

Candidates speak on key issues

• The Economy • Education • Transport • Health



★ IN KENT the Conservatives will be seeking to maintain their blue domination of the map. Every constituency in the county is Tory held, and Sir Patrick Mayhew holds a large majority in Tunbridge Wells.

★ Listed here are the main candidates for the constituency. All were asked to provide 50 words on each of five subjects — the economy, including local taxes; education; health and transport; and one other of their own choice.

★ Where candidates have not broken their statements down, we have done our best to include the main points.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Tony Clayton (Lib Dem)



TONY CLAYTON, 42, is an industrial strategy adviser to private and public sector businesses. Married, he has two children. His interests include walking and cycling, church activities and Friends of the Earth.

He designed the London to Brighton cycle ride, and is a member of the Citizens Advice Bureau management committee.

He has been a Sevenoaks district and town councillor since 1987, and worked for Roy Jenkins from 1982 and 1985.

Economy. Our budget for growth would invest in homes, hospitals, schools and transport, to relaunch the economy and create 600,000 jobs.

We would control inflation by making it impossible for politicians to fiddle with interest and exchange rates for short-term political advantage. We would raise the cash needed for skills for the future.

Education. Britain today spends less on education than most developed countries. We will invest in children and their schools, which will cost a penny on income tax.

This will guarantee more teachers, more books, a year's pre-school education for all under-fives and two days

a week training for every 16 to 19 year old.

Transport. As a commuter I know the need to improve Kent's rail network. The Channel Tunnel could help shift lorries off roads and on to rail, but little has been done to make it happen. Our budget includes £1.8 billion to start passenger and freight investment. We will encourage fuel economy, and efficient public transport.

Health. Local doctors are horrified at the lack of choice in the "market" NHS. Our plans will restore the right of GPs and patients to control their own healthcare.

We will back health promotion with abolition of charges for optical and dental checkups. In addition, we guarantee a real increase in NHS funding which will avoid the threat to acute hospital services in Tunbridge Wells.

Making your vote count. I believe that you, British citizens, have the right to a government which commands the support of the majority of the people.

Almost every other citizen of Europe has that right — why not you? No government elected in this way could have brought in the poll tax, made money the main measure of our health service or cut investment in education for all under-fives and two days

Edward Goodman (Lab)

EDWARD GOODMAN, 46, is a solicitor. He is married and has two children. His hobbies include history, gardening and art. A borough councillor in Surrey, he is a member of the National Council for Civil Liberties, and chairman of the Campaign Against Censorship. He is keenly interested in personal freedom, and enthusiastically supports Labour's plans for a Charter of Rights. Other interests include local government reform and the NHS.

Economy. Labour will reverse Britain's slide into deeper recession by granting tax relief on investment. There will be fairer national and local tax structures. Fewer people will pay income tax and national insurance. Only a minority will pay more.

The extra revenue thus generated (£4 billion) will be used to increase Child Benefit, pensions and expenditure on education and the National Health Service. The council tax will be replaced by fair rates with rebates for those on low incomes.

The uniform business rate, which has driven so many firms into liquidation, will be abolished in favour of local rates with rebates for small businesses.

Education. Labour will increase expenditure on education. It will ensure that there will be nursery education available for every three and four year old. It will increase the number of places in higher education and replace student loans by

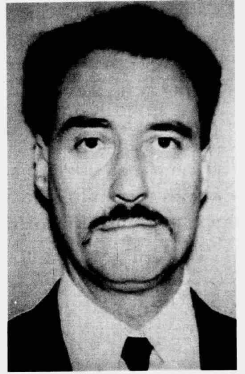
grants. State schools will no longer be allowed to opt out of local education authority control, thus preventing the development of a two-tier system.

Transport. Labour will invest in public transport, especially the railways, which have been neglected by the Tory Government with the result that Britain has the most expensive and inefficient rail service in Europe. There will be a passengers' charter and concessionary fares for those on low incomes. Expenditure on road expansion will be reviewed.

Health. Labour will increase expenditure on the National Health Service. Hospitals which have "opted out" will be brought back under area health authority control, thus ending the creeping privatisation of the Health Service. A Health Quality Commission will enforce standards. There will be free eye tests and dental checks.

Constitutional. Labour will abolish the House of Lords and replace it by an elected second chamber which will safeguard a Bill of Rights.

There will be a Freedom of Information Act to replace the Tory Official Secrets Act of 1989, which prohibits any publicity about the workings of government and thus impedes democratic control. Scottish aspirations will be satisfied by home rule exercised by a regional Parliament at Edinburgh.



Brian Leslie (Green)



BRIAN LESLIE, 61, is a school teacher. He is married and has two children. His hobbies include handicrafts such as woodwork and metalwork, painting and decorating, jewellery making, photography, and preparing artwork for printing. He has no previous parliamentary experience.

Economy. Our worldwide system of debt-finance and usury has driven us and our environment near to extinction. Fundamental changes to our money system and away from the destructive and unfair ways goods are produced and distributed are essential, with high taxes on finite resources to make prices reflect their true value.

Education. Advanced societies must educate for life — to produce informed, concerned and caring citizens. The current shift towards vocational training of schoolchildren is misguided. We need high-quality education, available to all throughout life. We can and must afford the resources for this. The National Curriculum cannot work without them.

Transport. All forms of public transport must be integrated and made environmentally cleaner and more efficient — and all transport less needed.

Subsidies must be shifted to public transport from the private car, and planning regulations must be rewritten to help minimise the need for daily travel. Clean-burn engines and non-fossil fuel energy sources must be developed for all powered transport.

Health. We need a national health service — in its true sense. We must give more attention to health promotion, especially by eliminating poverty and stress, which maintaining high quality medical care for all who need it. The recent wasteful and divisive changes must be reversed.

Other. Basic incomes would eliminate the poverty trap and break people's dependence on "jobs", so allowing them to choose not to work in useless, wasteful or destructive jobs, which so much of present employment is. Automation should be freeing people from drudgery and allowing them to live worthwhile lives, without destroying the environment.

Sir Patrick Mayhew* (Cons)

SIR PATRICK MAYHEW, 62, is a barrister, and has held the post of Attorney General since 1987. He was first elected MP for Tunbridge Wells in 1974. Married, he has four sons. His hobbies include gardening, sailing and hill walking.

The Economy. Uncertainty about the election is the factor now holding back confidence. Business organisations say Labour will harm them. Liberal votes can lead to a Labour government. So we need a Conservative majority.

Taxation policy should now encourage people, not discourage them. The council tax will be much the fairest local tax.

Education. Wide choice and high standards are what our children need. They are Conservative policy. Conservatives want first class comprehensive and grammar schools together. Grant maintained schools can now be independent of Kent County Council.

We here have the benefit of these because of Conservatism in action. Only Conservatives will keep them.

Transport. People must be able to travel with least damage to the environment. British Rail will invest £4 billion in the next three years (£1.3 billion in Network SouthEast), the highest level for 30 years. The Conservatives' green petrol discount is good. But the South-East's roads make us still underprivileged.

Health. People are made cross by political attacks on the NHS. They know the



wonderful free assurance it gives.

I have welcomed the huge increase in its real money under the Conservatives (to £3 billion annually, up 50 per cent). It can still be better run, and I look for more self-government now.

The EEC. Britain must take a leading part in the development of the Community, but a restraining part too.

Conservatives will not accept a federation, nor is one necessary. Unlike the other parties, we must remain firmly for parliamentary sovereignty. Britain must keep her own defence, foreign and monetary policies. John Major has secured this.

Roy Edey (Ind)

ROY EDEY, 56, is believed to be the first independent to stand in Tunbridge Wells.

Married, but with no children, he lives in Harrold. He says he is standing against Sir Patrick Mayhew, rather than for Tunbridge Wells.

Mr Edey says his manifesto is based on upholding the rule of law, something he claims Sir Patrick, as Attorney General, has not done.

He cites two incidents — the floating of Sunday trading in supermarkets, and the decision not to prosecute Sir Leon

Britton over the Westland helicopters affair.

On the first issue, Mr Edey was the man who gained notoriety by taking a packet of biscuits from a supermarket on Sunday, and refusing to pay for it until Monday.

On the second issue, he holds Sir Patrick as guilty as his predecessor, Sir Michael Havers, for not prosecuting Sir Leon after he "gave, by his own admission, an unlawful instruction to a subordinate civil servant to break the law."

(No photograph supplied)

*Denotes candidate seeking re-election