

NORTH DEVON LABOUR NEWS

RED LINES

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BETTER TOGETHER; BEST AS EQUALS.

NEWS SHARED - VIEWS INVITED - CAMPAIGNS SUPPORTED

EDITOR'S WELCOME

Autumn's busy period has well and truly started in North Devon! With two brilliant candidates up for by-elections in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe, and lots of canvassing; an amazing Carnival in Barnstaple; plus our delegates and members heading down to Brighton for the annual Labour Conference - there's an awful lot to report on!

NEWS

Jeremy is coming to North Devon! On Thursday 26th October, JC will be joining Billy Bragg and guests at The Factory in Barnstaple for our fundraiser! Tickets are now sold out - record time!

LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Barnstaple Central (14.09) by-election was campaigned well by Laurence but lost with 20.7% of the vote. Ilfracombe Central Town Council (21.09) by-election was fought hard by Jim but sadly we were unsuccessful this time, gaining 194 votes. The fight goes on though and we'd like to thank every single member who contributed to their campaigns - street stalls, leafleting, canvassing, talking to neighbours - whatever you were able to do. Every little helps and the more we get out and show that Labour DO have a presence in North Devon, and that we ARE a relevant and positive option for people to choose. Well done every one. And look out for Jim's piece on the by-election...



Join Jeremy Corbyn, Billy Bragg, Amy Newton and Jim Jones at our Fundraiser on Thursday October 26th, The Factory, Barnstaple! TICKETS NOW SOLD OUT!

There's a by-election coming up in the ward of Braunton East with our very own Simon Scott standing. Our Chair, Mark Cann, is also standing for election as a District Councillor in the same ward. Both elections take place on 2nd November. Keep your eyes peeled for canvassing dates on our Facebook page!

EVENTS

We want to showcase how active North Devon Labour members are in their local communities; campaigning, fundraising and standing up for the people in our constituency and beyond. We are a pretty pro-active constituency, but our actions speak louder than words...

We held some really positive street stalls in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe in

September as part of the by-election campaigns. People are definitely feeling the need for a Labour government, and they've been very pleased to see Labour's presence on the streets again. Ian Crawford and co have also held a brilliant free live music event for SOHS up at Tapeley Park, and - despite the weather - fun was had by all and money was raised to Save Our Hospital Services and battle the government cuts.

Autumn is always busy in politics, as it's when the parties hold their annual conferences, and North Devon sent two delegates this year: Annie McVey for the main conference and Rosie Godfrey was our Women's delegate. Tamsin Higgs and Siobhan Strode also attended in an unofficial capacity.

When there wasn't any voting for our delegates to do, there was training or an interesting debate to attend. Some of the interesting training sessions were: "Challenges and solutions when working within rural CLPs", "Campaign Planning", "BAME officer training" - among many others.

The fringe events were excellent - especially The World Transformed festival that ran alongside Conference, organised by grassroots organisation Momentum. There was an abundance of brilliant speakers and panellists - Paul Mason, Owen Jones, Ken Loach, Naomi Klein, Russell Brand...the list goes on!

There were lots of parties and receptions, the first of which was the South West Reception. Angela Rayner MP, Iain McNicol (NEC Chair), Claire Moody MEP, Ben Bradshaw MP all gave rousing speeches, and delegates mingled and networked. There was even the odd celebrity - Paul McGann (Dr Who, Withnail and I) had a lovely chat and drink with Rosie and Siobhan. He was a fan of Rosie's Labour Rose Doc Martens!

(see final page for photos!)

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Rosie Godfrey and Annie McVey attended the Women's Conference as our North Devon CLP delegates and the day was started with an emotional and heart-felt speech by Seema - a councillor with a truly amazing story to tell.

The entire Saturday was filled with empowering speeches from Shadow Cabinet women Dawn Butler MP, Angela Rayner MP, Emily Thornberry MP. Training courses were run and well attended.

Find out more at our AGM!

PERIOD POVERTY

By Siobhan Strobe

During the Women's Labour Conference, it was announced that Labour would spend £10m to end "period poverty" in schools in England when it forms the next government.

Earlier this year the charity "Freedom4Girls" reported that girls in



Dawn Butler MP with Siobhan at Conference

the UK were missing school because they could not afford sanitary protection, which Pam Ebert wrote about in our previous newsletter.

Shadow education secretary Angela Rayner told conference this was a "scandal" and every child would get the support they needed under Labour.

Scotland is currently piloting an offer of free sanitary products to women and girls.

Ms Rayner told delegates in Brighton that action was needed on the issue in England too: "As well as giving our schools the resources they need, we must ensure they give every child the support they deserve. All our pupils deserve a good quality of life. So I am proud to say that as your secretary of state I will allocate £10m from our departmental budget to end the scandal of period poverty in our schools."

Dawn Butler MP spoke passionately during her opening speech, stating that Theresa May is no friend of women, that 86% of her cuts are falling on women. "We are phenomenal women - so let's do things to help empower women, no matter who they are or where they are."

A spokesperson for the "Bloody Good Period campaign", which hands out sanitary products to refugees, asylum seekers and those who can't afford them, welcomed the policy. "Period products are as essential as food but for those living in poverty they come way down the priority and shopping list. The fact that many are forced to resort to using toilet paper, old scraps of fabric

or nothing at all is disgraceful. So we're bloody thrilled to hear that Labour are committing to do something about it - this can't come soon enough."

North Devon CLP are delighted that this issue is being taken so seriously, and would like to see pilots being brought in across England and Wales. We will continue to put pressure on this Tory government to ensure that "period poverty" is on their agenda.

NO SCAPEGOATING OF MIGRANTS

By James Craigie

Jeremy Corbyn's speech was replete with earnest and worthwhile commitments, but the most important one for me was committing to giving all EU citizens living in Britain full rights to remain. The 3 million EU nationals living in Britain are part of our communities and integral to our society, not even to mention how much they have contributed through economic participation.

However, as members we have a duty to go further than this and ensure that we give Jeremy the political space to keep the free movement of people throughout Europe. It is only through the cultural and economic mixing of migration that we can learn to be outward looking and progressing towards a better future.

The challenges of population growth and cultures clashing are real difficulties to overcome, although properly funded public services and sharing out economic gains from growth will alleviate most of these issues. Let us be like Jeremy and be brave, and push our part of Devon to become more tolerant, welcoming and ultimately accepting place!

POSITIVE NO-WIN BY-ELECTION

By Jim Duncombe

A few weeks ago I stood as the Labour candidate in the Ilfracombe Town Council by-election. I didn't win but I did receive 40% of the vote against an "independent" candidate - with a frustratingly low turnout at 14.9%. Everyone who took part in the campaign should look positively at the result and use the

lessons learnt to go forward.

The result may not have been the one we wanted, but I don't feel disheartened and I walked away on polling night in confident mood, something that I have since learnt was translated as relief by the opposition. Unfortunately for them it has sowed a seed of determination and realisation that as a team we can make an impact on Ilfracombe. The whole experience has been incredibly rewarding. On the doorstep we received a positive and friendly response, in the street. We talked to many people who would be natural supports and all around there was little animosity towards us and the party.

It feels like that we can make inroads into local government but at this level; people tend to vote for the person over the party and in the words of my opponent, "I only won because I know more people than you". If we are going to succeed in future local elections we need to build ambassadors now who can go on to be candidates in the future.



Jim out canvassing in beautiful Ilfracombe

HOW DID THEY DO THAT?

By Harry Ellis

Our country is divided as never before – well not quite. But never since the Second World War has there been such conflict of interest within every town, village and city of this green and pleasant land.

This is no misfortune visited on us by some enemy or by accident. This is not the result of mysterious forces beyond

the Government's control. It is the intended result of deliberate, well-planned actions by the Conservative Party in power.

In little over seven years they have ruthlessly exploited the near collapse of the global financial system in 2008 to transfer wealth from the many to the few. This process was begun by Cameron who slipped into power by blaming Labour for the crisis although everyone knows that the cause of the crash was deliberate false accounting within the system itself – the repackaging of debt as a revenue stream that was allowed by auditors to be sold on as an asset.

As Naomi Klein showed a year before the crash in her excellent book "The Shock Doctrine", the holders of capital love a crisis because they can use it to scare people into accepting ruthless and brutal actions in the face of the most facile argument of all – there is no alternative. This is how the majority of people in this country have been conned into accepting a ruthless, wholly unnecessary and counter-productive policy of austerity – a very selective austerity in which it is argued that this wealthy country cannot afford to ensure the health of its people, to provide decent housing for all, quality education for every child and the right to a decent job in which diligence and hard work will bring the rewards of an assured future.

The conflict that splits the people of this country in two is as old as recorded history – between those that have and those that have not. What is new, is the way this has come to mean a split between the old and the young. This is invidious – an example of short-sighted, narrow minded selfish greed. These attitudes have always been present in society but balanced to greater or lesser extent by the generous impulses of people who are far-sighted, broad minded and kind to those in need whether they be next door, in another part of the country or the other side of the world.

What we are experiencing now is what happens in a democracy when we

allow the acquisition of money to rule over everything and everyone. A new world order has been established in which wealth is deemed to be the sole yardstick of merit – and along with this, the right to power. I'm all in favour with people being personally rewarded in proportion to what they contribute to the world around them, indeed I would say we need such people, their energy and innovation to deal with the massive problems of population growth and climate change. But what really matters is not what people have or say but what they do.

What I don't accept is that the sum total of property, shares and other monetary instruments held by any individual is anything to be admired – let alone a qualification for good governance. In truth we all know that such accumulation comes from a mix of inheritance, luck, energy, and ability plus the pursuit of money over all other considerations. These people talk of making money when they are really just wresting it from other people – be they competitors, suppliers, customers, employees and everyone else.

The point I wish to make here is that the current failure to invest in our young people and to give them a stake in the future is not only damaging but wholly unnecessary. This is still a rich country but it is being weakened year on year by a small cohort of global corporations that are allowed to dictate policy so as to maximise their profits at our expense. We don't have to let this continue.

So many of us who, do useful work, making useful things, caring for people, educating our children, keeping us safe have been conned into believing that we depend on those with vast personal wealth to provide us with a living – a job with wages, the money that we need to put a roof over our heads, to feed our children etc. etc. This is rubbish. Every one of us has a vote. There are more of us than there are of them. Thanks to the heroic efforts of our forebears from the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Chartists, the Suffragettes and so many more who taught democracy to

the world, it is within our power to elect a Government that will restore some balance to our economy and direct investment where it is needed so that all of our people can enjoy a life free from fear.

LETTERS

As a man, I want to respond to Siobhan Strode's piece in the previous issue of the Newsletter by unequivocally condemning both the actions of Dean Stone and the institutional cultures that minimised the harm caused.

The sending of an unsolicited sexual image by Dean Stone (Lib Dem candidate in Great Torrington Town Council election) to Shaun (Siobhan) Strode (Labour candidate in Great Torrington Town Council election), is in my view, as a man, very serious and should not be allowed to fade into a jocular misogynistic background. Male dominated culture sustains and minimises sexual intimidation and harm. The case of 'celebrity' sex offenders illustrates this; the celebrities were able to commit their offences over a long period of time, not because of exceptional 'evil' cunning, but because their behaviour was not seen to be problematic at the time, by men in positions of power. The celebrity was 'merely' being a man. Maybe Mr Stone was merely being a man; Mrs Strode quotes the police 'the bloke's just having a go isn't he?'. She indicates, many women have experienced similar acts of sexual intimidation. The vast majority of sexually harmful acts committed are not reported to the police, and of those that are it is only minority that result in a criminal conviction. It is clear that this culture of minimisation plays a part in preventing victims from speaking out, or being taken seriously.

In the 2017 Manifesto the Labour Party states:

The level of violence against women and girls is not acceptable. Labour will emphasise the safety of women and girls by appointing a commissioner to set new standards for tackling domestic and sexual violence.

I include sexual harassment (remote or

in person), within a definition of sexual violence, thereby further recognising the seriousness of Mr Stone's behaviour. Causing and experiencing sexual harm is both a personal and a political issue. Feminist commentators for many years have suggested that all forms of sexual harm are part of, not apart from, the culture where they occur. The perpetrator is not an alien but part of a community. The challenge for the Labour movement in tackling this issue is not to appoint a Commissioner, but to create a culture that does not tacitly support men 'having a go', but rather:

- enables victims of all forms of sexual harm to speak openly about their experiences;
- recognises all acts of misogynistic banter as potentially intimidating and harmful;
- defines these acts as unacceptable and liable to serious sanction including criminal prosecution.

This requires political attention being given to both the personal and the social dimensions of sexual harm.

Malcolm Cowburn

SPANISH REFERENDUM

Recently we have witnessed the Spanish police turning on the public and inciting violence on innocent people. Why? All because the citizens of Catalonia wanted to vote in a referendum on their independence from Spain.

Ed Miliband tweeted: "The scenes from Catalonia are appalling. They go way beyond rights and wrongs of independence. The U.K. government cannot just stay silent."

Jeremy Corbyn also tweeted: "I urge @Theresa_May to appeal directly to Rajoy to end police violence in Catalonia & find political solution to this constitutional crisis."

Why aren't the UK government speaking out? We need to be a bastion for voting rights, for human rights. Not a silent watcher as people are beaten in the streets of Europe.

The Catalan government are saying that 90 per cent of the 2.26 mil-

lion voters who cast a ballot voted for independence – a turnout of 42.3 per cent. That's massive.

However the Spanish government are denying the legality of the vote, stating that the referendum is a "path that leads to nowhere".

Surely if the Catalan people - who speak their own language - do not want to be a part of Spain, they should be allowed a ballot? And not only that, they should be given the right to do this safely and without the risk of violence.

Some of the scenes from Barcelona have been horrific. Reports of over 844 people being hurt as officers deployed by the Madrid government fired rubber bullets and used riot equipment on defiant crowds. The police also smashed their way into the polling stations in attempts to thwart the vote. Violent clashes occurred in school playgrounds.

I wonder how this will pan out? I just hope there can be a peaceful solution.

Anon

TORY CONFERENCE

Is anyone else concerned that the far left (or the anarchists?) are making us look farcical by putting up banners suggesting we "Hang the Tories", accompanied by effigies of humans lynched on the bridge?

Who is going to take us seriously if we cannot get behind Jeremy Corbyn's campaign for HOPE and a new, kinder politics?

We should be hating the policies NOT the people. After all, that's what they are. They are fellow humans. No, they don't treat people fairly, and they have definitely got blood on their hands because of their harmful Austerity policy. But don't we need to take the high road? We can't be nasty like them. We need to be that ray of hope for a new politics.

The vision that Jeremy and his front bench have for Labour is a kind one. Let's show the MSM and the opposition that we are better than them. Maybe I am an idealist. But what's wrong with that?

S.S

RENEWING TRADE UNIONISM

It is part of the Labour Party rule book that members should be part of an appropriate trade union, but does this make sense when so many are self-employed. A recent study into the wage rates of the self-employed found that 45% earned less than the national living wage. The self-employed need representing now more than ever and it should be the Labour Party that is their natural home. But how can trade unions represent the self-employed if they continue to hold onto a traditional view of organising?

Even creditable attempts to change like Unite Community have failed to make progress. Many branches have failed due to extreme lefties groups. The Socialist Party and Communist Party have both ruined branches in the South West, causing failure and collapse. The efforts of many cannot be allowed to be sabotaged by the intransigence of a few.

So how do we make trade unions fit for the present century? As we renew and democratise the Labour Party we must not forget to do the same in the wider movement.

JC

SOUTH MOLTON - TIME TO BRANCH OUT?

North Devon Labour doesn't have a branch structure and this makes it difficult for people to get involved by attending meetings. Is it not time that we attempted to start local branches to foster community action and morale raising socials? Labour believes we achieve more by our collective endeavour than we do alone, but does it not also make sense to make activism as local as possible?

The growth in the Labour party membership since 2015, has given us a chance to put in place local campaign groups that can grow into protobranches. Devolving responsibility for getting our party to local groups means taking some pressures off our hard working Constituency Officers who currently do it all in their spare time as volunteers.

Let's all of us do a little so that none of us has to do a lot. Local small scale organising can push the Tories hard. Particularly if we are to believe the revelations coming out of Tory conference that most constituencies have fewer than 100 Conservative members.

If we can energise small groups to work regularly we can easily out match the Conservative membership and activism. Then we will be making it ever more expensive for the Tories to keep winning here. Come on, let's all of us find ways to take the fight to Peter Heaton-Jones and the Conservatives!
D.O.



NDCLP canvassers battling weather in Barnstaple

ANDY'S RANT

Our parents were the generation of the Second World War, and their parents before them were the generation of the First World War, and they knew what the cost of division in Europe was: it was two world wars. The vindictive treatment of Germany after the First World War enabled Hitler to come to power, and launch another - even worse - conflict.

If people think the unity of the European continent doesn't matter - it absolutely does matter! The Tory party is absolutely destroying this country. In the Thatcher years they got rid of most of our industry and now it's looking like Brexit will probably get rid of what little remains. If the car plants that are located in this country are undermined, because of the new deal they will just go. They won't hang about.

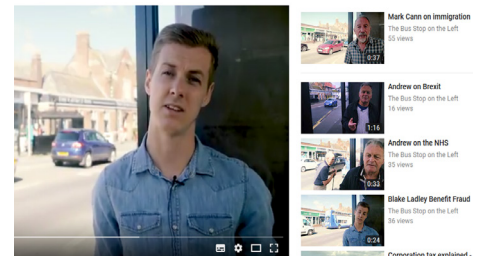


Romantic canvassing sunset

NORTH DEVON YOUTH LABOUR

Blake Ladley, our Youth Officer, is putting together a regular PodCast with some NDCLP members, so keep a look out for that!

And, as well as being busy canvassing with other Youth members, he has been talking about issues at [The Bus Stop On The Left](#). Go and check out the YouTube channel now! Don't forget to subscribe!

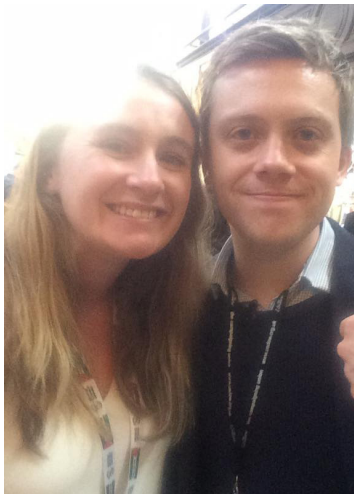


UPCOMING EVENTS:

7pm Thursday 12th October – CLP AGM, Vivian Moon Centre, Braunton

7pm Thursday 26th October - Fundraiser with Jeremy Corbyn and Billy Bragg, The Factory, Barnstaple

7pm Thursday 23rd November - CLP Meeting, Vivian Moon Centre, Braunton



Especially taken for Blake Ladley - SS with Owen Jones, journalist, who is currently touring the country trying to unseat Tories!



Yvette Cooper and Keith Vaz at the Diversity event (minutes later Yvette broke into Gangnam Style...)



Annie with Barry Gardiner MP



Chris Williamson MP leans in for a selfie



Andy Burnham (Mayor of Manchester)



Marvin Rees (Mayor of Bristol)



Annie McVey, proudly representing us on the delegate floor



Rosie's Labour Rose DMs were a hit with Dr Who/Withnail and I star Paul McGann



Rosie and Siobhan had a brilliant conversation with Dennis Skinner MP in Brighton



Kevin Courtney (NEU) and Tamsin Higgs at "Show Racism the Red Card" event



Siobhan with Angela Rayner MP

The North Devon CLP Newsletter is YOUR newsletter. If you would like to contribute, whether that's an article of interest, a success to celebrate, or if you've got an event to publicise that Labour members might be interested in supporting please get in touch with the editor: editor@northdevonlabour.co.uk

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