

## **Bishop's Stortford Climate Group – Local Elections 2023**

### **Labour, Yvonne Estop-Wood**

#### **On behalf of the Labour candidates in Bishop's Stortford for East Herts District Council**

Thank you for asking for candidates' responses to your questions. We see that your questions go a lot further than in-principle support and all relate to policy and action if and when elected. We would therefore like to reply as a group of candidates and respond as follows.

1- EHDC has agreed a Climate Change Motion, which commits the Council to do everything it can in supporting the whole of East Herts District to become carbon neutral by 2030. Research by the Tyndall Centre shows that East Hertfordshire needs to achieve an average cut in carbon emissions from energy use of around 13.4% per year, through a rapid transition away from unabated fossil fuel use.

- *If elected, will you call for EHDC to reaffirm its commitment to its Climate Change Motion, review progress towards its target and strengthen its policies?*

Yes we will. Our manifesto for this election includes:

*Labour will make sure there is dramatic progress on net zero and aim to decarbonise East Herts by 2030.*

*We will turn the Tories evasive climate statement into a dynamic climate policy, touching all areas of the council and following other councils around the country by declaring a climate emergency in East Herts.*

In addition, we pledge that Labour will continue working with the East Herts Sustainability Action Plan, but develop it: to encourage large businesses to change their practices, to expand energy efficiency improvements in existing older housing; to ensure no plastic waste is sent abroad.

2- EHDC needs to use its power as a local planning authority to drive area-wide net zero by 2030.

- *If elected, will you push for EHDC to undertake and complete, within one year of the election, a partial update of the Local Plan (LPPU) to require all new developments to be net zero? And to require net zero for domestic extensions when homes are modified?*

If elected, we will be very clear in our advocacy of net zero. Our manifesto says:

*Labour will make sure there is dramatic progress on net zero and aim to decarbonise East Herts by 2030.*

Our policy will certainly be to expedite the partial review of the Local Plan, and we will press for an approved submission draft, with all consultations complete within a year. We are mindful that there would be an examination and the timing for that may be outside the Council's control. The review needs to be very strong about net zero and the task will be to work with, and around government policy. To achieve net zero in all new developments will require detailed practice guidance, probably

best in a 'design guide' as recommended by the government. Our approach might be more pragmatic, requiring a number of basic tickboxes that developers cannot argue against, such as: no gas, insulation and ventilation minimum standards, percentage from on-site renewable energy, no landfill waste, non-sewer drainage, banned materials, percentage site area for green land. If there is central government policy push-back, we would establish a unilateral, evidence-based 'Expectation statement' in readiness for others to catch up. For domestic extensions, some need planning permission but all need building regulations, and part of the Council's overall climate policy would be to add specific requirements to domestic work (including paving) rather than demand calculations for net zero.

Our manifesto also says

*All the land surrounding our towns and villages is London Green Belt. We will make an East Herts Green Belt policy. It will have a strategy regulating solar farms, recreation in the green belt and farming diversification.*

3- BSCG considers that the EHDC/Cityheart proposals for regeneration of the Old River Lane site are not in line with EHDC's Climate Change motion. In particular, that demolishing the URC Hall and Charringtons House in favour of newly constructed buildings will result in significantly higher carbon emissions than refurbishing and reusing them.

- *If elected, will you push for a full review of the project to regenerate the Old River Lane site, to engage the community and deliver new and exemplary proposals fully in line with the Council's commitment to work towards carbon neutrality by 2030?*

Yes we will. We would do this by leading on a new planning and development brief for the area, starting from sustainability, adaptation of existing buildings, pedestrian and cycle route integration with the town, mixed tenure housing, and green links.

Labour members have been at the heart of the campaign to resist the plans to demolish buildings and develop a better vision for ORL. We produced a paper in 2021 making a case for re-use and adaptation of Charringtons House for educational use, and set out the case for keeping embodied carbon, and set out examples of other buildings that were being adapted elsewhere. We maintain this position and will press for imagination and responsibility in regenerating this site.

We stated from the start that as council-owned land, this development should set an example for the whole district, and show council leadership. We will still press for this and for the council as owner to set environmental pre-conditions for purchase or lease of the land.

Labour advocates collaborative working on this key site across all parties. It is being approached as just another brownfield site, with all the density and commercial assumptions that goes with it, which have damaged some towns.

4- In addition to the climate crises, we are also facing a collapse in our biodiversity, with unprecedented declines in the populations of many insect species. The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust are [calling for at least 30% of our land](#) to be connected and protected for nature's recovery by 2030.

- *If elected, will you commit to enhance the management of parks and green space for wildlife, to continue 'No Mow May', and to develop green corridors throughout East Herts?*

We commit to learning, to creating a green spaces strategy, to breaking down the division between public and private green space to enable green corridors, and to enhance and diversify existing green spaces.

5- There is increasing concern about the impacts of pesticides on human and environmental health. The use of pesticides is also contaminating natural resources in urban areas that are increasingly important for wildlife. A number of local authorities around the UK have already made a commitment to [phase out pesticide use](#).

- *If elected, will you follow the Pesticide Action Network UK three-year phase-out plan for pesticides?*

We will find out, learn, talk to you and others and we will do our best on this.

David Jacobs  
Yvonne Estop  
Sophia Adams Bhatti  
Jane Band  
Daniel Barnett  
Matthew Bird  
John Boyle  
Alex Chapman  
Oliver Diffey  
Steve Smith  
Dave Willcocks

Labour Party candidates in Storrord