



# A PLAN FOR CHANGE

Our Manifesto for you, delivered by  
Gianni Carofano.

**VISION**  
**AMBITION**  
**ASPIRATION**



## **Foreword by Gianni Carofano Conservative Candidate for Mayor of Bedford Borough**



**On 2nd May, you will have the opportunity to determine the future of Bedford Borough. You have the chance to vote for a better Bedford.**

Having been born in Bedford and now raising my children here, it is devastating for me to see that we currently have a town centre which is a shadow of its former self; anti-social behaviour and street drinking issues; a housing plan which dumps new houses in villages with no new infrastructure; young people unable to raise deposits to purchase their own home; residents flocking to Milton Keynes and Rushden Lakes to shop, eat and play. All of this whilst our Liberal Democrat Mayor sits back and acknowledges these issues, but does nothing about them, despite **having the power to do so.**

This Manifesto has been put together following our extensive survey across the Borough. **The issues in it are the issues that YOU told us matter to YOU.** The issues you want us to sort out, if we win this election.

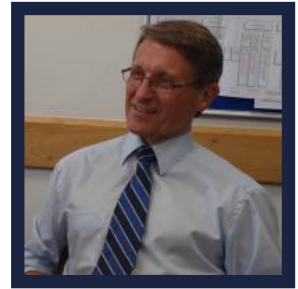
**Only I and my team of Conservative candidates are offering change.** However, to be able to do so, we need to be in charge. At this election, the power is in your hands. You will decide whether to carry on down the path that this current Liberal administration, propped up by Labour, is taking us... **or choose to vote for a fresh start.**

You have the opportunity at this election to vote for a Mayor and Council with **vision, ambition and aspiration.** I am asking you to vote for the change that this Borough so sorely needs; for us, for our children and for our grandchildren.

**Vote Conservative on 2 May,** and we promise we will deliver for **you.**

Gianni Carofano

## **Foreword by Stephen Moon Conservative Group Leader Bedford Borough Council**



**The elections on 2nd May are vital for our future.**

This manifesto offers a clear choice and a way out of the drift, decline and complacency of the current administration.

Our priorities are:

**1. To reverse the decline of Bedford Town centre.** The closure of Marks and Spencer while the one at Rushden Lakes stays open shows that we must compete with surrounding towns by becoming more attractive to residents, visitors and businesses. **We have a clear strategy to revive the Town Centre.**

**2. To address the housing needs of existing residents** and respond to future needs. The current policy uses greenfield sites while ignoring brownfield land and puts the wrong sort of houses in the wrong places. **We have a clear strategy to ensure that all our residents have the houses they need where they need them.**

**3. To seize the opportunities offered** by the Oxford/Cambridge corridor proposals which the Borough's current plan ignores. It is clear that future government investment in our roads and infrastructure will depend on whether or not our local plan takes account of the new railway and the expressway. **We have a clear strategy to ensure that Bedford benefits.**

**4. To improve the lives of residents in all our communities.** Policing, traffic, speeding, litter, vandalism are some of the issues that affect the lives and health of many residents. There is much more the Council can do to remove or mitigate problems. **We have set out a clear strategy for working with communities and consulting to ensure that the issues of most concern are given priority.**

**5. To protect and improve frontline services** by ensuring that the Council finances are properly managed. It is only because of Government pressure that the Borough has grudgingly made savings over the last 8 years, there is a long way to go. Unlike many local authorities, Bedford does little to make savings by working with other local authorities. **We have a clear strategy to protect the Council's finances.**

**It is time for a change.**

Stephen Moon

**DELIVERING A BETTER  
BEDFORD BOROUGH**  
**Our Plan For Change**

**Revive Bedford  
Town Centre.**

**Build Homes for  
Future Generations.**

**Reduce Waste and  
Improve Services**

**An Ambitious Strategy for  
Jobs and Housing.**

**Provide Greater Support  
for Rural Areas.**

**Deliver a Borough for  
People and Families.**

**VOTE FOR VISION,  
AMBITION AND ASPIRATION**

## REVIVE BEDFORD TOWN CENTRE

Retail shopping in Bedford is under threat as the closure of M&S shows, but more can be done to bring businesses, residents and visitors to a clean and safe Town Centre and reverse its steady decline. We will:

- 1. Set up a Task Force** of business owners, residents and the council to drive the vision for a more vibrant Bedford.
- 2. Reduce parking restrictions** and provide 2 hours free parking in multi-storeys from Monday to Friday and increase Saturdays to 3 hours free parking, to give our businesses the backing they deserve.
- 3. Deliver an ambitious and overdue regeneration** of the long neglected Midland Road area and wider Town Centre to provide a mix of retail, leisure and housing fit for the 21st century.
- 4. Make the Town Centre clean and safe again** by investing in better cleaning, additional policing and adopting a zero-tolerance approach to littering, street drinking and antisocial behaviour.
- 5. Reverse the closure of the Tourist Information Office** to ensure visitors to Bedford are encouraged and supported.

## BUILD HOMES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

We understand the frustrations of young people and families who want a home to call their own but are held back by the cost. We will help address their housing needs by:

- 1. Investing in a building programme** that provides more quality and affordable homes for rental for families or individuals of all ages who may not be able to buy a home.
- 2. Creating a £1million fund to help first time buyers** with a deposit for their house purchase, with flexible repayment options.
- 3. Ensuring that housing is built where residents want it.** Too many homes currently approved by the Council are in places that are inconvenient for public transport, shopping or employment.
- 4. Enabling residents to stay within their existing communities** when leaving home to start a new family or later in life when wishing to downsize, by ensuring we provide the right size of housing in the appropriate areas.

## REDUCE WASTE AND IMPROVE SERVICES

Taxpayer's money should be used for the benefit of our residents. Every penny must be spent wisely and in the best interests of our communities and it is important that vulnerable groups are fully supported. We will:

- 1. Cut the Mayor and Councillors' pay and allowances** budget by at least 10%, bringing councillors' pay and allowances to pre-2010 levels.
- 2. Protect frontline services** by ensuring an efficient and streamlined council.
- 3. Save money** by collaborating with other councils and local stakeholders to combine services, improve standards and reduce costs.
- 4. Work with Bedfordshire Police** by providing £250,000 to train 50 special constables across the Borough, with powers of arrest to keep our communities safe.
- 5. Invest in additional and upgraded libraries** and extended opening hours.

## AN AMBITIOUS STRATEGY FOR JOBS AND HOUSING

The current Local Plan is a lost opportunity and damaging to Bedford. We will put this right by immediately fixing the Mayor's broken Local Plan. In order for Bedford to compete for investment and take full advantage of the Cambridge to Oxford Corridor, we will:

- 1. Ensure that housing around the borough** enhances and protects existing communities instead of destroying them.
- 2. Prioritise Brownfield sites** and remove unsuitable and unsustainable sites from the current Liberal/Labour Plan.
- 3. Ensure fairness and transparency** by opening up the planning process to town/parish councils and residents so that you can have a genuine say in your future.
- 4. Prioritise the housing needs of the young, older people** and those in need instead of the interests of big developers.
- 5. Ensure organic growth of communities and villages** with housing that meets local needs, decided by the local residents.
- 6. Adapt the Plan** so that we take advantage of our pivotal position in the Oxford to Cambridge corridor, enabling businesses to start, prosper and grow in Bedford.

## PROVIDE GREATER SUPPORT FOR RURAL AREAS

We know that rural areas of the Borough often feel overlooked. We will ensure that rural residents are acknowledged, noticed and included by:

- 1. Making sure that there is fairer use of resources** in matters such as planning and road maintenance to enhance the rural way of life.
- 2. Empowering Town and Parish Councils** by giving them the ability to take control of urgent highways works if they request it.
- 3. Giving the Town & Parish Councils a greater say** when considering planning applications, as they are presently ignored in practice.
- 4. Listening to residents' concerns** and responding with the appropriate service or solution, For example, we know through our survey that speeding is a huge concern in many areas and average speed cameras have been requested but not yet provided.
- 5. Protecting the accessibility of our villages** by guaranteeing, at the very least, the existing level of support for the bus network.

## DELIVER A BOROUGH FOR PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

In addition to protecting essential services, we will continue to fight for improvements across the council and in areas controlled by other bodies, such as with infrastructure, rail and hospitals. We will deliver a better Bedford by:

- 1. Reinstating the subsidy for Post-16 school transport.** No child should be denied an education because of worries about cost.
- 2. Substantially increase the funding of our Children's Services,** specifically to challenge and provide more support to our schools, and to provide better Mental Health provisions for our children.
- 3. Bringing new, and enhancing existing, leisure facilities across the Borough** for all of us to enjoy. Too many people are going out of the Borough to visit bowling alleys, crazy golf courses, trampoline and climbing parks. We need to bring the opportunity here.
- 4. Working with charities and specialist agencies** to reduce begging and rough sleeping in the town centre by providing support and services to those who need it.
- 5. Re-introducing and expanding the discontinued school holiday play schemes** to support working parents so that they do not have to lose wages or arrange for expensive care during the holidays.

# **IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE**

**Vote for new leadership**



## **BEDFORD BOROUGH CONSERVATIVES**

Promoted by Bernard Jones on behalf of Gianni Carofano.  
Both of 69 Gwyn Street, Bedford, MK40 1HH.

Promoted by Katherine Arnold on behalf of Stephen Moon.  
Both of NEBCA, c/o Biggleswade & District Conservative Club, St Andrew's Street,  
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