

BEXLEY LABOUR GROUP PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Refusal to remove Illegally attached Union and St. George's flags across Bexley

Since last summer, a substantial number of Union and St. George's flags have been attached illegally to lampposts, footbridges, and railway bridges. In addition, pedestrian crossings and roundabouts have been vandalised with spray paint. Whilst the council has removed several flags that caused road safety issues and those that were attached to the Belvedere horse roundabout and Erith fish roundabout, it still refuses to remove the large number of flags across the borough because of decisions in their group.

We have been contacted by many residents across the borough who are not happy at the council's lack of action to deal with this vandalism. Bexley Labour group continue to press the ruling Conservative council to remove these flags across the borough immediately, publicly condemn this behaviour and state that the council will prosecute those vandalising council property.

Cllr. Anna Day, Labour group Shadow spokesperson for Neighbourhoods said:

'Many residents expressed disquiet at a recent hate crime forum hosted in Bexleyheath, and through emails and social media, and want the council to act. Health workers have requested a preference to not work in areas where the flags are prevalent due to the tension they feel. Furthermore, to add insult to injury, when reporting this issue on fix my street because they want to be reassured that the council don't condone these actions, residents get a response on the website telling them, "At present, we are not aware of the flags causing any immediate community tension." This response is not acceptable, and the council should be acting now.'

The Union and St. George's flag should be used to unite people across our community. Our country's flags are something we all celebrate; it is a symbol that unites us as a nation across the political divide. But these actions have not been inclusive of the whole community; instead, our flag has been repurposed to intimidate others. We reiterate that Bexley is a welcoming and inclusive borough for all.

Cllr. Stefano Borella, Leader of Bexley Labour Group said:

'We are continuing to press Bexley Tories to publicly condemn this action, prosecute the organisers for damaging council property and remove these flags immediately, these flags look very tatty and worn, which certainly does not engender a spirit of national pride'

N.B Bexley Labour group has produced leaflets over many years with the union flag on its branding and this election is no different, the whole community owns the flag, and we will not let a small minority intimidate and divide our diverse and inclusive community in Bexley'