

NORTH DEVON LABOUR NEWS

RED LINES

WE ARE
**North
Devon**
 **Labour**

BETTER TOGETHER; BEST AS EQUALS.

NEWS SHARED - VIEWS INVITED - CAMPAIGNS SUPPORTED

EDITOR'S WELCOME

This summer has seen a huge influx of new members to North Devon Labour, and has reignited the passion in politics that has, in many of us, been been dampened in the last few decades. Labour currently have a leader that has truly become a beacon of hope.

The Labour mantra of "For the many, not the few" is one that resonates and stands for what we all believe. The manifesto is exceptional. It is why Labour have been so successful. No false promises as the MSM would love us to believe. True Democratic Socialist values. For a fairer society.

We didn't win in North Devon, despite huge gains; and the election was not a defeat. We are all going to ride this wave of excitement and renewed love of politics. We want you to contribute to this newsletter. It's here to give you a voice. Issues that aren't being raised in NDJ? Drop us an email: editor@northdevonlabour.co.uk

NEWS

He's been spotted! Jeremy Hunt was caught on camera by Simon Scott in Exeter earlier this month. He was on a media locked-down visit to the hospital to meet the Healthcare Trust incognito. According to the British Red Cross the NHS is facing a 'humanitarian crisis' and it is all under this man's watch.

LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

With excellent candidates standing for



Photo of the North Devon Labour canvassing team out in force in Barnstaple 04/09/17

Labour in the Barnstaple Central (14.09) and Ilfracombe Central Town Council (21.09) elections, we are going to try and turn North Devon red. Laurence Overend will be fighting for a fairer Barnstaple, and Jim Duncombe wants to build sustainability in Ilfracombe.

If you'd like to help Laurence or Jim with their campaigns, please get in touch with the CLP. Many hands make light work! The more doors we knock on, the better. We can spread the word that Labour is the best choice for the residents of North Devon.

STREET TALK

Every issue we want to highlight a local project which our members are involved in. This issue ND Labour member Rosie Godfrey interviews Kizzy Lovell (from North Devon Bus Shelter/Survival Bags Home & Away) about their newest endeavour to help the homeless in our area.

What is the Bus Shelter North Devon?

We've just received a donated double decker bus & it's now parked up on land where we can start the conversion to a bus with sleeping pods for about 14 homeless; a shower, toilet, kitchen and a seating area.

Why is there a need for this project locally?

We've got some great organisations in the area helping to house the homeless, but there are a small number of people who find it more difficult to adjust to moving straight into a room with four walls. We hope that by providing a small personal sleeping pod, alongside a family type support system, we can help the people who'll take a while longer to adjust, as well as provide shelter to those who don't want to leave the street, on very cold & wet winter nights.



The tagline for North Devon Bus Shelter is 'Sleep is only the beginning.' Why?

Sleep is so important - we recently supported a man who was homeless but trying to hold down a job. He was unable to sleep properly and at risk of losing his job because he was tired, not eating properly and was not in a fit state to work. But our bus will also provide the other bit that is missing for these men (and occasionally women who will be kept safe in sleeping pods downstairs): a family atmosphere of belonging.

We already have a close connection with those on the very outskirts of life. They connect to us as people who actually care about them and who go out of our way to support them. The bus will be a point of contact where they can come and get help with benefit forms, access counselling, have people to go to appointments with. They'll have a kitchen so can eat together, cook and socialise. We're the only 'family' many of these people have had in years.

How can people 'Get On Board'?

We need people to 'get on board' in a number of ways; As well as helping in a practical 'hands on' sense, we need supporters like businesses to get themselves advertised on the back of the bus by donating £50+ to our project, we need other businesses and craftsmen to help fitting, and with supplies of wood,



Bus Shelter North Devon team

lighting fixtures, a cooker and wood stove, bathroom fittings and many more items, all listed on the fb and website pages. The contributors' names will go onto the back of the bus too as supporters.

We also need financial help to continue to feed, clothe and provide assistance to the homeless whilst the bus is being worked on. We currently do this from a little premises in Bear Street, Barnstaple, which is open to the homeless 7 days a week from 3-6pm, until the bus is up and running. Then many of the services we provide from here will move to the bus, freeing up the premises to continue providing more space for increased free counselling services, energy debt management and making up survival bags for other groups of people in need.

NDCLP extend a huge thank you to Kizzy and her team for their hard work. It's fantastic that Rosie is now a trustee of the project.

Get in touch via their facebook pages @Survival Bags-HomeandAway and @BusShelterNorthDevon or through their website: www.survivalbags-homeandaway.org

NORTH DEVON YOUTH LABOUR

Blake Ladley is the North Devon Youth leader, and he has a lot to say! Every issue will highlight issues raised and give ideas of how to get more involved.

It is time for Young People to show that we were not tricked into voting for Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party.

When the clock struck ten on June 8th 2017 few of us had predicted what would unfold over the next twelve hours. The exit poll suggested a hung parliament with Theresa May's Conservative Party losing their parliamentary majority handing Labour a swing of the vote not seen since Clement Atlee's Labour in 1945.

Whilst there were many reasons as to why Labour's vote increased, one took particular interest: expanding the electorate. Labour had managed to benefit from a forty-point lead against the Conservatives from the ages of eighteen to twenty-four. A study by YouGov suggesting that the age at which a voter is more likely to voted Conservative than Labour had increased from 34 at the beginning of the campaign to 47 by the end of the election, this being driven by the 23.4% turnout increase from voters aged 18 to 24.

Whilst the fallout of this extraordinary result began to take place with tabloids such as The Daily Mail (who had supported Theresa May in her quest to 'crush the saboteurs') struggled to twist this embarrassment into some sort of positive; The discussions behind closed doors of Conservative supporting tabloids began to figure out just how they would spin the Labour vote to make it seem illegitimate.

Firstly, began the attempt to claim electoral fraud with reports that some students had voted twice, once in their universities constituency and then in their home constituency. After it had been revealed that less than 1,000 cases of double voting were being investigated the reports subsided. Then, on an episode of The Andrew Marr Show, John McDonnell talked of 'reviewing' some of Labour's goals they had set out during the election including wiping student debt; this finally allowing the media spin on the young to really begin. The claims then spread of the young being 'misguided' by Labour on a so-called 'promise' that did not even feature in the manifesto; to Dan Hodges even calling Labour voters 'mugs' in his Daily Mail article.

Whilst this student debt spin has now come and gone what has not disappeared is the view of some that young people cannot make rational political decisions. Whether this be due to a lack of life experience or following the crowd as was argued in the 2017 General Election.

What the young really need to do now is prove, to those who hold that view, that we can make rational political decisions and hold well-educated positions. The only way to do this is to get out and canvass for local council by-elections, take part in our local Labour Party and help to take part in any political events nearby.

After attending some events it is surprising how many people really do want to discuss the issues that our country faces daily and for the young this is a crucial chance to prove to those who doubted us after the election that we truly can argue our beliefs in a public forum.



Blake Ladley and Mark Cann

So, get politically active and help shape this country for many and not the few.

Head along to our two new pages 'North Devon Young Labour' and 'North Devon Young Labour Members'. #NDYL

Blake Ladley.

PERIOD POVERTY

Some of you may have heard or seen the campaigns to provide sanitary products in schools and through foodbanks.

In Scotland the government has funded a pilot programme in foodbanks at a cost of £42,500. In Brighton the Whitehawk Foodbank has introduced a "Monthly Scheme" for users of the Foodbank. Special bags are provided with a selection of products specifically for women and girls at menstruation time. Not sure how widespread this is as the Ilfracombe foodbank supplies products on request not as a separate bag.

Some colleges and schools in the country as a whole have set up free dispensers for students, how this is paid for I don't know, but it seems things are moving to highlight the problem and put an end to it.

There are also campaigns to abolish the 5% tax on these products. Labour reduced this tax to 5% but couldn't go further because of EU rules – it's abolition won't be till 2019 which is why these campaigns were targeting supermarkets to drop the tax now. They have been very successful as most supermarkets have done so alongside Lloyds chemist.

This is such an important issue and the thought of young women not able to protect themselves each month and therefore refrain from activities or even going to school or college is appalling.

I personally would like to see these products available in school all year round for those young women who face the awful embarrassment of not having enough funds in the family to provide sanitary products when needed. The sheer pain and discomfort at a naturally difficult time of the month anyway of not having the right products and resorting to rags or toilet paper takes us back far too many years.

My concern around foodbanks is that families need vouchers and usually this is for a set time, ie when sanctions on benefits have been put in place or they are waiting for benefits to kick in. What happens the rest of the year when there is no referral to a foodbank and no vouchers? These products still have to be purchased on a low income. Very difficult if you have two/three or more girls/women in a family. If there are any teachers out there who

know of schools providing products, it would be great to hear the news and how it was implemented, for instance who pays? Or some of you parents, governors or teachers, would like to start a campaign in your school, to highlight the problem and initiate the provision of free dispensers.

It would also be good to hear other people's views on this issue and what they think can be done. You could also write or telephone your local foodbank to enquire what their policy is and if they provide a "Monthly Scheme Bag" like the foodbank in Brighton.

Let's kick this issue off the backs of the poor who have enough to deal with and make this issue definitely a thing of the past.

Pam Ebert

EVENTS

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

We had a successful stall at the Green Man Festival in July, and it was a valiant team effort in the pouring rain! Ewan - one of our younger members - battled the downpours, handing out 99 Red Balloons to children enjoying the festivities.

North Devon members supported the Bideford Pride festival, wearing their rainbow heart Corbyn t-shirts with pride!

A few of our members were able to go down to see Jeremy Corbyn speak in Cornwall last month, and he was as inspiring as expected. Bring on October 26th...

Despite booking the annual BBQ on a bank holiday, the sun shone and the rain stayed away! And Mark and Val hosted a brilliant BBQ at their home, raising a fantastic £320+ for the CLP.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

10am Saturday 30th September – National Campaign Day Street Stall, Barnstaple

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

ANDY'S RANT

Lately through the "Save Our Hospital Services" campaign, we have been told that staff are being recruited such as Junior Doctors and nurses. Then it falls through because they cannot afford to move to Devon. The government is proposing to sell off NHS land all over the country which it deems surplus to requirements. "Health Trusts" are saying they should use that land to build staff accommodation to help them with their increasingly desperate recruitment crisis. Instead – as is usual – the govt wants to sell it for the construction of unaffordable housing to the highest bidder.

This mirrors the 1996 Tory sell off to big business financial interests of surplus military housing which has been described as a ruinous deal for the MOD by media reports. You might think if it was to be sold it should have been offered to serving or retired military personnel or to councils for local housing need? But no, in accordance with the "Tory Principle: For the few and not the many" it just went to wealthy moneyed interests to fatten them up.

Andy Gill



Sheila Blogg: remembering the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings (6-9th August) in Barnstaple High Street. She joined an international fast with others from around the world: Lagos, Paris, London...Tavistock!

WOMEN'S WORD (BY S.STRODE)

You might have read in the mainstream media (MSM) about a recent "scandal" in the neighbouring Town Council

elections, Great Torrington, where I was standing for Labour. Some of you might have even seen my face in the press next to a cropped version of the image I received from a male opponent: Dean Stone, Lib Dem candidate. Although the articles have been much fairer than I anticipated, I am writing this because I don't feel that people (men) are taking this issue seriously enough.

My case was reported to the Electoral Commission, who passed my complaint on to appropriate departments. The police were very supportive, but deemed the image "not explicit enough" to be criminal and laughed it off as "the bloke's just having a go isn't he?" And the Liberal Democrats dealt with it poorly sending a victim blaming "apology" signed by the offending person, claiming that I "wasn't offended at the time". Oh, I'm sorry! Is there a protocol for receiving this sort of thing? Should I apologise for not being offended enough?

The awful thing is, a growing number of women are receiving an appallingly high amount of "dick pics" and other unsolicited sexual images via their social media. Why? Well, Dr Lauren Rosewarne, a senior lecturer specialising in gender and sexuality at the University of Melbourne, explains the behaviour can partly be put down to the anonymity that the internet supposedly gives us. She notes how it's the same motivation that has men, for example, drawing penis' on walls.

Surely the men sending these pictures know that it's not going to get them anywhere...which means it's not about getting sex. Does that mean it's a power play? Is it for the shock factor? Do they get off on that? Is it some sort of inherent misogyny?

I really didn't know how to respond, and it wasn't until I spoke with other women about it that I realised the severity of the problem and the responsibility I had to report it. Some women are responding by forwarding the images to the perpetrator's family, or naming and shaming the senders online.

What do you think? Have any of you received unsolicited images from people online? Write to: editor@northdevonlabour.co.uk and tell us your experiences.

LETTERS

TACTICAL VOTING is encouraged by *FIRST PAST THE POST*.

The right to vote has been fought for as a democratic right and was only achieved for all men and women in 1928. This democratic change was achieved over a period of almost a hundred years with Chartist petitions presented to the House of Commons, calling for a change. In essence the positive demand for change achieved votes for all.

Tactical voting is not a positive vote for change and instead is a protest to prevent a political party or politician from being voted into office. If we all voted tactically in every constituency our collective vote would only confirm what we are against and we would not know which policies were supported by the electorate. Where a tactical vote keeps a party out of office, the tactical voter only achieves a second best to their preferred option which should have been for the party of their first choice. Voting should be a positive experience.

A vote for the party whose policies are supported leads to a clear picture of the electorate's wishes and coupled with a proportional voting system like the Single Transferable Vote (STV) allows government decisions and policy implementation which is commensurate with the majority view of the electorate. This is what is meant by inclusive democracy where people feel that their vote counts. STV is the electoral system used in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Belgium, Cyprus, Malta, Denmark, South Africa and the Netherlands.

In 2011 the British public voted against replacing First Past the Post with the Alternative Vote (AV) which is not a form of proportional representation and in certain conditions, such as the 2015 General Election, it can produce a more disproportional result than First Past the Post. In 2011 the British public voted against replacing First Past the Post with the Alternative Vote. In 2011 the British public voted against replacing First Past the Post with the Alternative Vote.

However AV is the best way to elect a single person, like a president or mayor,

but it's a flawed way to elect a parliament as it isn't proportional. Tactical voting in North Devon has kept the Lib Dem vote up and even got them elected. At the last general election Labour became the party of opposition in many constituencies across the South West winning Plymouth Sutton & Devonport and coming second in many constituencies.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is calling for electoral reform although it is not Labour policy – maybe we should be sending motions to conference supporting electoral reform?

Ian Crawford

THANK YOU for this new forum and channel for news and hope. I see it as part of the rising tide of shared ambition, for a kinder politics and a kinder society, deliverable with Jeremy Corbyn's Labour spirit.

The greatest prizes are on offer, no less than survival and sustainability, our fulfilment in terms personal and global and eternal. We most of us in Earth mean well, but somewhere between the simple moral extreme of 'giving to the poor and joining the poor,' set against that of 'keeping all wealth ready to share never,' we need a secure basis for sharing, to hand-on from generation to generation.

That 'social contract' will be simple and sure, supportive of all self-expression except the tyrannical. That, in pedantic terms, means 'democratic socialism.' For most of us - taking socialism, 'better together,' as given - the hope emerging is I believe simply of democracy, real not sham.

Real democracy depends not on top-down 'state ownership' of all. It is rather and rationally ONLY to be enjoyed in our agreed equal-income partnership.

I look forward to more debate, and the news we might make, for good cheer and urgent progress.

Robert Reynolds

NOW THAT THE DUST has settled and the celebrations and commiserations have finished, we ask your readers to reflect on the position this government now finds itself in. The term Zombie Government was once coined to de-

scribe a government that is too weak to implement its policies and therefore has to rely heavily on others to get anything through parliament. We have such a government now and zombie fits the bill quite well we think.

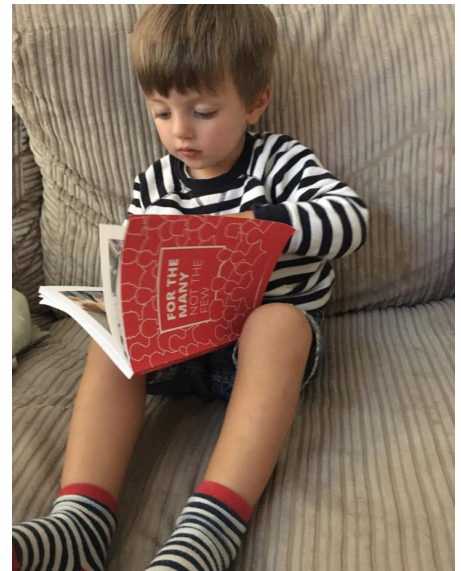
As for Labour – no, we didn't win but we didn't lose either and one of our victories was to inspire and enthuse many young people to become engaged in politics. After all our future depends on them. Mark Cann and his team lead a brilliant campaign in North Devon proudly backing Labour's excellent manifesto and Corbyn as our leader.

For those who voted to leave the (so called 'interfering') EU, you now have a government who courts DUP (Democratic Unionist Party) to aid its work. According to many, a very dubious partner with highly dubious values indeed. So as our roads, schools, hospitals and public services continue to decline the shiny buildings of collaboration or desperation will be covering our Northern Irish shores as the DUP demand more and more handouts for backing this damaged government.

A big thank you to all of your readers who voted Labour, we are now the second largest party in the South West. We firmly believe that it's a myth to think that voting Lib Dem would save our hospitals and schools and keep North Devon safe from Tory policies. Look what happened last time. The Liberals went into coalition with the Tories and backed them all the way.

If another election is called in the not too distant future (as is possible) we urge you to vote for a Labour government. England has only two parties who can get enough votes to become electable and form a government. We nearly did it this time and with your help we could do it next. If you haven't already, check out our manifesto, you can view it online. It really is for the Many and not the Few.

Pam & Toby Ebert



One of our youngest members doing a bit of light reading while singing "Ooooooooooooooh Jeremy Corbyn!"

(Pic: Simon Scott)



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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