

Ashby Labour Party

Town Council Election Manifesto

Thursday 2nd May 2019

Your Labour Town Councillors will:

Improve our Parks and Cemeteries

- Oppose any Bath Grounds housing development
- Endeavour to buy the Bath Grounds freehold and renew the lease if we cannot purchase
- Capital investment to improve play and fitness facilities at Hood Park
- Improve maintenance standards of all parks, cemeteries and green spaces
- Implement a routine maintenance schedule for all parks, cemeteries and green spaces
- Properly maintain play equipment and facilities across our Parks
- Improve floral displays, employing additional ground staff if necessary
- Pursue Green Flag accreditation for Bath Grounds and other parks
- Waive fees for child funerals



The Bath Grounds are precious to Ashby's character and must be protected. Labour will resist any attempts to build houses on the Bath Grounds and will seek to achieve public ownership of the entire "Green corridor" from the Royal Hotel through to the Castle. The Bath Grounds lease expires in 2023. If the freehold cannot be obtained, we will take the necessary steps to secure lease renewal.

Maintenance of Ashby and Blackfordby's parks and cemetery is a primary Town Council responsibility. Well maintained parks foster civic pride and combat anti-social behaviour as well as enhancing our environment and encouraging outdoor exercise for young and old. Labour will prioritise providing a high level of maintenance for existing play equipment and facilities and will ensure that improvements are made where most needed. We will improve floral displays across Ashby and Blackfordby. If necessary, we will enhance the Ground Staff to achieve these goals.



Positive Planning

- More thorough scrutiny of planning applications, bringing to bear our local knowledge
- Pro-actively demand developer contributions for improved local infrastructure
- Continue to insist upon overarching masterplan for the whole Money Hill development
- Seek restoration and re-opening of Royal Hotel without building on the Bath Grounds.
- Closely monitor the Royal Hotel condition and seek entry on Historic England At-Risk Register
- Insist on maximum affordable housing provision on new developments
- Scrutinise developer viability assessments which are now to be made public
- Neighbourhood Plan review is due in 2021. We will;
 - endeavour to include the latest energy efficiency standards for new housing
 - press for improved protection of our countryside
 - seek “Areas of Separation” between Ashby, Blackfordby and their surrounding villages and hamlets.



The Tory District Council's Local Plan has imposed an enormous burden of additional housing on Ashby and Blackfordby for the foreseeable future, with over 2000 houses still to be built. We are unable to stop this, but Labour will do all in our power to attain the additional infrastructure required for mitigation.

We will press to maximise affordable housing on new developments and to ensure a suitable housing mix to cater for local need. The Town Council is consulted on all planning applications and the current Tory administration has been woeful in its superficial scrutiny and failure to demand developer infrastructure contributions where appropriate. Your Labour councillors will study all planning applications in their ward prior to Planning Committee meetings and apply their local knowledge to advocate sensible outcomes.

It is essential that Blackfordby's Neighbourhood Plan is completed as quickly as possible to provide protection from yet more thoughtless development.

Ashby's new Neighbourhood Plan will be due for review in

2021. Labour will ensure that the review process is open and transparent, with maximum community input, and that adequate research is undertaken to allow the latest housing energy efficiency standards to be included, stronger protection of the countryside and powerful arguments made for "Areas of Separation" between Ashby and its surrounding villages and hamlets.



Promote Public Transport and Connectivity

- Press for improved public transport particularly;
 - services between local housing estates, the town centre and Castle Health Centre
 - better evening bus services, and
 - a direct service to the East Midlands Airport and Gateway
- Support and facilitate a community led Local Transport Needs Assessment
- Campaign for the National Forest Line with stations at Ashby and possibly Hicks Lodge
- Continue to oppose HS2 but, if it proceeds, press for maximum local benefit such as improved cycling infrastructure
- Press for implementation of the Ashby Cycle Strategy with cycleway to Hicks Lodge as priority
- Ensure provision of safe footpaths and cycleway connectivity into town from all new estates
- Seek solution to current Hastings Park connectivity problems
- Lobby District Council to synchronise car parking charging with Coalville



Ashby and Blackfordby have some of the poorest public transport in the country and it is getting worse, leading to ever increasing use of private vehicles and congestion. We will facilitate a community led Local Transport Needs Assessment to identify the local transport priorities and means of attaining these. We will resist attempts to reduce bus services further and lobby for restoration of recently withdrawn services. Their partial



replacement with a “Demand Responsive” service is unacceptable. We will continue to lobby for a direct bus service to the airport, more vital than ever with the East Midlands Gateway development.

Labour will champion safe pedestrian and cycle connectivity between new estates, employment zones, schools and the town centre. We are aware of failures to achieve connectivity in past developments, particularly at Hastings Park, and will seek means of solving such past planning errors. An Ashby Cycle Strategy has now been agreed but implementation requires considerable funding. We will actively seek to identify funding making a safe cycle connection from Ashby to Hicks Lodge a priority. We oppose HS2 but, whilst it persists, we will seek maximum local infrastructure reparations. We will not let the aspiration for a National Forest passenger railway die. A station at Hicks Lodge could resolve its access problems.

The potential Royal Hotel development would reduce the Town Centre parking provision. We will work with the District Council to mitigate this. We will seek a level playing field with Coalville for public car park charges.

Develop our Community and Environment

- Keep Ashby and Blackfordby's physical and mental health provision under close scrutiny
- Encourage and support residents' and tenants' associations across Ashby and Blackfordby
- Improve provision for Young People
- Increase and enhance public town events to put Ashby on the tourism map
- Develop Ashby's appeal as a characterful Market Town at the Heart of the National Forest.
- Work with the Business Community to secure a thriving town centre
- Maximise local procurement and progress towards only employing contractors and purchasing from businesses who pay a Real Living Wage
- Eliminate use of disposable plastic in council premises and in procurement
- Work with local businesses to explore alternatives to plastics, particularly timber products
- Actively promote awareness of the recycling possibilities in our community
- Support Community growing schemes
- Press for proper control of A-boards in Town Centre to ensure public safety



Our local communities need support and services in order to flourish in difficult times. We will keep Ashby's physical and mental health provision under close scrutiny. Labour will endeavour to use the Town Council's limited resources to foster and encourage Community activity in the form of youth clubs, community growing schemes, residents' associations and voluntary work, particularly where the environment will benefit.



We will eliminate the use of disposable plastic in council premises and in procurement. We will promote alternatives to single use plastics, especially National Forest timber, and awareness of recycling possibilities.

We will encourage local procurement initiatives to help stimulate local Business. A healthy local economy requires well-paid jobs. A Labour council would progress towards only purchasing from businesses who pay a Real Living Wage. Tourism is increasingly important to keep Ashby thriving as the go-to Market Town at the Heart of the National Forest. We will support expansion of existing Town events and develop new initiatives to enhance Ashby's tourist offering. We support continuation of the new Town Manager post.