

Labour's Pledges to Pensioners

Labour will stand up for older people and has made five key pledges to ensure older people have the security and dignity they deserve:

1. Secure pensioner incomes with the Triple-Lock on state pensions.
2. Protect the Winter Fuel Allowance and free bus passes for pensioners.
3. An extra £45 billion for the NHS and social care.
4. No rise in the state pension age beyond 66.
5. Justice for women born in the 1950s hit by five year rise in pension age.

Theresa May's government has failed older people, their cuts to social care have resulted in over one million older people not getting the care they need. Labour will spend an extra £45 billion on the NHS and social care over five years.

The Conservative Party manifesto has promised three major new burdens to be placed on older people:

1. Scrapping the 'triple lock' on state pensions so that pensioner incomes are no longer protected.
2. Means testing Winter Fuel Payments to remove support to heat the homes of ten million pensioners
3. Forcing those who need social care to pay for it with their homes.

Pensioners would be at least £330 worse off under the Tories' new Double Lock had it been in place between 2013/14 and 2017/18, compared with the basic state pension being uprated by the Triple Lock. Under Theresa May's plan, ten million people

– five out of six pensioners – are set to lose their Winter Fuel Payments, worth up to £300.

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour party, said:

“Not satisfied with plunging our social care system into crisis, Theresa May’s nasty party has promised more attacks on older people: scrapping the triple-lock on state pensions, removing the Winter Fuel Allowance and asset stripping the ill by forcing those who need social care to pay for it with their homes.

“Labour will protect the Winter Fuel Allowance and Triple-Lock on state pensions to deliver a secure and dignified retirement for all, and spend an extra £45 billion on the NHS and social care over five years, so that older people can get the care they deserve.

“Theresa May and the Conservatives won’t stand up for pensioners, their only concern is their billionaire friends. Labour is proud to stand up for the many, not the few.”

Grazeley issues

Yesterday I visited Grazeley to talk to residents. Three main issues came up.

The first was future development. I explained that I have not offered support for a major new settlement adjacent to the village. The Council is currently consulting on this possibility. I have urged them to consider how much infrastructure this would require, where the money would come from to provide it and what impact it will have on the local area. The Council’s bargaining position on behalf of the local community is strongest before it offers planning permission.

I have also pointed out that there would need to be express guarantees of protection for other parts of the Borough if that is the idea, as under current planning rules seeking to place a lot of new homes in one place does not prevent developers getting permission on appeal to build elsewhere in the Borough as well. I will help them negotiate with government over where future development should go and how much we should provide, and will back a sensible plan.

The second was the speed of traffic on the local road through the village. This is a matter for the Council, but I will also take it up with

Councillors.

The third is aircraft noise from light planes out of White Waltham. I will also take this up with the airport.

Published and promoted by Fraser Mc Farland on behalf of John Redwood, both at 30 Rose Street Wokingham RG40 1XU

204 bus – Roseangle closure arrangements



I [previously advised](#) that, from tomorrow for up to 5 days, Roseangle will be closed to through traffic (towards the Perth Road end) from tomorrow due to gas connection works.

I have been in touch with the City Council regarding the running of the 204 bus which comes down Roseangle then along Magdalen Yard Road on its route from the City Centre to Ninewells Hospital.

As this bus is used by many elderly residents for whom a walk uphill from Magdalen Yard Road or up Windsor Street is a struggle, I was anxious to see what could be done to minimise the effect of the road closure.

I am pleased to advise that the council's Sustainable Transport Team Leader has now advised me that :

"We have been in discussion about the possibility of serving Magdalen Green area during the Roseangle closure (5 days from Monday, 22 May 2017). Obviously I'm keen to offer something to the residents living between Perth Road and Magdalen Green but it's not easy to do so without compromising the timetable of the 204.

I have taken the view that most users of the service come into Dundee City Centre and therefore I have approached Stagecoach and asked that they try and serve Magdalen Green on the way into town. They'll do that by coming down Windsor Street and as far as the triangular junction of roads at Riverside Approach, turn there and then back up to the Perth Road via Windsor Street.

On the way out of town the bus will only serve the Perth Road and will miss out Magdalen Green. Hopefully passengers can manage the downhill walk if alighting on Perth Road. Notices have been put out ... at affected stops."

China builds Mongolian language database

Experts in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region have developed a Mongolian language database containing over 19 million words and phrases in an effort to protect ethnic culture and language.

The program, based on cloud computing technology, was initiated in 2012 by Mengdong cloud computing center of Chifeng City and Inner Mongolia University.

Yan Xiaofeng, an engineer with the program, said the university started to collect Mongolian language documents in the 1980s, which has helped contribute to the database. The database covers a wide range of content including lexicons, grammar and literature.

Nashunuzhиту, a professor at the university, said the database's Mongolian-Mandarin electronic dictionary is open to the public. The database also includes a dictionary for scientific terminology featuring Mandarin, Mongolian, English and Japanese.

In 2016, the region designated the big data and cloud computing industries as new engines for local development, vowing that the regional big data industry's output value will exceed 100 billion yuan (14.5 billion U. S. dollars) in 2020.

Options for social care

The current system has been uneasily defended by the main parties in recent years, with growing criticisms. This system seeks to define a distinction between normal living costs, and care costs. An elderly person, whether living in their own home or in a care home, gets some state financial support with care costs but is expected to make their own provision for accommodation and daily living and to pay for other social care provision. All healthcare is free for all.

This means when someone moves from their own home into a care home for the rest of their lives a decision has to be made about the use of the home they are vacating which will have implications for any means tested benefits and support. Clearly the elderly person no longer needs the home they leave, and that home should be used. The most likely outcome is sale to a new owner occupier, releasing capital. This capital is then used to pay for the day to

day living costs at the care home. Alternatively, if the property has a high rental value, the elderly person could rent it out and use the rental income along with any other income to pay the care home fees.

There have been many critics who say this is unfair on grown up children hoping to inherit. If their parents live in their own home until death they will inherit a valuable property. If the last surviving parent moves into a care home they may inherit very little. To address this different outcome the Conservative Manifesto says why not increase the amount of capital someone in a care home can keep to 100,0000 pounds from the current 23000 pounds, but also have the same rule for people continuing in their own home.

Judging this needs detail over how the distinction between healthcare, free to all, and other care which you will be billed for, would work out. The proposal allows an elderly person living in their own home to defer any payment, making it a charge on the estate.

The different outcomes that will still arise come from the high costs of care home provision. The basic accommodation and meal costs will tend to be much higher than living alone in your own home. Many more staff are involved and we want them to be decently paid. The owner also needs to cover the cost of capital to provide the property.

A lot of the grown up children, many of them pensioners themselves, have their own homes and savings by the time their last parent dies. The debate is whether they should pay more tax to help pay more of the costs of living of their parent's generation through the state, or whether they should accept as possible heirs that their own parent has to spend more of the money they have accumulated during their lives to pay the bills of their old age. One way or another the children have to help finance the very elderly. The truth is the state has no money, only the money it takes off us one way or another.

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