



AMBITIOUS FOR WATFORD

Making Watford a greener, safer and more caring community



FOREWORD

Mayor Peter Taylor

It has been a huge honour to serve as Watford's Mayor since 2018. My focus has always been to bring people together to make things better for everyone. Together we have faced big challenges, such as the pandemic, by making sure that we remain a united town. This is likely to be the last election for a Mayor of Watford. It would be a huge honour to continue in this role until we become part of a new unitary council. I know how important it is to be accessible, so that local people can contact me about the issues that matter to them.

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- ✓ Hold regular surgeries, both online and in person, so that people can discuss their concerns with me directly
- ✓ Host regular Q&A events with other community leaders, for example Facebook Live sessions, so that people can ask questions to me and other local leaders
- ✓ Ensure that we have a range of community forums so that we can discuss key issues facing the town together

I want to continue work with Liberal Democrat councillors to make Watford a better town for everyone. We must make sure that we have excellent local services and keep council tax down. My priorities are securing investment in new facilities at Watford General, making our parks even better and keeping bills down to help everyone with the cost-of-living.

Please do give us your support in the election on Thursday 7 May so that together we can make Watford a greener, safer and even more caring community.

RECORD OF SUCCESS



Over the last four years, we have achieved many things from my previous manifesto to be proud of, including:

- 17 Green Flag Parks, including Oxhey Activity Park Cassiobury Park and St Mary's Churchyard – the most in Hertfordshire for 10 consecutive years.
- Over 40,000 trees planted across the town since 2018.
- A packed calendar of annual events for residents to enjoy - including the Big Screen, Big Beach, and Cassiobury Fireworks.
- Successfully refurbished and reopened the Watford Colosseum.
- Supported local businesses with a high profile 'Shop Local' campaign and made improvements to local shopping parades.
- Expanded the Beryl Bike scheme, with over 600,000 journeys across our town since it was launched.
- Introduced Watford's Green Loop to make it easier to walk and cycle around the town
- An award-winning council - including winner of Council of the Year award in 2025.
- Worked with local charities to tackle rough sleeping in our town.
- Allocated £1m to community projects across the town to support local groups.
- Kept council tax increases below inflation and froze Watford Council's share of council tax this year.
- Delivered big improvements to both Woodside and Central leisure centres.





OUR PRIORITIES

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STANDING UP FOR WATFORD

- ✓ Fight for Watford General Hospital to be rebuilt quickly, so that our community gets the modern healthcare facilities we deserve.
- ✓ Make sure our town's voice is heard during Local Government Reorganisation. We must protect Watford's identity and ensure the changes deliver real benefits for our community.
- ✓ Work proactively to bring the disused Croxley Line back into use and for the Hertfordshire to Essex Rapid Transit (HERT) project to start here.
- ✓ Campaign for Watford's railway stations to be rezoned into zone 6, so that passengers pay fairer fares.
- ✓ Press for improvements to local train stations - such as a pick-up and drop-off point at Watford Junction and making more local stations accessible and step-free.
- ✓ Demand a bus franchise model that improves local bus services, with affordable and reliable buses in Watford.
- ✓ Fight for infrastructure to support new developments - more affordable homes, and the public services people need.
- ✓ We will prioritise the delivery of well-designed, sustainable, social homes in suitable locations for local residents.

A GREENER TOWN



- ✓ Invest in some of the best parks in the country. We will increase the number of Green Flag parks in Watford to 18, with Knutsford Playing Fields achieving this standard. We will improve paths in local parks and install more water fountains.
- ✓ Plant another 10,000 trees across the borough by 2028 and provide regular free tree and compost giveaways to help residents create greener, more sustainable neighbourhoods.
- ✓ Make Watford Central Leisure Centre more energy efficient, to reduce fuel bills and support the environment.
- ✓ Promote sustainable transport in Watford by increasing the number of Beryl Bikes available and ensuring new developments encourage active, eco-friendly travel for all residents.
- ✓ Support active travel in the town by improving community shopping parades, making further improvements to the Green Loop and working with the county council to improve walking and cycling routes.
- ✓ Make Watford's air cleaner by installing more Electric Vehicle charging points, ensuring more residents have convenient access and encouraging greener travel.
- ✓ We will enhance the River Colne with ongoing work to support greater biodiversity and improved water quality.
- ✓ Work in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, to launch a Thermal Imaging Camera Loan Scheme. This will enable residents to borrow a thermal imaging camera free of charge to identify where heat may be escaping from their homes, highlighting insulation gaps, draughts and other areas where energy efficiency improvements could be made
- ✓ Increase the number of allotments in Watford so that more residents can grow their own fruit and vegetables.





A HEALTHY AND HAPPY TOWN

- ✓ Champion wellbeing in our town, with a special focus on funding projects for young people from the Mayor's Small Grants Fund.
- ✓ To make sure that every child can enjoy Watford's parks we will invest in more accessible playgrounds.
- ✓ We will provide a range of family-friendly events such as the popular Big Screen, Big Beach, and Cassiobury Park fireworks.
- ✓ Provide free swim and gym sessions for young people in school holidays, and exciting Easter and summer holiday activities for children.
- ✓ Improve sports facilities with a new outdoor gym for young people, a new cricket pitch at King George V Playing Fields, improved facilities at Woodside Playing Fields and better basketball facilities in north Watford.
- ✓ Abolish hiring fees for registered charities who use our parks and open spaces for community events.

CARING FOR EVERYONE



- ✓ Fund the Winter Night Shelter, so that no one has to rough sleep during the cold winter months. We will also work with local charities to enhance their services, working together to end rough sleeping in Watford and ensuring that everyone receives the support and help they need.
- ✓ Support local families and residents with the cost-of-living crisis by reducing council tax bills for households with low incomes, providing help through the council's Healthy Hub and grants from the Watford Community Fund.
- ✓ Increase the amount of funding given to local community projects from the payments we receive from developers in Watford through the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- ✓ Make sure that Watford is a town for everyone by supporting people living with dementia and their families, make Watford an Age-Friendly place and support Herts Pride.
- ✓ To help people who may be struggling, we will bring groups together in a Cost-of-Living Forum to agree how we can provide the support that is needed. The Mayor's Faith Forum will provide an opportunity for faith leaders from across Watford to come together, supporting community cohesion. Our People's Panel and Youth Panel will mean that residents of all ages will help shape the council's work and priorities.
- ✓ Fund a Watford Shopper Bus Service to make shopping trips easier and more accessible for those who need extra support.
- ✓ We will champion accessibility and inclusion by ensuring public spaces, services, and community activities are designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- ✓ We will work with Electric Umbrella to set up an inclusive forum, to discuss how we can make Watford an even better town for everyone, by learning from the experience of others.



A SAFE AND CLEAN TOWN



- ✓ We will keep Watford safe and welcoming for everyone by working with the police, Community Safety Partnership, and local communities. We will expand our network of over 300 CCTV cameras, funded by the council, and for these to be monitored every day and every night.
- ✓ Campaign for more properly resourced community police officers to tackle anti-social behaviour, while supporting events that help residents engage with local police.
- ✓ Champion the safety of women and girls in Watford by promoting the White Ribbon initiative and encouraging other organisations to support this.
- ✓ Keep Watford clean and safe by tackling littering and fly-tipping by expanding our enforcement team tackling littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling. We will introduce extra patrols in our parks to tackle anti-social behaviour and any other issues.
- ✓ Work with Veolia to deliver yearly spring clean and regular deep street-cleaning initiatives.
- ✓ Promote Community Waste Days to give residents opportunities to dispose of waste properly.
- ✓ We will work with local schools to encourage safer parking near schools, with more enforcement to tackle dangerous parking.



A COMPETENT COUNCIL

- ✓ The current cost of living crisis is squeezing many families. We will keep increases in council tax to a minimum, and below the rate of inflation.
- ✓ Open a new, modern, and inspiring Museum of Watford to celebrate the town's story and showcase our rich and diverse heritage.
- ✓ The Town Hall is central to our community. We will ensure it is refurbished and make it available for wider use by local residents and community groups.
- ✓ Improve signage in the town, with new signs for people entering the town and better wayfinding signs for people walking in Watford.
- ✓ Work proactively with Hertsmere Borough Council to explore the possibility of delivering a new, local cemetery so that families can continue to bury loved ones in the area.





A THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY

- ✓ Open a state-of-the-art Innovation and Incubation Hub to support start-ups, attract new businesses, and create jobs and opportunities in our town.
- ✓ We will have a winter ice rink in the town centre, to support local business and give residents and visitors an attraction to enjoy throughout the Christmas period.
- ✓ Work with local partners to produce a Nighttime Economy Action Plan to ensure our town centre thrives as spending and leisure behaviours evolve.
- ✓ We will deliver a 'Shop and Eat Local' campaign, supporting our businesses and encouraging residents and visitors to spend locally.
- ✓ We will promote the Watford Business Pledge, supporting local enterprises, fostering growth, and ensuring our town remains vibrant.
- ✓ Promote Watford Market, including its popular Market Late events, supporting local traders and making the market a vibrant destination for residents and visitors alike.
- ✓ Improve community shopping parades such as Queens Road and Vicarage Road Precinct, to help support local businesses, encourage active travel, and benefit local communities.
- ✓ Make sure that developers support the local economy by using local suppliers and employing people from the area.
- ✓ Launch a new Hertfordshire Film Festival, based in Watford, to further cement our region as a globally significant centre for the creative industries.



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