

# Monmouthshire Labour Council Election Manifesto

This year you have the chance to vote for change.

Help us to help you with actions that reflect our values – FAIRNESS, EQUALITY AND EXCELLENCE

A Labour council would focus on rebuilding our communities weakened by Tory austerity and the effects of Covid. Monmouthshire is the most unequal county in Wales. We will work closely with Monmouthshire people and our different communities to address poverty and inequality and work for you.

## OUR PRIORITIES ARE:

- Providing social homes to rent and homes for young people
- Tackling issues of rural isolation and our ageing population
- Responding creatively and rigorously to the climate emergency with practical measures
- Promoting localism in our town centres, enhancing their unique character
- Encouraging high quality public transport, fix traffic issues and promote active travel.
- Working collaboratively with the Welsh Government to maximise the resources coming to Monmouthshire

## A STRONG, FAIR LOCAL ECONOMY

**The Problem:** Monmouthshire has huge inequalities: low wages; business support that doesn't tackle red tape; planning barriers; lack of inward investment for green and locally sustainable jobs. Tories are letting our high streets die.

**Our Solution:** Labour would:

- Work closely with existing business, and nurture green and local initiatives
- Invest in our high streets
- Close the digital divide
- Champion ethical, local procurement in the NHS, education and all council services
- Create green jobs and apprenticeships
- Lobby for the same transport subsidies as neighbouring councils
- Fix potholes within our first term of office.

**We will be accountable and open in all our actions to you the people of Monmouthshire.**

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

**The Problem:** More than a decade of Tory austerity has put pressure on families the young and the old alike. We have hit crisis point during the pandemic.

**Our Solution:** Labour would:

- Improve arrangements for people leaving hospital
- Develop a high-quality care sector.
- Prioritise affordable housing for key workers
- Build long term funding partnerships with key voluntary organisations
- Ensure access to healthcare by public transport, flexible bus schemes or volunteer care schemes
- Fill social work vacancies and recruit more foster carers
- Invest in services that help parents and the wellbeing of our young people.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**The problem:** In Monmouthshire the impact of climate change is felt with more frequent extreme weather events and flooding. We are also seeing the damaging effects of pollution of our rivers, and health risks from air pollution in traffic hotspots.

**Our solution:** Labour would

- Require all new homes to be built to the highest energy efficiency standards,
- Ensure active travel routes in all new housing developments
- Support the retrofit of energy improvements to buildings.
- Promote local food procurement for schools, community centres and public buildings.
- Expand allotment facilities, working with town and community councils.
- Support the development of local horticulture and agro-forestry
- Enhance water management, predicting and seeking to avoid flooding,
- Fully enforcing pollution controls.

## EXCELLENT EDUCATION FOR LIFE

**The problem:** Overall pupil performance has tailed off once children go to secondary schools; pupils who qualify for free school meals in the GCSE year groups achieve

lower grades than elsewhere in Wales. Many of our most vulnerable and needy children have not attended school regularly since the pandemic. Too many pupils, especially girls, do not feel safe in school and pupils' voices are not heard.

**Our solution:** Labour would:

- Help schools to get all children back to full-time schooling
- Ensure schools and teachers have the resources and support to introduce the new Welsh curriculum
- Improve outcomes for children who have additional Learning needs, are in low-income households as well as young carers and refugees
- Strengthen the Youth Council's collaboration with the Council's Children and Young People Committee
- Work to ensure pupils feel and are safe in school, and online
- Work with adult education providers to promote affordable lifelong learning and personal development
- Extend before and after school activities and child care
- Develop further Welsh-medium provision.

## **HOMELESSNESS, SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**The Problem:** Years of Tory failure mean that 131 homeless households are in temporary accommodation in Monmouthshire. Emergency accommodation for local people is provided in Abertillery and Newport because it is lacking in the county. 2,400 people are registered on Monmouthshire's housing waiting list; there is a shortfall of almost 500 extra affordable homes per year in Monmouthshire. Over the past 40 years there has been a doubling of the private rented sector and a halving of the social rented sector; there is a severe lack of housing for older people.

**Our Solution:** Labour would

- Establish a housing company and build on publicly owned land – no more asset disposals
- Enforce 50 per cent plus affordable housing on all new housing sites
- Bring empty properties back into use, by compulsory purchase if necessary
- Increase council tax on second homes and empty homes
- Develop safe accommodation in Monmouthshire for homeless people.

**Monmouthshire County Council provides everything from childcare to graveyards, public protection, recycling, museums theatres, planning countryside services, leisure and enforcement.**

**A Labour council will work with our dedicated hardworking staff to provide excellent value for money services for everyone in Monmouthshire.**