

Members' Newsletter



Labour Party —
Evesham Branch

December 2023

From the Vice-Chair: Sue Wood-Griffiths

It is hard to believe, as I put this together, that this is the twelfth newsletter that I have compiled in 2023. When we started, we envisaged it being a regular communication for members, but I didn't think it would evolve into a monthly update. Thank you for all the positive feedback and regular contributions that have enabled us to make it a monthly publication. As the activities of the branch widen we have more to report on each month which is very encouraging for the executive.

In the new year we hope to link the newsletter to our campaign focus and if there are any members who would like to get involved through doing some research, please let me know. Brian and Neal are

working on a campaign strategy that will ultimately shape the direction for each meeting and our campaigning. The new year will start with a focus on the cost of living and we look forward to welcoming speakers from Citizens Advice to our January meeting to understand how they are supporting local people. We aspire for our meeting programme to support members to respond to the public when we campaign and will be looking to you for suggestions for speakers.

There is a lot to read and digest in this newsletter and we are keen to get it out before Christmas. We wish all members a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful 2024.

Caring Hands cuppa and cake

Thanks are extended to all those members who contributed to our collection for Caring Hands Christmas food parcels on December 1st. Your generosity was overwhelming and those members and supporters who were able to join us for a cuppa and cake at Delicious café enjoyed a friendly get-together. It was particularly nice to welcome some new faces as well as some old friends along to this informal gathering (am I allowed to call it that, it wasn't a party?)

Thank you to all those who helped to lug the heavy bags of donations to The Lighthouse where they were received with much gratitude by the volunteers.



Litter pick: Brian Gregory

Dave Tasker and I recently joined Anti-litter Evesham for their final collection of the year. We met at Evesham hospital car park and were part of a 21-strong team that collected litter in an area close to, and within, the hospital grounds. Dave and I were assigned the road stretch between Abbey Bridge and Coopers Lane and it wasn't long before our bags were filling up. Please look out for notification of future collections. All equipment is provided and it is both rewarding and enjoyable.



December branch meeting

Matthew opened the meeting with some updates on what the executive have been doing in terms of campaign planning. He outlined how we plan to engage more with social media and how members can help with this. We are also going to review our use of WhatsApp so we can communicate "calls to action" with members who are happy to be included. The existing WhatsApp groups set up for other purposes (e.g. May election campaign, Liverpool conference etc) will be disbanded, so if you need to communicate with us and don't want to use WhatsApp, please contact us by email.

Matthew split his presentation into looking back and looking forward, providing a summary of all we have done this year and where we plan to go next. Sue distributed certificates to those present who participated in the Bellboat Regatta and still has some for Simon, Anne, Helen and Jon.

Brian outlined the strategy that he and Neal have identified to engage people to apply for voter registration and Matthew outlined the electoral calculus predictions as of 13 December for the upcoming general election. Although the seat (Droitwich and Evesham) is predicted to be a Tory hold, Nigel Huddleston's predicted vote share has dropped from 66.7% to 38.9% (which equates to a majority of 5359 votes) so... you never know!

The December branch meeting was planned largely to be a social event with a quiz. At the start of the year, we sought ideas from members for getting the branch more visible and quizzing was a popular response which has been taken up through holding our own quiz nights and participating in local quizzes as an ELP team. So after a break to exchange library books and refill glasses, the quiz commenced.

The competition between the top three teams was fierce and close, but good spirits prevailed and the most challenging question (How many votes did Labour win in the 2019 election?) with a cash prize was won by the CLP chair Alex Knudsen. Well done, Alex!

Thanks as ever are extended to the Taskers for compiling the quiz, to David for acting as quiz host and Mary for producing stupendous hampers for the bumper raffle. The raffle raised £156 for our branch funds, so thank you to everyone who bought tickets. Thanks too to Peter (as ever) for transporting the library and distributing materials for the reading group .

The meeting was well attended and it was good to welcome members from Droitwich branch, along with some new faces and left-leaning friends. We hope that they enjoyed the evening and will consider supporting us again in future.

With that in mind, the meeting ended with a plug for the January *Lets Get Political II* on 6 January. Tickets are available from Mary Tasker, The Valkyrie or We Got Tickets, at <https://www.wegotickets.com/event/601877>

The poster features a black background with a silhouette of a person playing an electric guitar. At the top, the text 'Get Political II' is written in large, bold, white letters, followed by 'with...' in a smaller font. Below this, 'THE WHIPJACKS' is written in a large, stylized white font. Underneath, 'The Gathering' and 'Elvis legsley' are written in a white, sans-serif font. A circular logo for 'BLEEDING HEARTS' is positioned to the left of the text, featuring a skull and crossbones and the text 'PUNK-FOLK-ROCK The Original (since 1993) ALTERNATIVE MUSIC FOR ALTERNATIVE PEOPLE'. Below the logo is a QR code. To the right of the QR code, the event details are listed: 'SATURDAY 6TH JAN 2024', '7:30PM', 'THE VALKYRIE BAR', '(MARKET SQUARE, EVESHAM, WR11 4RW)', and '£10 ADV + BOOKING FEES'. At the bottom, a red banner contains the text 'Profits from this event will go towards funding the Evesham Labour Party's Campaign for the upcoming General Election.' and the 'WeGot Tickets' logo.

Reading group: Peter Daw

Not a big turnout (probably too close to the Branch event the day before) but we did get both Roger Woollen, with his contribution on river pollution useful, and Carol Wade, who was a very good contributor to the discussion. Vic came again and is a retired teacher of biology with an ecology specialism, and was very engaged by the issues. David has a long memory of SERA work and used to meet with them at conferences in the past. So I was the least expert contributor in a very well informed discussion! So much the better.

The next Labour party candidate... ?

Could you be the Labour Party candidate for Droitwich & Evesham at the next General Election?

Applications are now open for anyone wishing to be the next Parliamentary candidate for our constituency of Droitwich & Evesham. Anyone wishing to apply must have been both a Labour Party member for a continuous period of twelve months and also a member of a trade union.

Those who are interested in submitting an application have until 12 noon Wednesday 10 January to do so.

Since its inception, Droitwich & Evesham (formerly Mid Worcestershire) has always been a Tory 'safe seat'.

- Based on the current polling, seen below, we could make it a much closer run thing at the next General Election
- The constituency has seen significant demographic shift since 2019 due to new housing influx — this could impact results
- The CLP has an active programme to address voter registration amongst young people and renters, the most likely groups to impact a Labour result

Current prediction of an election held right now, based on Electoral Calculus data shows the result could be:

	2019	Share	Majority	2024/5	Share	Majority
CON	37,426	66.70%	28,018	22,627	38.90%	5,359
LAB	9,408	16.80%		17,268	29.70%	
LIB	6,474	11.50%		8,140	14.00%	
GRE	2,177	3.90%		3,605	6.20%	
OTH	638	1.10%		814	1.40%	
REF	0	0.00%		5,698	9.80%	
	58,142			58,142		

If you would like to submit an application, scan this QR code:



or follow this link:

<https://labour.org.uk/resources/application-form-for-remaining-westminster-parliamentary-seats/>

From the Chair: Matthew Rea

We have reached the end of a very interesting year for Evesham Labour Party, marking exactly twelve months since we implemented a new more member-focused approach. Many of you will remember Sue and her Post-It notes back at Cornmill Yard gathering feedback on how you wanted our branch to progress. Now, looking back over last year we can see that so much has been implemented — and capping it off with our extended December branch meeting was great fun and I am grateful to all those who managed to persuade “left-leaning” friends to come along and join us. Perhaps now you are all looking forward to a break, some seasonal festivities, and some family time free of politics?

My advice would be to make the most of it, because we almost certainly have a general election thundering down the track and so I predict (no prizes here) that 2024 is going to be a very busy

year for us. This will be a year that we enter quite well prepared, thanks to the relentless efforts of many branch members and supporters.

Brian and Neal have made a great start on our campaigning strategy, and Sue and Simon's work on the Newsletter has driven member engagement immensely. All that remains now is the tiny task of finding a parliamentary candidate. I urge anyone who is considering this to scan the QR code above.

As promised, in the New Year Sue will work with Brian to add a campaign “call to action” element to the newsletter and we will start to increase our communication to members and supporters through the new “Evesham Labour Party Action!” WhatsApp community. If you haven't joined yet then again I urge you to do so — see how to on page 4 overleaf. All that remains for me now is to thank you all for supporting the branch and to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Forthcoming events

6 January 2024 *Let's Get Political II* gig
at The Valkyrie; 7.30 p.m.

10 January 2024 Branch meeting at Evesham Rowing
Club with guest speaker from Citizens' Advice.

11 January 2024 Bengeworth by-election for
Evesham Town Council, Mary Campbell standing.

18 January 2024 Reading group, 59 Burford Road,
Evesham WR11 3AG. 7.45–9.15 p.m.

14 February 2024 Branch Meeting.

COP28: Will Jarvis

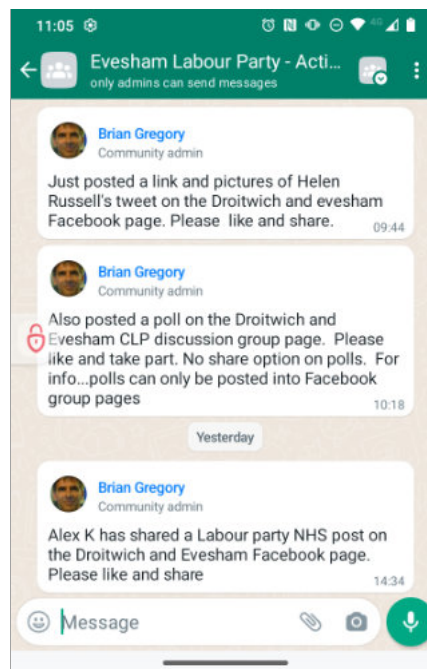
The COP28 conference kicked off with leaked documents from the UAE, using this opportunity to sign trade agreements with other countries to trade their oil. This is not what people would expect from the hosts of the biggest climate talks of the year. Also, the fact that the host of COP28 being the seventh most oil-producing country leading the talks to save our planet just sounds completely mad. Furthermore, the president of this year's COP is Sultan al-Jaber, who is also the CEO of Abu Dhabi's national oil company. Despite that, there were 2,456 delegates from the oil and gas sector attending COP, along with 475 delegates from the carbon capture and storage industry. This shows that oil CEOs are truly in charge of COP.

At least the UK was well represented this year, with Rishi Sunak and King Charles giving speeches to world leaders and business leaders. With Rishi Sunak saying that we must fight climate change and keep 1.5° alive. However, what he tells us at home is that we must invest in new oil fields in the North Sea and that we need to delay the ban on new petrol and diesel cars. At least King Charles gave a good speech saying, *"The Earth does not belong to us, we belong to the Earth."* We know that Charles has been fighting for a better environment for years and what he says there is true. He represented our interests much better than our unelected prime minister.

Branch WhatsApp community

We have decided to create a new WhatsApp community for our branch. This will allow us to keep member and supporters updated about events and activities much faster than by traditional email methods. This WhatsApp community is called "Evesham, Labour Party Action!" and it appears in WhatsApp just like any other group or community. The difference is that it is just one-way communication, so we can broadcast what is happening in the branch.

Brian is already using it to notify everyone about new social media posts which he is encouraging us all to like and share (see below). Doing this has a huge impact on our engagement with the public because it is only the most liked and shared posts that make it to the top of people's Facebook feeds. We think this is a powerful tool for driving out our message in the run-up to an election. If you would like to be a part of "Evesham Labour Party Action!" then do let Matthew know; his email is matthew.rea@eveshamlabour.org. Make sure you include your mobile phone number. Users can leave the community at any point, but we promise to not overload you with messages.



Contacts: Matthew Rea (Chair):
Sue Wood-Griffiths (Vice Chair):
Newsletter submissions:

General enquiries:

Call us:

Facebook:

Web site:

matthew.rea@eveshamlabour.org
sue.woodgriffiths@eveshamlabour.org
newsletter@eveshamlabour.org

welcome@eveshamlabour.org

01386 293035

EveshamLabour

midworcslabour.co.uk