

# Members' Newsletter



Labour Party —  
Droitwich and Evesham Constituency

March 2024

*From the Editor: Sue Wood-Griffiths*

Welcome to the first edition of our constituency-wide newsletter. As reported last month as we move towards the general election, we need to get the two branches working together and the newsletter is one way of sharing news across the constituency. This is a members' newsletter, and everyone is encouraged to contribute. If you have news articles, photos or forthcoming events you would like to share please email them to [newsletter@eveshamlabour.org](mailto:newsletter@eveshamlabour.org)

The newsletter is our main means of keeping members informed about what we are doing and plan to do so please note forthcoming events. We are building our social media profile and visibility in the area and are happy for you to share the newsletter with friends and supporters.

We shall be taking a break from campaigning over the Easter weekend and wish all readers a Happy Easter.

## *Evesham Branch meeting: March 2024*

On a recent Electoral Dysfunction podcast (15 March) Jess Phillips MP gave a young voter, interested in pursuing politics, a warning that if you go a local Labour party political party meeting don't be put off, they can be a place where 'hope goes to die!' It's a lot of minutes of meetings! At the Evesham branch over the last year or so, we have worked hard to make our meetings welcoming, sociable, and topical, to inspire members and supporters to get politically engaged.

The March Evesham branch meeting had a focus on campaign training, and we were pleased to

welcome Alex and Steve from Droitwich and Ed Kimberley from Worcester.

In recognition of International Women's Day, and in solidarity with Diane Abbott, Sue opened the meeting by reading the Maya Angelou poem *Phenomenal Woman*, and invited members to reflect on the intolerable racist abuse levelled by Conservative Party donor Frank Hester at her, and the disrespect of all black women. The response of the Conservative Party to his behaviour has been woeful and reflective of their self-serving values.

Matthew then shared some branch news and business including our forthcoming events before moving on to the main focus of the meeting.

The meeting focused on three aspects of campaigning:

- Door knocking
- Phone banking and
- The gazebo

Ed and Brian Gregory spoke about engaging with the electorate and Brian had been out with the Worcester team to gain experience. They explained the importance of working in teams with a board runner that records the outcomes of conversations. By working with a script and recording the likelihood of a Labour vote they can identify households where a candidate might revisit and also we can encourage postal voting.



## *Evesham branch meeting (cont.)*

They modelled the interactions you might have and stressed that you are there to listen to concerns and not to persuade. As we move towards lighter evenings, we will be looking for volunteers to form teams to work in targeted areas. As a constituency, we have been twinned with Worcester which is forecast to be a winnable seat. You are probably getting emails from them asking for support and we would encourage you to join them to get training and experience as they are well organised and welcoming.

Brian then modelled phone banking using the Labour Dialogue system. This is a really good way for members who are less mobile or have limited time to get involved in campaigning as you can do it as and when you have time. You need to be a member and have access to the Labour hub to do this, and once you are logged on with your details the central system calls your phone and connects you to voters in our area. Brian demonstrated this to the meeting on a laptop, but you could work from a PC or tablet. There is a script to work from and central Labour training is available on Tuesday and Thursday evenings as the party prepares for a by-election in Blackpool South. If you were absent for the meeting have a look! If you are nervous about face-to-face interactions, have a good telephone manner and are prepared to commit some time, this is a means for you to campaign actively.

The third session focused on the gazebo which was put up in the room. The gazebo is our means of being visible and supports us to interact with the local community and engage in conversation. Mary Tasker is a regular campaigner, and it has helped her to be seen and get into conversation in her role as a District Councillor. Those who have

been out regularly in Evesham report a change of attitude in the town, more people are stopping to talk and share concerns and taking it out does help us to draw in support. We had prepared sign-up sheets for future outings but as one of these required a date change we did not get people to commit at the meeting, we will be asking people to volunteer. It is our ambition to get the gazebo out twice a month in Evesham and it would be great to see this in Droitwich too.



The meeting concluded with the raffle which raised funds for the room booking. The main prize was a magnificent hamper of Easter Eggs. This was won by Vic and Jan who generously donated it to the Caring Hands collection. Thanks are extended to members, and the staff at The Hawthorns for their donations of cleaning materials, toiletries, and hygiene products they brought to the meeting. Mary and Sue took these to The Lighthouse the following day where they were gratefully received.

## *Quiz Team Steir Karmar: runners-up!*

The team is getting better and at the February Charity Quiz at The Red Lion we lost out on the win by just one point. It was another occasion when we changed our mind about an answer to our detriment!

Evesham Labour donated a hamper for the raffle and the evening raised £450 for Bowel Cancer UK and barmaid Milli Tanner who is undergoing treatment for this at the age of 22. If there are other keen quizzers out there we could form a second quiz team, let us know!





## *Evesham reading group*

*As Peter is away, Matthew has provided this report.*

This month's reading group was an opportunity to meet and discuss environmental policy with local Green Party members. We were joined by Peter Knight and Julie Tucker. Whilst Labour attendance was down a little due to many of our regular members having other commitments, we were still joined by Anne O'Hagan, Vic Scutt, David Haslam and myself. We didn't spend a lot of time going over our Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) reading material, instead the time was used for a wider discussion exploring where our two parties agreed and disagreed. That said, Peter was complimentary about several of the SERA articles, and it served its purpose in creating a focus around which we could come together.

A key question that was quickly posed to the Greens was whether they considered themselves socialists. After some banter about whether the Labour party was still socialist, we agreed that we were all cut from the same cloth, Peter Knight reminded us that his political journey included many years in the Labour Party. We then moved onto look at where our differences lay – this was summed up well by Julie Tucker who felt that with the Greens, every policy is 'green-centric' whereas she felt that Labour's approach was more one of tacking green issues onto existing policies. Another valid point made by Julie was that many parties see green issues as being about the environment, but only the Greens approach environment and ecology as fundamentally equal and linked.

Vic posed the question 'So what should we in Evesham do to be greener?' Responses focused around the difficulty of achieving much when the district council's compositions is so heavily skewed to the Tories. Current council thinking is limited to some cycle route improvements and some thinking around making the town vehicle free. This quickly evolved into discussions about the fundamental nature of our current political challenges; all concluded that without a change towards proportional representation, wider voter engagement and support for green issues will always falter. This highlighted that there is more than enough common ground in our thinking to ensure we maintain an open dialogue and continue to look for ways to work together.

## *Film Group*

If you are interested in film nights or outings please email [david.tasker@eveshamlabour.org](mailto:david.tasker@eveshamlabour.org) to make sure you get the emails about 'What's on'.

## *The Great British Spring Clean*

On Sunday 17th March Evesham branch members supported Evesham Anti-Litter with their Great British Spring Clean event. There was a great turnout for the event with Laura reporting that sixty-three volunteers from different groups within the town had participated. The red fleeces ordered through our branch outfitter, Dave Tasker, made us a visible group. The event finished with free refreshments provided by the Red Lion and a performance from the Singing Binman. The following day it was reported back to us by a prospective member that she had seen us being photographed outside The Red Lion.



## *Labour in the local press*

Thank you and congratulations to Peter Daw for getting his letter about the budget printed in the Bromsgrove and Droitwich Standard and the Evesham Journal. These newspapers do not always include a letters page and Peter has a long record of being successful in getting published. It would be great to get some other member's letters in the paper. Peter has previously offered to mentor members to get published so if you are inspired to write about political concerns locally or nationally do have a go and if you want help or proof reading support get in touch!



## Cuppa and cake

Thank you to everyone who turned up on Friday 22 March to enjoy a cuppa and cake at The Old School Café in Evesham to donate Easter Eggs for Caring Hands. We had an enjoyable afternoon and your generosity was astonishing. Following the event we delivered the eggs to The Lighthouse where they were received with much gratitude.



## News from District Councillor Mary Tasker

This month, I was invited to the book launch of 'Simon de Montfort The Miracles, Laments, Prayers and Hymns', edited and translated by David Cox.

It was very interesting to learn more about the history of Evesham and the role of Simon de Montfort. The book had been translated from Latin and French. The monks of Evesham Abbey had collected stories from pilgrims and recorded them and this is the translation of the stories told to the monks. Some of the 'miracles' seemed fantastical, but they kept the memory of Simon de Montfort alive. He was never canonised as a saint, but many people believe he is.



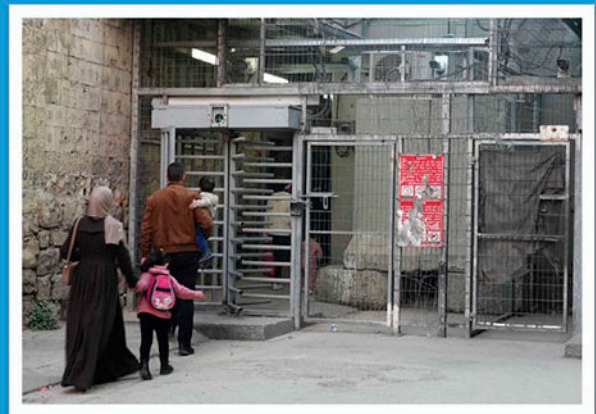
## Understanding Palestine

With a case study of Hebron  
in the occupied West Bank



Speaker Ian Cave, EAPPI Volunteer, Hebron, Jan–April 2023

Questions and discussion



Wednesday 17 April, 7.30-9.00pm

Evesham Methodist Church

71 Bridge Street, Evesham, WR11 4SF

Parking at rear of the church

Free entry, donations to EAPPI Quakers in Britain Charity welcome.

Members are invited to a meeting at the Methodist Church, Evesham on 17 April at 19.30 where speaker Ian Cave will give a talk 'Understanding Palestine' with a case study of Hebron in the occupied West Bank. Ian was an EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) volunteer, Hebron, January to April 2023.

*From the constituency Chair:  
Alex Knudsen*

This past month I have been working away on the website and you may have noticed changes to the look and feel of the site. The home page has been revamped, alongside updates on numerous pages, as well as brand new pages for previous editions of the Newsletter and a dedicated page for donations to be made to the local party.

Next on the list of improvements will be an events calendar as well as a complete refresh of the members section of the site, which I hope to relaunch in the next newsletter. Watch this space.

In terms of a General Election, the latest rumour is that this will now be in October, if Jeremy Hunt's comments are anything to go by. With regard to having our own candidate, we're still waiting but while we do, we will make a start on identifying potential election agents so that we're ready whenever the election is finally called. With this in mind, if you are able to help with our campaigning efforts in the coming months, please do get in touch. With as much help as possible, we believe we can at least halve Nigel Huddleston's majority, if not get it under 10,000.

*From the Droitwich branch Chair:  
Alan Humphries*

Following a bit of a lull in activity, the Droitwich Branch is back up and running. I'm pleased to say that we will be having our first branch meeting, open to members, supporters and left-leaning friends, on the 24th April. We're currently working on securing a guest speaker as well as a venue for the meeting but as soon as these are confirmed we will email out the details to you all.



In addition to this we will be out with the Labour gazebo on Saturday 6 April, Victoria Square, Droitwich. We will be out from 11:00–13:00, talking with the public and trying to spread Labour's message further.

Over the coming months, we hope to have more events going on in Droitwich, so I hope to see you at these and the ones coming up in April!



*Labour lottery*

As many of you will have seen recently, the Labour Party have been pushing their 'Labour Lottery' through emails to members and supporters. This has been set up as a way to fundraise for the party including down to a CLP level. We have been given a unique link, that for anyone who signs up using it, 50% of the income generated will then be given to the CLP directly to our bank account every month.

If you would like to sign up to the Labour Lottery you can do so using this hyperlink, or by scanning the QR code opposite: [https://labourlottery.org/?source=droitwich\\_and\\_evesham](https://labourlottery.org/?source=droitwich_and_evesham)

**THE LABOUR LOTTERY**

Over **2,350** weekly players

**120** winners since launch

**£30,000** worth of prizes won...so far

£2 per entry. Drawn every Friday. Must be 18 or over to play.

Registered with the Gambling Commission under the Gambling Act 2005. [www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk](http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk)



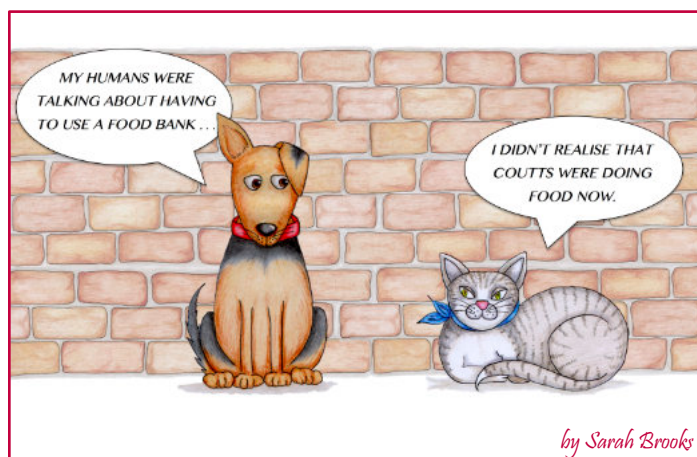


## From the Evesham branch Chair: Matthew Rea

I particularly enjoyed this month's branch meeting and extend my thanks to Brian and Ed for making it so engaging. It was refreshing to see Ed's enthusiasm for campaigning and his clear presentation style served to debunk a lot of the myths that might prevent people from engaging in this activity. To sum up (in case you missed it), door knocking is not about engaging with difficult residents on thorny political policy issues, it is just a simple, friendly survey about how people intend to vote and what their key issues are. Anyone can do this and, as Brian has stated many times, this is one of the most useful activities we invest our time into what their key issues are.

Whilst we've only had limited gazebo activity this month I do feel this has also been very successful. We're all learning that gazebo encounters are all about quality and not quantity and in March we had a few really good encounters that may well translate into increasing active membership. We're definitely seeing a real change in how receptive people are when we are out with the gazebo; so I'm very much looking forward to the first Droitwich outing and would ask as many of our active Evesham regulars to make a special effort to support this. We will arrange lifts for those who can't get to Droitwich. As a reminder, this gazebo outing will be our kick-start to getting the Labour party visible on the streets of Droitwich as a campaigning presence.

For once I feel I can close off my thoughts without having to bring up the subject of dismal Tory party news. It seems that just when you thought it couldn't get any worse it continues to do so. I shall eagerly review the latest polling stats at the end of this month to gauge just how much of a battle we have in Evesham when it comes to the impending general election – hopefully we can go into April and start to implement all the new campaigning skills we have learnt. We'll be standing candidates for two local council seats (one town and one county) as well, so the next two months will be a real dry-run for all our campaigning skills.



## Forthcoming events

**6 April** Gazebo in Victoria Square, Droitwich.

11.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

**10 April** Evesham Branch Meeting 7–9 p.m.

Evesham Rowing Club. The Mental Health crisis: Speaker from The Samaritans.

**17 April** Understanding Palestine.

See information and the poster on page 4. Parking is available at the rear of the Methodist church.

**20 April** Gazebo outing and St George's Day Music event at The Valkyrie, Market Square, Evesham.

**23 April** National Theatre Live are showing 'Nye', starring Michael Sheen at both Number 8, Pershore and The Regal, Evesham. Book your own tickets and we can arrange car sharing nearer the event.

**24 April** Droitwich Branch Meeting (full details to follow)

**25 April** Reading Group 7.45 p.m. at 59 Burford Road. Reading material to be distributed at the next Evesham Branch meeting

**4 May** 'Love Evesham' Litterpick, Market Square and Bridge Street

**Contacts:** Newsletter submissions:

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# CALL TO ACTION



Winning elections requires team work. It isn't just about an electable candidate and some compelling policies. It is about getting people out to vote and getting them to understand why they should vote Labour, and that is something everyone can help with.

There are activities you can help with even if you can only make a small time commitment. The benefits are huge: you'll get to work with a highly-motivated group, be a part of delivering change, and have some fun along the way. To support us please contact Brian Gregory by email: [brian.gregory@eveshamlabour.org](mailto:brian.gregory@eveshamlabour.org) or call us on 01386 293035

## Action: Promoting us on Social Media.

### Commitment: just five minutes per day.

Facebook can deliver Labour's message to a lot of people, with just a few minutes of your help. Campaign organisers Brian Gregory & Alex Knudsen publish persuasive posts (words, pictures and videos) to our Facebook page weekly.

You can vastly increase the reach of these post with just a few clicks. All you need is a Facebook account and a WhatsApp account. We will alert you over WhatsApp every time a message is posted to the Droitwich & Evesham Facebook page, then you go into Facebook and like and share the post. If we can get fifty or more members liking and sharing, then our messages will be seen by thousands of locals.

**Next Steps:** Ask to join the Evesham Labour Party Action WhatsApp community, so we can notify you every time a Facebook post is made.



## Action: Join the Gazebo Outreach Team.

### Commitment: Two hours, twice a month, usually on a Saturday.



Getting the Big Red Labour Gazebo out and about is one of the best ways to raise Labour's profile. We'd like to build a Gazebo team for Evesham and a team for Droitwich. We go out armed with leaflets to explain Labour's pledges and highlight issues. At the same time, we gather real on-the-ground feedback from locals and encourage people to get involved with our branches.

We provide training and can usually help with transport. Whilst this isn't everyone's cup of tea, it is one of the most exciting ways to be at the heart of delivering Labour's agenda for change.

**Next Steps:** Get in touch with Brian (see above).

## Action: Phone Banking and Door Knocking.

**Commitment: One to two hours per week.**

Even though current polling shows that Labour are on course for a landslide victory, this is all based on research which involves speaking to people who are sat in their comfy armchairs in a warm house. The reality of turning this into a real victory is very different, especially in a complacent traditional Tory stronghold like Droitwich and Evesham. What we have to do is get people out of their armchairs and down to the Polling Station to vote. All the evidence says that doing this requires real in-person interaction. Once we have met people, spoken with them and mailed them a few times they are going to feel a much stronger allegiance to

### Phonebanking vs Doorknocking

Phonebanking	Doorknocking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accessible and from home</li><li>• Can call from anywhere in the country</li><li>• Governed by some legal regulations</li><li>• Limited to collecting data</li><li>• Get through data quicker</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be visible in communities</li><li>• Get to know other members and socialise after</li><li>• Conversations can be freer and engaging</li><li>• Ability to persuade</li><li>• Can combine with leaflets</li></ul>

Labour

our cause and will be more likely to vote. The two main methods for speaking to voters that we can use are **Phone Banking** and **Door Knocking**. With phone banking you can contribute as much or as little time as you like – you simply use one of the Labour party comms tools to call people from your home, following a simple script. With door knocking you do the same thing but in

person, so the commitment is a little higher, and you go out in teams.

At the March branch meeting we will be running training sessions and providing more details on both of these tasks; then we will ask for volunteers. Please come along if you think this sounds like something you can help with.

Thank you to Carol Wade for responding to an earlier Call to Action. Carol has been a member for just a little over a year and bumped into Sue Wood-Griffiths at one of our Cuppa & Cake events in December. Since then Carol has attended the reading group and been out on the Gazebo. Carol responded quickly to our request for someone to manage the “Rising 18’s comms” process and from next week she will start sending out our Happy Birthday letter to young people in Droitwich & Evesham who turn 18. Thanks Carol for throwing yourself into active membership — it is greatly appreciated.

## Action: Leafleting.

**Commitment: Max about 90 minutes per session, as few or as many sessions as you like — and lots of fresh air!**

We are targeting renters and those people who have recently moved house to ensure they are on the electoral register. Typically, renters are younger and therefore much more likely to vote Labour. In the next month we need to get about 3500 leaflets distributed around Evesham. There is no deadline (other than before the election!) and you can do as little or as much as you like. We provide leaflets and delivery area details — and include the all-important dog-proof letter-box utility tool (and yes, it does look like a spatula!).

# CALL TO ACTION