

Creating A Thetford We Can All Be Proud Of

Our existing communities have been forgotten. Whole areas have been run down and are a shadow of their former selves.

A Labour-led Thetford Town Council will prioritise street cleaning, maintenance of street furniture, improved floral displays, signage cleaning and general maintenance of our communities. We will recruit a new Thetford Community Warden Team to help maintain our communities and tackle the years of neglect. The team will work with other organisations including businesses and charities as well as local residents to improve where we live. They will seek to harness the excellent community spirit that we have in Thetford to create communities that we can all be proud of by facilitating regular community action days, litter picks and much more.

The jewel in Thetford's crown is our river corridor.

A Labour-led Town Council will continue to invest in improving options for walking and cycling locally, particularly along our river corridor. We will lobby the Environment Agency to better maintain the river and support efforts to keep it clean. We want to see more opportunities for people to use the river and will promote swimming, canoeing and paddle boarding. We want to see an accessible pathway running alongside the river from Thetford Garden Centre at one end through the town centre and out towards Brandon. Fallen trees and waterlogged pathways currently restrict access, particularly around the Cloverfield Estate, so upgrading these areas will create great walking spaces for all residents and showcase our amazing natural assets.



A Labour-led Town Council will become the champion for all that is good and positive in Thetford and use its resources to support and promote our great town.

We will do more to promote Thetford's heritage by funding interesting and innovative guided walks for tourists and residents and upgrade information boards and signage across the town. We will highlight the rich and varied history we are all so proud of, overhaul the outdated and clunky Town Council website so that it becomes easier to navigate and use technology to encourage people to visit and spend their money locally.

Fly-tipping blights our communities and we will tackle it.

Labour Councillors will work tirelessly to improve enforcement with fines for repeat fly-tipping offenders. We will seek to redesign Breckland Council's bulky waste collection service to make it easier and cheaper to dispose of unwanted items – particularly where access to transport is an issue. We will improve publicity about what can and cannot be taken to the local recycling centre. We will continue to organise community litter picks and support others that want to do their bit to keep our community clean and love where they live.



A Town Centre Fit For The 21st Century

Thetford has a lot to offer, but we're not shouting about it loudly enough.

The Tourist Information Office and website provided by local CIC Leaping Hare has done a fantastic job for nearly 13 years, especially given it receives no regular funding. It is operated solely by volunteers and understandably opening hours are limited. A Labour-led Town Council will invest in our tourist and community information services so residents and visitors alike know more about what's going on and can get involved.

In 2022 Thetford won silver in the Anglia In Bloom awards – let's aim for Gold!

Labour Councillors support our fantastic Town Centre hanging baskets display and will improve other floral displays around town. Flower beds and shrub beds around our forgotten estates will be improved and continue to be maintained. If we want residents to take pride in where they live, the Council must take pride in what it does.

The Guildhall & Carnegie will become a stand-alone charitable organisation, separate to Thetford Town Council. This will free the facility to become a leading venue and events organisation that serves Thetford and the surrounding area with an exciting programme. This model has worked well in places like Diss where the venue is separate from the council but supported by it.



We will provide a town-wide events programme across the whole year, that caters for all ages.

Thetford has a rich and varied history from Thomas Paine to Dad's Army, and our natural assets such as the forest and our River corridor that are not currently highlighted properly. We need to shout louder about our local heritage, for instance, Charles Burrell, Maharajah Duleep Singh, Alan Mimms and Thetford's impressive civic regalia. We want to see more collaboration between the Town Council and Breckland Council when it comes to events. We support a return of the very successful 'On The Green' events and Summer Night Markets.

We want Thetford's status as a Market Town to continue.

We will lower fees for market traders and do more to promote their goods and services. We will find and support new market traders as well as delivering themed markets as part of our events programme. This will bring new people into the town centre to spend money and help support existing traders and retailers.

The Town Council has significant 'buying power' – let's use it to support local businesses.

Thetford Town Council will provide space for people to trade where possible and review the way the Town Council purchases services, buying local whenever possible. Rather than the usual automatic purchasing from retailing giants, we will buy local. Our 'Local Procurement Policy' will recognise that for every £1 spent locally, 60p remains in the local community.

Public toilets are provided by Thetford Town Council. Under Labour they will continue to be free to use. They will be cleaned thoroughly and open for longer. This means they are available when people need them. Recently, the Town Council considered closing the toilets at the Bus Interchange on Minstergate. Labour is committed to keeping these vital amenities open. They should be available for residents and visitors alike.

Lobbying For The Infrastructure We Need

Thetford Town Council should provide a strong, coherent voice that works collectively and collaboratively to get the best for our town and its people. Sadly, the current Town Council is too busy fighting itself to be able to fight for Thetford.

Thetford is seeing significant new housing growth – but the infrastructure we need alongside new homes, and more people, is sadly lacking.

Labour Councillors want a community-led planning process instead of developers ruling the roost. Too often the views of local people are not listened to. We want to see improvements to the way Breckland Council manages the planning process and we do not support an outsourced planning department run by a private company, as is currently the case. The Town Council has got to sharpen and improve its responses in regards to planning too so that when it is consulted on planning applications, it is able to maximise its ability to protect our local communities and Thetford residents from inappropriate and excessive planning applications.



More must be done through the planning process to protect and enhance the local environment too. The large-scale removal of trees as we've seen along Joe Blunt's Lane and near Tesco should not be allowed. We are not seeing enough thought to future-proofing new homes, sufficient insulation or other environmentally friendly measures needed to tackle the climate crisis.

Labour Councillors want to see regeneration of our existing communities. However, the infill of green spaces and the net gain of hundreds of additional homes as proposed by Flagship Housing on the Abbey Estate is not the way to go. We stand with local residents who have

been failed for too long. We will seek investment and regeneration that has the support of the local community.

Connectivity around our town is crucial and needs to be improved.

We will lobby Norfolk County Council to improve our existing roads and infrastructure in Thetford. We will call on Greater Anglia to improve our local train services including better ticket and waiting facilities and remove the eyesore that is the rubbish along the side of the rail tracks. We are committed to free car parking in Thetford and will make sure there are more locations for cycle storage. We will lobby Norfolk County Council to improve walking and cycling links around Thetford and pursue access to Thetford Forest by foot or bike. The forest is a tremendous asset right on our doorstep and cannot be left out of reach to large numbers of Thetford's population.

The Council should be held accountable to you, the public.

Thetford Town Council under Labour will hold its meetings in public, and they will be well promoted. We will invite representatives from other organisations to attend and answer questions from Councillors and the public. We will hold an annual town meeting that will be well promoted. The Town Council will better promote what it does with a new Communications Officer and produce regular newsletters. We will make sure you know who your Councillor is and where you can get help. Labour Councillors will continue to hold regular surgeries, produce regular newsletters and organise litter picks. Labour gets out and meets residents on the doorstep.

ON YOUR SIDE

Thetford is a great place to live, but we recognise that there is also entrenched deprivation and poverty for many. People are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, following over a decade of Conservative cuts to services and rises in Council Tax. Foodbank use has increased, and the local Citizens Advice Bureau is overwhelmed. A low wage economy and poor social mobility locally limit life opportunities and with spiralling energy costs, fuel poverty for many is a real challenge. Life expectancy is 10 years less on one side of Thetford than the other. While many of the solutions are out of reach of Thetford Town Council, there is much that could be done to support residents. Labour Councillors and candidates are rooted in their local communities and understand the challenges.

Here are our proposals to make sure that Thetford Town Council is on your side and we look forward to implementing them if elected.

Supporting Residents Through Difficult Times

We will fund a new full-time Support Worker for Citizens Advice that will be based in Thetford.

We recognise this charity is under-funded and under-resourced. By improving capacity, we will help them to help more Thetford residents.

The Charles Burrell Centre is a major success story. We want it to grow and thrive.

Through CBC, dozens of new businesses have started, jobs have been created, new training options have been provided and people have been supported. A Labour-led Thetford Town Council will continue to support the Charles Burrell Centre so that it can grow and support more residents.

We will continue the Thetford Town Council Small Grants Scheme.

This scheme provides grants of up to £300 per organisation and it will be continued. We will also reintroduce the Medium Grants scheme to support local charities and community organisations with larger sums of money.

Labour Councillors will work to reduce food waste and food poverty by supporting local Foodbanks and social supermarkets such as the Burrell Community Shop. We all must do more to stop food being wasted. A third of waste that goes into Norfolk's household waste bins is food, an unacceptable statistic – particularly when many are struggling to eat, and we are in a climate emergency. Food that is wasted is bad for the environment, and bad for all our pockets too. We will look to use Town Council communication channels to spread information about preventing food waste and use Town Council venues to host information events and activities. The Town Council will lead by example on food waste too at its own events and through its own catering and hospitality services.





Labour Councillors will work to support residents with lowering their domestic energy bills.

We will explore ways to improve the take up of Government grants and other funding to improve the insulation of people's homes and support local energy production methods. Accessing Government grants can be complicated, and we want to remove barriers and improve opportunities to access these funds.

Having well-paid jobs is crucial to the success of our local economy and crucial to residents' own finances.

We will take every opportunity to highlight the many positives about our town, whether that be through press releases or social media posts. For too long we have had an unfair image, that puts off businesses and investors. We want to see the Town Council initiating regular meetings with the Eastern Daily Press and engaging positively and constructively with other publications (both print and digital). We want to create an environment where people choose to move to Thetford, want to open a business here and provide new job opportunities. We want to see the Thetford Enterprise Park become a reality, see an upgraded Thetford Train Station and more opportunities for small businesses to trade in our Town Centre. Increasing the availability of well-paid jobs is vitally important to Thetford's future prosperity.

Crime and antisocial behaviour can have a devastating impact on our local residents.

The Town Council's role in addressing these issues can be limited, but we must use the Council's considerable influence to ensure residents' concerns are addressed. We will request an annual meeting with the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable to raise concerns related to crime and antisocial behaviour locally. This will give residents the opportunity to press those in charge for action on local priorities and ensure that we are getting the resources we need to tackle these issues. A Labour-led Thetford Town Council will continue to support the Safer Thetford Action Group (STAG) and provide free accommodation for it to meet. STAG consists of a number of different organisations and agencies and meets to discuss and address local crime and antisocial behaviour concerns.

Putting The Environment At The Heart Of All We Do

Informing our decisions and guiding our actions will be a Labour recognition there is both a climate and biodiversity emergency.

There must be a green thread running through the Council's work. We will do more to support bees and other pollinators by creating space for them within Town Council owned land, ban the use of weed killers such as Glyphosate and plant more trees and shrubs locally. We want to create 'Pocket Parks' on small derelict pieces of land and maintain and enhance our public open spaces such as Castle Park, Melford Common and Barnham Common. We will erect bird and bat boxes as well as bug hotels where possible and encourage others to do the same and continue our award-winning work with the Conservation Group – led by Thetford Town Council.



Having an allotment and being able to grow your own fruit and vegetables is a great thing. A Labour-led Town Council will ensure that renting an allotment remains affordable, that there are plots available when you want them and that the plots vary in size to allow flexibility.

We will explore renewable energy opportunities and ensure Town Council buildings are well insulated so our carbon footprint is reduced. We will become a carbon neutral Council – reducing emissions and balancing out any carbon we do emit with mitigation.

We recognise that our river corridor is a key natural asset. We will work to better maintain the river, support those who remove litter from it and encourage greater use of it. Significantly important wetland habitats like those around Lady Gentle Meadow and Ford Meadow will be supported and we will continue our important conservation work with grazing, including the Water Buffalo!

Supporting The Next Generation

Most Thetford play areas are in a poor condition – a Labour-led Town Council will seek to further upgrade our network of play areas. This will be done by working alongside children and their families who use them to guide the improvements. Castle Park will continue to be a flagship play area and we want to see good play equipment in our communities for families to enjoy.

We will support local groups providing activities for children and young people by making available a new Youth Fund for groups to bid for. They can then provide activities to encourage play and education while having fun.

We will establish a new Youth Council who will shadow the work of the Town Council – bringing forward ideas and suggestions to support local children and young people.