants and £50 million investment by Government.
- Level of **new affordable housing** units delivered consistently higher than the previous administration.
- Worked with developers to bring **community facilities and local centres** to new housing schemes such as Kingsway and introduced Community Builders.
- Secured £1 million for Podsmead through the **Big Local Fund**.
- **Leadership through the floods of 2007** and over 100 flood alleviation schemes undertaken since.
- **Major improvements to open spaces** across the city, including works at Robinswood Hill.
- **Urban Wildflower Meadows** introduced, helping Gloucester to become Britain’s first “Bee Guardian City”.
- Major investment in **play areas** across the city – more than £1 million spent on over 20 sites.
- Tough action taken to bring **empty homes back into use** – including the compulsory purchase of long-term empty property in Bristol Road. The threat of CPO has been used to bring other long-term empty homes back into use.
- Continued to **support voluntary sector** in the city through grants at a higher level than most councils. Further funding levered in from other sources such as the Lottery.
- **Armed Forces Champion** appointed and Military Covenant, setting out our commitment to the Forces community, signed.
- **Believe in Gloucester** campaign launched, and awards introduced with Gloucestershire Media, to generate pride in the city.

# THE CHOICE AT THIS ELECTION



**Before Conservatives started running the Council in 2004, the City was under Labour control for many years, either on its own or in coalition with the Liberal Democrats. It's easy to forget the chaos that existed at the time, but judge whether you prefer our record or theirs.**

CONSERVATIVES	LABOUR
Average 1.8% a year council tax rise. Council tax frozen for the last 5 years.	Average 10% a year council tax rise
Recycling rates 40% and due to rise further	Recycling rates in single figures
Major investment in our museum service	Closed the Folk Museum and left both council museums unchanged for years.
Over £700 million of investment in regeneration at St Oswalds Park, the Docks, Gloucester Quays, the Railway Triangle etc	Failed regeneration at Blackfriars. Sold Westgate car park for £1 and spent £1 million getting it back.
Parking charges cut.	Parking charges went up year-on-year.
£10 million of savings delivered over last 6 years	Ran up £10 million of debt with nothing to show for it
Working closely with the County Council to deliver savings, service improvements and regeneration	Often at loggerheads with the County Council
Three star housing service, £40 million of improvements to the housing stock and transfer to Gloucester City Homes completed	Zero star housing service, council housing stock in serious disrepair
Working with our communities to build on their strengths. £1 million Big Lottery Fund secured for Podsmead	Top down approach told communities what they needed and reinforced dependency culture

# YOUR CONSERVATIVE COUNCIL CANDIDATES

<b>Andrew Gravells</b>	<b>ABBEYDALE</b>
<b>Collette Finnegan</b>	<b>ABBEYDALE</b>
<b>Laura Pearsall</b>	<b>ABBEYMEAD</b>
<b>Gordon Taylor</b>	<b>ABBEYMEAD</b>
<b>Lise Noakes</b>	<b>BARNWOOD</b>
<b>Judi Brown</b>	<b>BARNWOOD</b>
<b>Saj Patel</b>	<b>BARTON &amp; TREDWORTH</b>
<b>Daniel Woolf</b>	<b>BARTON &amp; TREDWORTH</b>
<b>Rashid Farooq</b>	<b>BARTON &amp; TREDWORTH</b>
<b>Tarren Randle</b>	<b>CONEY HILL</b>
<b>Shane Hopkins</b>	<b>ELMBRIDGE</b>
<b>Justin Hudson</b>	<b>ELMBRIDGE</b>
<b>Nigel Hanman</b>	<b>GRANGE</b>
<b>Steve Morgan</b>	<b>GRANGE</b>
<b>Chris Etheridge</b>	<b>HUCCLECOTE</b>
<b>Lee Dopson</b>	<b>HUCCLECOTE</b>
<b>Matthew Francis</b>	<b>KINGSHOLM &amp; WOTTON</b>
<b>Tim Justice</b>	<b>KINGSHOLM &amp; WOTTON</b>
<b>Jennie Dallimore</b>	<b>KINGSWAY</b>
<b>Richard Cook</b>	<b>KINGSWAY</b>
<b>Paul James</b>	<b>LONGLEVENS</b>
<b>Kathy Williams</b>	<b>LONGLEVENS</b>
<b>Jim Porter</b>	<b>LONGLEVENS</b>
<b>Simon Griffiths</b>	<b>MATSON &amp; ROBINSWOOD</b>
<b>Duncan Hall</b>	<b>MATSON &amp; ROBINSWOOD</b>
<b>Norman Ravenhill</b>	<b>MATSON &amp; ROBINSWOOD</b>
<b>Peter Corry</b>	<b>MORELAND</b>
<b>Lyn Ackroyd</b>	<b>MORELAND</b>
<b>Jane White</b>	<b>MORELAND</b>
<b>Andrew Miller</b>	<b>PODSMEAD</b>
<b>Dave Norman</b>	<b>QUEDGELEY FIELD COURT</b>
<b>Lee Hawthorne</b>	<b>QUEDGELEY FIELD COURT</b>
<b>Hannah Norman</b>	<b>QUEDGELEY SEVERN VALE</b>
<b>Andy Lewis</b>	<b>QUEDGELEY SEVERN VALE</b>
<b>Colin Organ</b>	<b>TUFFLEY</b>
<b>Gerald Dee</b>	<b>TUFFLEY</b>
<b>Dawn Melvin</b>	<b>WESTGATE</b>
<b>Paul Toleman</b>	<b>WESTGATE</b>
<b>Pam Tracey</b>	<b>WESTGATE</b>

# WHAT A DIFFERENCE A CONSERVATIVE ADMINISTRATION MAKES

“Gloucester City is a fair council. It recognises that it has been over-ambitious in the past, spread its efforts too thinly over too many initiatives and been thrown off course by unforeseen events. As a result, it does not have a consistent track record of focusing on what is important to local people, delivering high quality services or improving these over time.”

## **Audit Commission Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2004**

“There has been a huge amount of regeneration and development activity in Gloucester over recent years and the council can be proud of what has been achieved in this regard. There seems to be a successful balancing of the regeneration and economic growth agenda with preserving the heritage and history of the city.”

“The council has dealt successfully with the financial challenges to date. The savings achieved thus far have been significant and the impact on ‘frontline services’ has been minimised.

## **Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge 2014**