



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS
MANIFESTO

TELLING IT
AS IT IS



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Foreword

Though these are Local Government elections they are inevitably overshadowed by the betrayal of Brexit. The defiance by Government and Parliament of the people's decision that the United Kingdom should leave the EU is quite appalling. In voting TUV you will be emphatic in demanding the delivery of a proper Brexit. Equally, your defence of the Union with the UK, will be clearly understood through voting TUV No. 1. But on local issues, too, you will have a clear, straight-talking voice, which will withstand the Sinn Féin takeover that is now so aggressive, even in the local councils. In this manifesto we again set out our critique of the big issues of the day and set forth our vision for the way ahead. At a time of uncertainty and equivocation by many, I thoroughly recommend TUV as a party you can trust.

William Ross
TUV President





Defending the Union

The Union that matters is the Union that binds us to GB, not the EU. This is the rock of our Britishness, both cultural and economic, which makes it the relentless target of republicanism. A republicanism that can't even respect the poppy or tolerate an Orange parade is a republicanism which would swiftly extinguish unionism in an all-Ireland. TUV is resolute in its defence of The Union, rejecting the folly of Irish Unity.

Who would want to

- give up the free NHS to pay €60 to visit the doctor, €100 at A&E and €75 for every night in hospital?
- surrender £12,500 tax free personal allowance to pay tax on all income?
- give up free school transport? • pay up to €750 for car tax?
- join an economy with higher unemployment and cost of living?
- join a country with the 3rd highest per capita national debt in the developed world (higher than Greece)? • lose the £10billion annual subvention from London, resulting in higher taxes and lesser services?

Yet, republicanism - fearful that a successful Brexit will strengthen our place in the UK - is aggressively attacking the Union and demanding a border poll. Give your answer on 2nd May to this Sinn Fein campaign by voting solidly in defence of the Union. Vote TUV. Remember - under the Belfast Agreement - once a border poll is called there is a presumption that there will be one every seven years thereafter until republicans get the answer they want. We cannot allow Northern Ireland to be plunged into a state of constant turmoil.





Brexit betrayed

By the biggest democratic mandate in our history the people of the UK rightly decided we should leave the EU. Three years later the political elite remain in defiance and connive by every conceivable ploy to subvert the will of the people. That might fit exactly with the EU's contempt for national will, but in this UK cradle of democracy it is an indelible stain of totalitarian rejection of the people's vote. The PM rolled over to Brussels to the extent that she produced a deal which was a humiliation for the UK, with its shocking betrayal of Northern Ireland through the pernicious Backstop - a republican building block for Irish unification. Turning to Corbyn added a new low to the betrayal of Brexit. TUV believes in a proper Brexit and the opportunities it affords, totally rejects the Backstop and holds that leave means leave. A proper Brexit and preserving the Union are mutually inclusive. No deal in face of EU intransigence would serve both very well. A prosperous UK through successful Brexit strengthens the Union. No Brexit diminishes and curbs the whole UK.

Standing up to Sinn Fein

TUV's resolute opposition to the Republican programme is well known. All TUV councillors will seek to frustrate the advancement of Sinn Fein's pernicious agenda in the council chamber.

With Sinn Fein

- intent on using their position in councils to impose the Irish language in places where it simply is not wanted, including Unionist areas of Newry, Mourne and Down, Mid Ulster, Fermanagh and Omagh and Londonderry and Strabane, their goal is not equality or cultural enrichment but cultural domination;
- stripping council chambers and buildings of symbols of national sovereignty, such as happened with the Union Flag on Belfast City Hall;
- most notoriously of all, naming a children's play park in honour of a convicted IRA terrorist who was arrested while in possession of a gun used in the Kingsmills Massacre. Unionists need councillors who can deliver strength and face down Republicans in council chambers the length and breadth of the Province.



Such issues are not limited to councils where Sinn Fein are in control. In the last council term TUV councillors led resistance to an illegal IRA monument on council property in Mid and East Antrim. Untainted by coalition with Sinn Fein/IRA at any stage in our history, TUV is best placed to call out Sinn Fein hypocrisy when they profess concern for “rights”. Having shown wanton disregard for the most basic human right - the right to life - over the thirty years of a terrorist campaign which they continue to not only justify but celebrate, Sinn Fein’s double standards will not go unchallenged by TUV.

Resolute on moral issues

You know where you stand with TUV when it comes to the big moral issues of the day. TUV stands unashamedly for traditional family values and will oppose the redefinition of marriage and campaigns which seek to further this aim.

In recent years there have been divisive attempts to light council buildings in rainbow colours and get council buildings to fly the rainbow flag. TUV councillors will oppose ratepayer funded buildings being branded in this way.

TUV is equally resolute when it comes to the lives of the most vulnerable in our society - the unborn, so opposes any weakening of our pro-life laws.

Untainted by sleaze

Between the RHI scandal and Ian Paisley's holiday junkets, Unionism has been brought to the low point that Sinn Fein – with its odious record – is able to lecture Unionists about the standards required in public life. What a humiliation inflicted by the DUP's abuse of power!

This election takes place in the context of months of highly damaging headlines about scandal affecting Unionism.

We've had...

- The RHI scandal resulting in a public inquiry which
 - (i) exposed unbelievable incompetence across government and the civil service, yet no civil servant has been sacked;
 - (ii) revealed that the Minister in charge was so cavalier that she didn't even read her own legislation and yet doesn't feel any personal responsibility for the scandal;
 - (iii) uncovered instances of relatives being tipped off by figures within the apparatus of government about the potential closure of the scheme; Now genuine poultry farmers and others, who invested in reliance on Mrs Foster's assurance of 20 years of returns, have been abandoned in their debt.
- An MP suspended for a record breaking period for acting as a "paid advocate" for a foreign government.
- Allegations of abuse of the planning system with a DUP councillor facing questions about a planning application to build homes submitted as a diversion in his mother's maiden name. Untainted by scandal and with a reputation for telling it as it is, TUV offers you the chance to shake things up in this election. Integrity matters.



Scourge of Stormont

TUV has consistently argued that Sinn Fein was not in Stormont to make Northern Ireland work or bring us good government and that when they judged the time had come, they would collapse it. In the aftermath of the last council elections in 2014 our leader Jim Allister said:

“But it is not a sticking plaster approach which Stormont needs, but root and branch change, whereby mandatory coalition and its crippling mutual vetoes are ditched. It is inevitable that one day the present unworkable Stormont will implode.”

(News Letter, 10th September 2014).

Later, that same year, he told the TUV party conference:

“Whether this Stormont executive implodes this year or next, implode it will”.

He may have been a year out but implode Stormont certainly did and that in spectacular fashion in January 2017.





TUV has consistently argued that Stormont needs a radical overhaul if it is to ever work. In the past we have spelt out alternatives to failure in our policy document “A Path to Making Stormont Work”. (<http://tuv.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/TUV-Making-Stormont-Work-A5-Leaflet-3.pdf>)

TUV has a clear vision of what will work and provide good and durable government. It is voluntary coalition with an Opposition. This does not deny cross-community government. Indeed, the strategic use of weighted majority voting would guarantee this. The collapse of mandatory coalition need not mean the end of devolution. Far from it. Indeed, it can be the catalyst to project Northern Ireland forward into governmental arrangements that work and end the cycle of failure. However, in the absence of an appetite to reform Stormont in order to provide workable and durable devolution, TUV is clear that we need to move on.

The Assembly has sat long enough in a state of suspended animation. It is a farce. The public are rightly angry about MLAs being paid while the Assembly hasn't functioned for more than 2 years.

After 20 years of stop start Belfast Agreement style devolution and 2 years of nothing happening we have a simple solution - if there is no appetite for the sensible proposals which would see us move towards a more democratic form of Stormont government, which actually has a chance of working, then it is time to shut it down and go for British rule.

TUV believe that this should happen immediately and without any further delay.

Targeting council squander

Lower rates

When the 11 new super councils came into operation, we were promised we would see a saving of £438m over 25 years. Ratepayers have seen little sign of this. Rates have risen and there has been a culture of squander across many councils (source for figure <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/official-report/reports-13-14/01-april-2014/>).

TUV is a low tax party. We believe that you should keep as much of your money as possible and that you have a right to expect value for money when it comes to the money you contribute in direct taxation or in rates.

And we have a track record to prove this. On Mid and East Antrim Council where TUV has its strongest presence we have proposed savings year on year which have been consistently voted down by other parties.

Others talk about delivering value for money. TUV has a record of challenging wasteful expenditure. If you want to derail the council gravy train, then vote TUV No. 1 on election day.



Delivering quality council services

TUV recognises that ratepayers rightly demand the best return for their money. Rural dwellers get a lesser service for their rates - TUV will not neglect them.

Recognising local talent is important but lavish Freedom of the Borough ceremonies are not what we have in mind when we think of the priority services local government needs to provide.

TUV pledges to stand up for you when it comes to cutting unnecessary expenditure.

Maximising recycling is good. However, we also recognise the practical realities of life for working people. If you pay rates you expect your bin to be lifted regularly. TUV councillors will reject the absurd proposal of monthly bin collections.

When it comes to leisure, TUV wants to see quality facilities which benefit the whole community. Sensible opening hours which accommodate people with increasingly busy lives - i.e. more early and late opening - is a must. Children's play parks must be maintained to a high standard with toilet and changing facilities nearby.

Helping local business

The decline in town centres across Northern Ireland deeply concerns TUV. Once bustling high streets and their remaining businesses are now struggling to survive. Crippling rates have been a major contributor to decline. Aesthetically pleasing artwork on empty shop fronts may bring cosmetic change but is no substitute for kickstarting economic revival in our town centres.

Invest NI loves the glamour of foreign direct investment but where is the meaningful investment in our town centres?

We believe that central government - and in the continued absence of Stormont it will have to be direct rule Ministers - should step up to the mark and incentivise and promote town centre shopping as a cost-effective and viable alternative to out of town locations.

As things stand, businesses are being penalised if they choose town centre premises because of higher rates. TUV believes that they should be rewarded for doing so. This will help fill the empty units and entice more consumers back into our town centres.

As the councils have economic development powers, opportunities exist to restore a viable economic hub in every major town; this is an essential strategy for growth. One of the drains on our town centres is excessive car park charges. Many people question why they should pay to shop in town centres while free parking is provided in out of town developments.



War on potholes

The state of rural roads is a disgrace. Lack of investment has produced a vicious circle of neglect.

TUV will be a constant voice demanding proper upkeep of rural roads and adequate winter gritting.

Cleaner streets

TUV will push to have our streets as tidy as possible and will ensure that there are more dog waste bins in areas where they are required.

Adequate litter bins and regular street cleaning is a must. These practical services which councils provide are essential and where your rates should be directed. More money spent on matters such as this is what ratepayers need and demand.

TUV is also cognisant of the growing problem of rural litter as well as roadside dumping. TUV believes that where possible those responsible should be held to account and that when it comes to roadside dumping the law should be vigorously enforced.

Adequate cemetery provision

In some councils there is a lack of civic cemetery provision. This must be addressed, especially in villages and towns where church cemeteries are fast reaching capacity.

A fair deal on planning

There is continuing concern about the connections between some political parties and developers which has caused considerable public unease. This is one area of additional power to the new super councils which we believe has failed to gain public confidence.

Transparency is key when it comes to planning. Decisions need to be made on policy, not because of politics. They also need to be made in a timely manner.

Providing for council staff

In some councils the number of agency staff and the length of time they have been denied full employment status is not acceptable. TUV will continue to pursue this issue.

Likewise, when we detect community imbalance in the make-up of council staff - often seen at senior ranks - TUV will not hesitate to expose it.

Fair and equal policing

Council input into policing through the Policing and Safety Partnerships enables local policing concerns to be highlighted, though the extent to which they are adequately addressed is disappointing in many cases. Lack of resources and the deployment of resources remains problematic. TUV already in councils has pursued adequate rural policing, sufficient policing patrols and proper allocation of resources.

Just as at provincial level we oppose the reintroduction of discriminatory 50:50 recruitment, so at a local level we demand that all are treated equally under the law and that none are above the law.



Ours is a zero-tolerance attitude to crime which has no room for pandering to paramilitary/terrorist interests. However, the very set up of police oversight through the Policing Board is unhelpful to public confidence with at least one convicted terrorist in place. The situation has been aggravated by the Sinn Fein leader having compromised the selection process for a new Chief Constable and getting away with it.

Health - patients first

Though not a council responsibility, the provision of a fully functioning and effective NHS is critical to us all. Thus, TUV councillors will use their influence to campaign against bureaucratic empire-building being prioritised over frontline services. It's not more deputy directors we need, it's more doctors and nurses.

The closure of more local facilities should not be the default position to save money. Of course, some services may require transformation, but it must not be about trumping local need.

In some councils the initiation of a forum on Health issues has proved worthwhile and should be pursued across all councils.

Fairness in education

Many TUV councillors are active on school Boards of Governors, seeking to sustain services and improve standards. The shortage of funding and the imbalance between sectors is hitting the controlled sector particularly hard.

The fact that an Irish Language school can be funded with just a dozen pupils, but some rural controlled schools are threatened with closure, illustrates the Sinn Fein inspired agenda which for many years informed the Department of Education.



Meeting housing needs

Though housing is not a council matter, councillors are called upon to deal with many housing issues in the social housing sector. Thus, representations to the Housing Executive and Housing Associations seeking necessary repairs and timely transfers is a frequent task of TUV councillors.

While increasing home ownership is a positive, for many it is unrealistic. Thus, sufficiency of social housing stock in urban and rural settings is a concern for TUV, as well as adequate measures to deal with exploitation in the private rented sector.

Community identity matters

Though Brexit should restore full control over immigration policy to the UK, the change wrought in many local communities by the 'open border' policy of the EU has left a legacy of issues.

Where assimilation has not occurred, it is often the indigenous community that feels discomforted. Local councils have a role in addressing these matters. TUV councillors will not run away from such issues but will ensure local communities are supported and their rights and interests protected.





Veterans and innocent victims

There is widespread unease about the treatment of those who served this country in the armed forces both overseas and at home in Northern Ireland. Disproportionate suicide rates are an alarming insight into the sense of hopelessness experienced by many ex-service personnel.

Northern Ireland remains the only part of the United Kingdom where the Military Covenant is not delivering for our service personnel and veterans. The biggest threat to veterans, however, comes from the rewriting of history.

Sanitising the IRA by vilifying the security forces is an obvious tactic of republicanism to which TUV is very alert. The good name of the RUC and UDR has been dragged through the gutter by those who proclaim collusion at every turn.

The recent revelations about how the Police Ombudsman in the Loughinisland case wrongly ruled that officers were guilty of collusion is a telling example of this. The most damaging claim - that the killers' getaway car was hidden by an officer and vital evidence lost as a result - was debunked but not until after an officer had been suspended for two years without hard evidence to support the damaging allegations against him.

This sort of rewriting of history is a very serious issue - and one which will become more widespread should the current Sinn Fein/DUP legacy proposals from the Stormont House Agreement go ahead. The oral history archive and proposed methods to be used by the Independent Commission on Information Retrieval are wide open to abuse by those who wish to throw out baseless allegations of collusion without a scintilla of proof.

With the Government consultation on legacy matters now closed, the danger is that once the elections are out of the way these plans will get off the ground. This election is your chance to send a message that the rewriting of history must stop and that the current legacy proposals are unacceptable.





www.tuv.org.uk



YOU CAN
TRUST
TUV

TAKING ON SINN FEIN...

...and its pernicious agenda

RESOLUTE ON MORAL ISSUES...

...pro life and opposed to redefinition of marriage

UNTAINTED BY SLEAZE...

...believes in probity in public life. Integrity matters

S COURGE OF STORMONT...

...Sinn Fein not there to make NI work: hence, failure

TARGETING COUNCIL SQUANDER...

...determined to deliver value for money for local ratepayers



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