

**“I want to make this the best place  
in England to live, work & enjoy life”**

**Peter  
CHOWNEY  
for MP**

# Rye & the Villages Election News

**Vote for Peter Chowney – your Labour candidate  
for HASTINGS & RYE MP: Thursday 12 December**

## Let's ALL thrive beside the seaside!

The Hastings & Rye constituency is a fabulous place to live, work and visit, with all its colour, character, heritage and quirkiness. But coastal areas have suffered since the 1960s, when domestic seaside holidays began to decline.

According to the government's own measures of deprivation, parts of Rye and Camber are now only just outside the 10% most deprived in the country. There are disturbing levels of rural poverty, with households isolated with no car, no local shops, no medical or welfare services, and poor public transport.

Jobs in the area are often seasonal, and low-paid. There's only one Job Centre in the whole constituency, in St Leonards, meaning a journey of an hour and a half from some areas to sign on – I've been campaigning for a job centre facility to re-open in Rye to help with that.

We need national recognition of the problems faced by coastal communities, to provide jobs for local people, apprenticeships, and training to those who've missed out on a decent



education. So Labour has established a £3.6bn fund to help regenerate the economy in coastal towns.

**I will do all I can to make sure we get a good share of that fund not just in Hastings, but in Rye and the surrounding villages too.**

**“Labour has established a £3.6bn fund to help regenerate the economy in coastal towns”**



# MY PLEDGES TO YOU

**STOP CLIMATE CHANGE**  
work to make our  
constituency carbon  
neutral by 2030

**TACKLE DEPRIVATION**  
addressing the problems  
causing poverty in our  
communities

**GET COUNCIL HOMES BUILT**  
enabling our councils to build social  
housing again

**GET HASTINGS & RYE MOVING**  
fixing our inadequate transport  
infrastructure and public transport

**IMPROVE SKILLS**  
securing better educational  
outcomes for young people

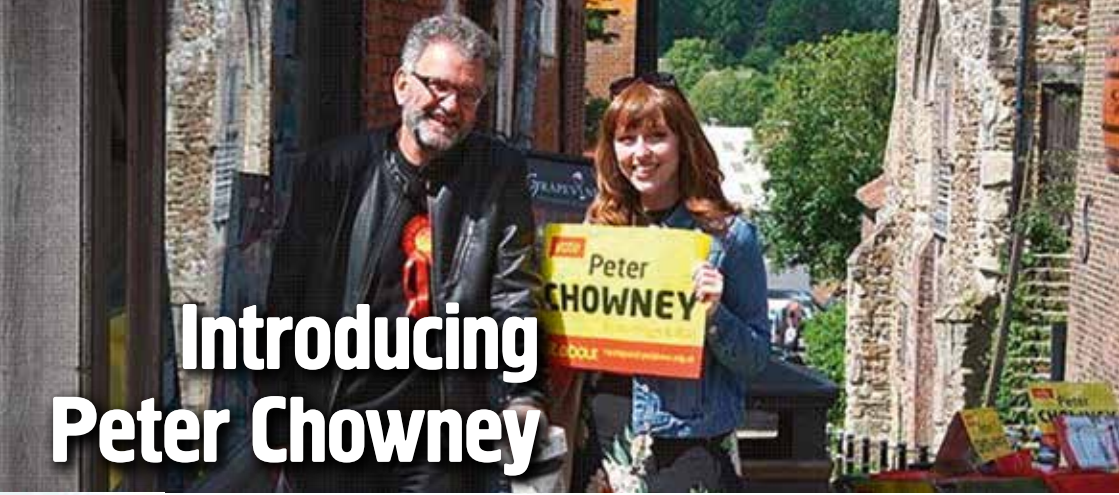
**As Leader of Hastings Council I'm proud to have been part of these valuable achievements:**

- **Retained 100% Council Tax relief** for those on out-of-work benefits
- **Brought the street cleaning service back in-house**, improving cleanliness standards
- **Achieved Blue Flag status on one of our beaches** and improved bathing water quality through an innovative natural filtration system
- **Building a new 'straw bale' visitor centre in the country park**, one of the first of its kind
- **Introduced the living wage for all council workers**
- **Campaigned to save – and saved the Station Plaza walk-in health centre**
- **Put on the ROOT1066 festival** to celebrate the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings
- **Boosted the creative and cultural sector** with council-run fish festivals, Stade Saturdays, and grants to creative businesses
- **Improved biodiversity in our parks** through environmentally-friendly management schemes



- **Renewed seafront structures**, including Bottle Alley with its award-winning lighting scheme and the new 'mist play' water feature now being built
- **Got Hastings Council to declare a 'climate emergency'** with a commitment to make Hastings carbon neutral by 2030 – one of the first councils in the country to do so
- **Bought houses to accommodate homeless families**, keeping them out of bed & breakfast accommodation
- **Worked in partnership with Optivo housing association on the Coastal Space project**, creating around 100 new social rented homes in previously derelict properties
- **Earned over a million pounds to fund local services** by acquiring commercial property
- **Gained over £10m in 2018** alone in competitive grant funding for schemes to help regeneration

# Introducing Peter Chowney



**I come from a working-class background: my father delivered paraffin and my mother was a clairvoyant.**

**I was educated at a state grammar school and was the first person in my family to go to university, to study microbiology at Aberystwyth.**

I worked in scientific research for a time, then for government departments,

at the Audit Commission, and for both urban and rural councils.

I moved to Hastings 22 years ago. I was first elected to Hastings Council in 1999, taking on the regeneration portfolio in 2006, and becoming Leader of the Council in 2015. In these roles, I've been responsible for many of the transformational improvements across the town. I have taken on other roles locally too, including chair of the Fisheries Local Action Group, and am a school governor.

I live with my partner, Jo, in Maze Hill, where I spend as much time as I can gardening and growing vegetables. I have a daughter who's the deputy director of a gallery in Hoxton, two cats, three chickens, a classic car, and an electric bicycle.

It has been an enormous privilege to serve Hastings as its council leader. I've adopted Hastings & Rye as my home. It's an area I know well, love and understand. I would welcome the opportunity to serve you as the Hastings & Rye MP.

**“Hastings & Rye is my home. It's an area I know well, love and understand.”**

**Peter Chowney**



Peter with former Hastings & Rye Labour MP, Michael Foster, at Station Plaza, Hastings – a Labour-funded regeneration project

# Our Local Economy

I will strive to:

- **Represent local business interests**
- **Ensure our specialist employers and small businesses get the grant funding they need**
- **Champion traditional industries such as agriculture, fishing and tourism**
- **Tackle local skills shortages**

Our local economy is vibrant and innovative, but needs help. It includes 'traditional' industries such as fishing, agriculture, tourism and language schools, but there are newly emerging sectors such as winemaking. Our growing cultural and creative sector is also making waves locally and worldwide.

As a scientist, I'm keen to promote the developing specialist manufacturing sector. Locally-made components went into the Large Hadron Collider at CERN

and the Curiosity probe on Mars! So we'd be well-placed to take advantage of Labour's 'Green Industrial Revolution', with the potential of hundreds of new jobs here in Hastings & Rye in emerging green technologies.

But businesses are hampered by a lack of investment. They can't get loans from the big banks, and are penalised by unfair and out-of-date business rates. Labour would reform business rates, replacing them with fairer business taxes. And we would also set up a National Investment Bank, to provide loan financing to help small and medium businesses grow.

A lack of skills in the local workforce is often cited by businesses as a problem too. To tackle this, we would not only invest in our under-funded schools and colleges, but establish 'lifelong learning', allowing free education to people to retrain and develop new skills throughout their working lives.



**Fisheries are an important part of the economy in Hastings and in Rye, not just because of the fishermen employed, but because of the positive impact they have on tourism and other businesses. A Tory government would almost certainly sacrifice the relatively tiny fishing sector as part of a European trade deal. But the real problem is the way fishing quotas have been allocated, with over 90% going to big factory trawlers. Labour will give more of this quota to under 10 metre boats, benefiting our local fleets.**

Left: Peter with Luke Pollard, the Labour Shadow Fisheries Minister and Paul Joy, Chairman of Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society.



**“We need better funded youth services to support our young people”**

## Education

**I will strive to:**

- **Make sure local schools are properly funded**
- **Demand more money goes into youth services**
- **End unaffordable university tuition fees**

Cuts in school funding have led to reductions in activities outside the national core curriculum, as well as cuts in teaching assistants, placing impossible burdens on teachers. School performance in Hastings & Rye isn't good, with three of our secondary schools appearing in the worst six in the whole of Sussex according to the 'Real Schools Guide'. And many of our schools have been converted to academies – only one non-religious school in Hastings is still a council-maintained school, resulting in a lack of choice for parents. We have skills

shortages here too, with local employers unable to find the skills they need in the local workforce.

But supporting young people isn't just about schools. We also need better-funded youth services, to support young people and avoid them being tempted into anti-social behaviour and crime. And of course, it's about colleges and universities offering the right courses in the right places, and ending tuition fees, which exclude poorer students from a university education.

Labour will introduce a National Education Service, restoring funding to schools and making sure all schools are democratically accountable. We will scrap tuition fees and reintroduce student maintenance grants. We'll also introduce lifelong learning, making free higher education available to everyone, to allow them to retrain and refresh their skills.

# Public service cuts

I will strive to:

- **Reverse damaging cuts to council services and adult social care**
- **Make sure councils can continue to generate income through commercial investments, without borrowing restrictions**
- **Demonstrate where cuts simply shift the burden onto other public services**

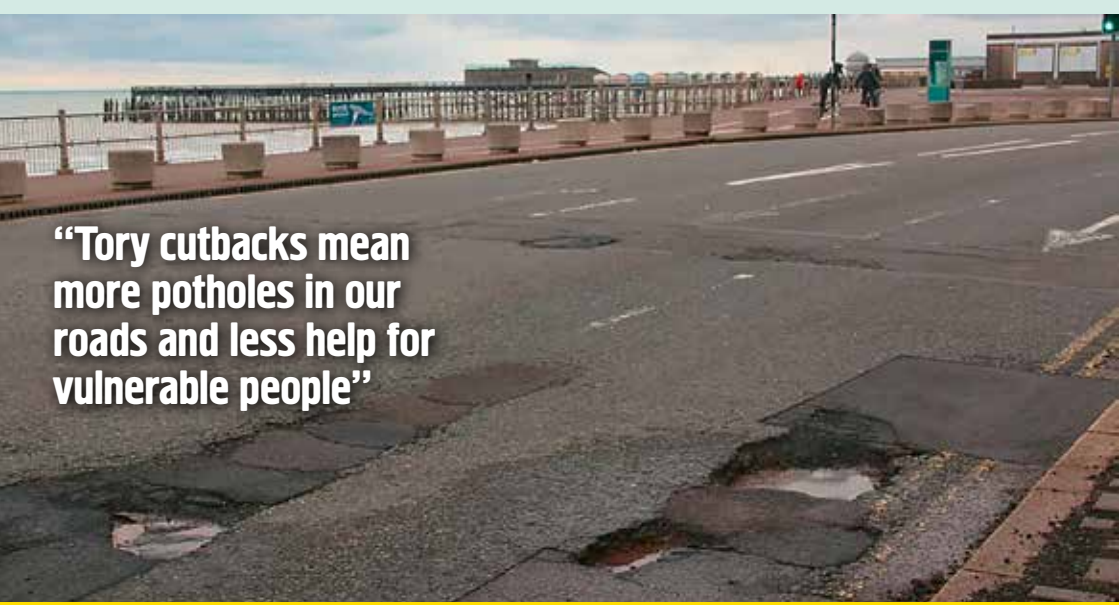
Cuts to public services have been disastrous, especially for local government. Hastings Council has lost more than £55m in total funding since 2010, with its major government grant cut from around £9m in 2010, to zero. In Rother too, funding cuts have been substantial, leaving the council with an unavoidable deficit.

Councils everywhere have been adept at absorbing these cuts, by making

efficiency savings, and by making better use of IT, moving service applications and problem reporting online. Many councils, including Hastings and Rother, are looking at new ways to raise income to offset government cuts – by buying commercial property, for example.

But with cuts on this scale, much of the work the council did on supporting local communities and employment initiatives for young people, for example, has gone. Cuts in East Sussex County Council's budgets mean more potholes in the roads, less support for vulnerable people, and less support for voluntary groups. These cuts are unsustainable – councils will simply run out of money – if funding isn't restored.

The cutbacks are misguided, and often don't save money, shifting the burden onto other public services. Labour would reverse them, funding public services at sensible, sustainable levels.



**“Tory cutbacks mean more potholes in our roads and less help for vulnerable people”**



# The NHS

## I will strive to:

- **Make funding available for decent healthcare services in Hastings & Rye**
- **Improve our chronically under-funded mental health services**
- **Improve access to GP surgeries, both in terms of their location and availability of appointments**

We have some significant health problems in Hastings & Rye. Levels of depression, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity are all higher here than the national and regional averages. In parts of Hastings, life expectancies are in the worst 1% nationally.

Overstretched local health services are struggling to cope, with long waiting times for routine surgery at the Conquest Hospital, where they're having to manage a £34m annual budget deficit. We're short of GPs too – around 15 short in Hastings alone, and sparse coverage in Rye and the rural areas.

Community healthcare services need improvement, particularly mental health

and social care for elderly people.

Untreated mental health problems in particular have led to increased homelessness, rough sleeping, drug and alcohol problems, and anti-social behaviour, which create burdens for other public services.

Labour will boost healthcare spending by more than £30bn, improve mental healthcare services, increase GP training places by 50%, and introduce a National Care Service to make social care for older people free.

But it's not just about spending more, it's about how the NHS is based around 'internal markets'. This has resulted in more bureaucracy, spiralling costs and with no benefit to patients.

We need to change that, to make it easier for health workers to do their jobs, and make our NHS work more closely with the local community.

**“Labour will properly fund healthcare for all and reverse the decline in services”**

“We must do all we can to limit damage to our planet – before it’s too late”



## Climate change

I will strive to:

- Make Hastings & Rye carbon-neutral by 2030
- Attract jobs funded by Labour’s Green Industrial Revolution
- Support schemes that create and enhance biodiversity

Climate change is the biggest threat we all face: measures to limit global warming are more urgent than ever. In 2018, United Nations experts gave us just 12 years to limit overall average temperature rises to two degrees to avoid disaster. For example, here in Hastings & Rye, a potential three metre

rise in the North Atlantic would mean that almost a third of the area of the constituency would be underwater. Thousands would be displaced from their homes. We must focus on







**“Labour’s  
‘greening’ of  
the economy  
will create  
well-paid jobs”**

developing renewable energy, with Britain leading the way. This is not an impossible dream, it’s a necessity – and there’s plenty of energy from the sun, from wind, from waves and from the earth itself.

Hastings Council was one of the first to declare a climate emergency, pledging to make Hastings carbon-neutral by 2030, a policy I put forward as council leader and which I feel strongly about being adopted by the Labour Party nationally. To work towards a carbon-neutral future, Labour will shift energy generation from fossil fuels to sustainable energy as part of a £250bn fund to ‘green’ the UK economy – our Green Industrial Revolution.

This will create hundreds of thousands of new, skilled jobs in a developing

carbon-neutral economy. And with a local manufacturing sector that already focuses on low-volume, high value technical products, we would be well-placed to take advantage of this.

I will do all I can to make sure we get a good share of this investment, creating well-paid, stable jobs in an area that has depended on low-paid, seasonal work.

Labour will invest £2.3bn in grants to improve the energy efficiency of our homes, with the added bonus of saving money on heating bills. I would also work towards reversing species extinction and enhancing biodiversity.

These courses of action are not just desirable, they are essential. We must do everything we can to save our planet and we must start now.

# Housing

I will strive to:

- **Ensure Hastings & Rye gets its share of Labour's planned million new social rented homes**
- **Introduce more secure tenancies and fair rents for private tenants**
- **End land banking by allowing councils to seize unused land**

The government has admitted that the housing market is broken. But private developers are failing to provide housing most local people can afford. This is particularly true in Rye and the Rother villages, where sky-high prices are forcing families out of the area.

We have a large private rented sector in Hastings too, which is also becoming unaffordable, with tenants on insecure tenancies frequently being moved on, causing chaos to family life.

'Land banking' must be stopped too. In Hastings alone, there are sites where the

council has given planning permission for over 1,000 homes. But they're not built, because developers wait until the value goes up.

To put this right, Labour has promised to build a million new social rented and council homes. We will introduce more secure tenancies in the private rented sector, and bring back rent controls while making sure benefits actually cover the rent.

Developers will not be allowed to hold undeveloped land – they will need to build on it, or risk losing it.

Hastings & Rye desperately needs innovative schemes to build genuinely affordable housing schemes, for both rented housing and housing for sale, as well as security for private tenants. I will make sure Hastings & Rye benefits from these policies.

Below: Winchester House in St Leonards – part of the Coastal Space scheme to provide social rented housing funded by Hastings Council and Optivo Housing Association

**“Tenants need more security and the whole area needs more homes”**



# Pensions & benefits

I will strive to:

- Get pensions for women born in the 1950s restored to what they were expecting
- Reverse benefit cuts and encourage people into work, rather than punish them for being out of work
- Make sure pensions and benefits for older people are maintained at least at their current level
- Restore free TV licences for the over-75s



Older people deserve a decent pension. Labour will maintain the state pension 'triple lock', free TV licences and bus passes. But we need a more intelligent approach to pension planning, with better incentives for people to save for a guaranteed decent pension. We must also reverse the unfair pension 'taper' that means women born in the 1950s are no longer entitled to the state pension they'd planned for.

Labour would scrap Universal Credit. The idea of a 'universal' benefits system, so you only have to make one claim, is a good one. But Universal Credit has been discredited because it was used to disguise benefit cuts. We need to start again with a new, fairer benefits system.

**“Let’s stop blaming claimants and get poorer pensioners a better deal”**

Benefit cuts and sanctions don't help people back into work. They make claimants more stressed, meaning they're less likely to get a job. What's needed is genuine support, skills training, and education. There are families in parts of Hastings & Rye where three generations have never worked. Rather than blaming them for being 'lazy', we need to get them out of this cycle of deprivation and despair, and into productive employment.

# Sustainable transport

I will strive to:

- Create better local, sustainable walking and cycling networks
- Secure a better transport infrastructure, with better east-west and north-south links
- Improve bus services, especially in rural areas

Transport infrastructure in Hastings & Rye is terrible, with poor road and rail links to London and east-west along the south coast.

This damages local businesses, and inhibits investment. New transport schemes are dealt with as isolated, one-off projects, based on spurious business cases. What's really needed is a proper integrated transport infrastructure, designed to both tackle the need for better transport links and to limit climate

change. That means local off-road routes for walking and cycling to link public transport interchanges, a comprehensive charging network for electric cars, and better long-distance road and rail connections. What's needed is better thought-out transport solutions, rather than new motorways carved into our countryside.

Bus services need to be improved, with investment in less polluting buses, with bus regulation to bring better, more frequent, and more reliable bus services, in particular serving our rural villages.

Labour will bring the railways into public ownership and end the chaos, inefficiency and escalating fares imposed on us by private rail companies.

We'll also allow councils to run bus services again, challenging the monopolies of private bus companies.

**“More frequent bus services will get people out of their cars and provide a real lifeline for isolated communities”**





Dawn Butler (left), Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, with Peter and constituents.

# Women and Equality

## I will strive to:

- **Name and shame local employers that maintained a gender pay gap**
- **See that Hastings & Rye Sure Start centres are re-opened, with at least as much provision as there was in 2010**
- **Participate in and promote the White Ribbon movement to raise awareness of domestic violence, and increase the number women's refuges**

Austerity policies since 2010 have caused untold hardship to our communities, with 38% of Hastings children living in poverty. Women have endured the worst of these cuts, as it's usually women who take the responsibilities for caring for children.

Women with children often have problems finding employment, because wages on offer are low, workplace practices discriminate against women, and they can't afford childcare. Reports of domestic abuse of women are rising too, with insufficient women's refuges to cope with the numbers of women survivors.

Women must be given more of a chance to get decent, well-paid jobs, with better childcare support available for free.

Labour's policies to help women include extending statutory maternity leave to 12 months, creating a Workers' Protection Agency to force employers to address their gender pay gap, providing 30 hours a week of free, high quality childcare for pre-school children, and opening 1,000 new Sure Start centres.

# Policing

Cuts to policing have led to problems in Hastings & Rye, and across the country. Recent small increases in police numbers have nowhere near restored these cuts. And the police now have extra burdens, particularly in terms of global threats from terrorism and priorities given to child protection, so local community policing has suffered. This has made it harder to deal with anti-social behaviour,

street drinking, and drug use. Labour would restore funding for local police patrols, as well as properly funding these other new demands on the police service.

I will call for the restoration of community policing, to reintroduce community police with their own patch, so they can gather local intelligence and keep on top of problems before they get out of hand.

## Broadband & mobile



**I will strive to:**

- **Get better mobile phone signal coverage for Hastings & Rye**
- **Ensure the area is in early rollout phases for superfast broadband**
- **Call for more research into the long-term health effects of 5G signals**

Parts of Hastings & Rye have suffered from poor broadband speeds for too long. This is because it simply isn't

profitable for private companies to invest in it in rural areas.

So Labour is proposing to re-nationalise BT Openreach to make sure superfast broadband is provided everywhere – free of charge. This would give a huge boost to our high-tech manufacturing and creative sectors that we have in the constituency.

But mobile phone signals are poor too – not just in rural areas, but in parts of urban Hastings. We also need a more comprehensive mobile network, to make sure a 4G signal is available everywhere.

I know some people have concerns about the safety of 5G signals. While I don't believe it's been proven to be harmful, I think more research is needed into the long-term health effects of exposure to microwave radiation.

New wi-fi technologies could be enormously beneficial to the way we communicate, and the way we use 'smart' connected devices. But we need to be sure the technology is safe.



# Brexit

The decision to leave the EU was bad news for the local economy. As a more deprived area identified by the EU, we've had a lot of EU funding – in Hastings alone, we got more than £50m over the last ten years, for projects ranging from supporting the local fishery to improving insulation in older homes. And Hastings & Rye benefits enormously from spending by EU tourists.

But the referendum decision to leave the EU cannot be ignored. To do so could lead to civil unrest, with people getting even more disillusioned with democracy. This is why we need a second referendum. Nobody voted for Boris Johnson's deal in the original vote.

Johnson's Brexit withdrawal deal is worse than Theresa May's – it puts a customs border down the Irish Sea and risks the breakup of the UK. It also trashes workers' rights, as well as food and drug safety standards. But if you

think the Johnson deal would 'get Brexit done' and it would all finally be over, think again. There follows a period of at least 20 months during which the UK remains in the EU for most purposes, while we negotiate a permanent trade deal. It isn't the end, it's just the beginning!

Many local industries, and farmers in particular, depend on EU labour for their businesses to survive. Our hospitals depend on EU citizens too. Labour would renegotiate a Brexit deal that took account of this, and keep us in the customs union, massively simplifying future trade talks.

But most importantly, we would put that deal back to the people in another referendum. In that referendum, I would campaign to remain. But should the decision of the referendum be to leave with the negotiated deal, that's what I'd support in parliament.

## WHY I SUPPORT JEREMY CORBYN

I first met Jeremy back in the 1980s, when I lived in London.

I've always been impressed by the way he sticks to what he believes in, and doesn't say one thing while meaning

another, unlike many other politicians. For me, that makes for a strong leader: honest, clear and determined. He will make a good Prime Minister, he's someone we can trust.

**“I love this area and I welcome the opportunity to serve you as your MP”**

**Peter  
CHOWNEY  
for MP**



This pamphlet shows some of the policies I would be promoting for Hastings & Rye. A full list of Labour's national policies are included in the party's national manifesto.

**Peter CHOWNEY**

If you would like to help with my campaign to become the Labour MP for Hastings & Rye, or you would like to display a poster, please get in touch.

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and a large print  
version, visit:**

**[www.hastingsandryelabour.org.uk/peterchowney](http://www.hastingsandryelabour.org.uk/peterchowney)**

## **My Pledges to you:**

### **STOP CLIMATE CHANGE**

– working to make our constituency carbon neutral by 2030

### **TACKLE DEPRIVATION**

– addressing the problems causing poverty in our communities

### **GET HASTINGS & RYE MOVING**

– fixing our inadequate transport infrastructure and public transport

### **GET COUNCIL HOMES BUILT**

– enabling our councils to build social housing again

### **IMPROVE SKILLS**

– securing better educational outcomes for young people

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Thursday 12 December**

