

Members' Newsletter



Labour Party —
Evesham Branch

February 2023

From the Vice-Chair: Sue Wood-Griffiths

As we start preparing for the May elections we hope that 2023 will be a successful year for those who are standing for election locally and for the Labour Party nationally.

Thank you to all those members who provided feedback on the first edition of the branch newsletter. We have taken this on board and hope that in time the images and content will be generated by our members' activities in the town and the villages. As we move into campaigning, it would be great if we could capture and share our

activities to expand our visibility. To support this, we have set up an email inbox (see addresses on page 4) and invite you all to submit photographs of members and friends 'out and about', be this supporting picket lines, picking up litter or participating at Labour events. In addition, any details of forthcoming events that will be of interest to members are very welcome, and we will add them to the calendar. We are also grateful to Simon Brown who has offered to support us with the layout and production of the newsletter.

Fundraising

Buoyed by the success of the 'Get Political' gig at The Valkyrie last month, Mary Tasker, our Fundraising (*aka* Entertainment) Officer, organised a pub quiz on February 22nd at Ye Olde Red Horse. provided a great opportunity for members and supporters to have a drink, socialise, compete and test their knowledge. The Red Horse provided a cosy and welcoming environment and Mary and Dave provided raffle prizes. There were four teams participating and after a slow start, the 'Steir Karmar' team's expert knowledge in the politics round helped them overtake the three other teams. The final death round led to them consolidate the victory and win convincingly. We hope that this healthy Labour victory will be repeated multiple times in the forthcoming elections. The winners finished the evening with prizes of cups and wine. We hope to repeat this as a 'social fundraiser' and look forward to welcoming members and friends to form more teams for the next one.



Be prepared for the new Voter ID rules!

See the web site at www.eveshamlabour.org/voter-id

or scan this QR code on your phone...



Branch meeting update

The February branch meeting, on 15th, was our first at the new venue. It was well attended, despite receiving several apologies, and the spacious bright room provided a welcoming environment for us to meet and socialise.

The meeting was divided in two parts with a refreshment/comfort break midway. The break also provides an opportunity for members to borrow or exchange library books and, as ever, our thanks are extended to Peter Daw for facilitating this and for storing the books.

In the first half of the meeting, Matthew Rea updated attendees on current membership (which is growing) and the status of those standing for election. We are pleased to report that all candidates have now been confirmed, pending one approval meeting. The candidates are now



meeting regularly to develop a campaigning strategy and a common policy platform, which they will share at the March 8th meeting.

Sue Wood-Griffiths then shared the feedback from the January branch meeting activity, where members offered ideas for growing the membership and visibility of the Evesham branch. The executive has prioritised these with the forthcoming elections in mind, and hope to use your ideas to plan a varied programme of activities for members to enjoy and contribute to. Thank you to everyone who participated and we are always open to ideas from those of you who were unable to attend.

Quizzing seems to be a particularly popular suggestion and offers an opportunity for members to get together at both our own events and those in our locality as we start campaigning. We have some badges and T shirts available for people to get noticed and can order more if required.

The second part of the meeting focused on 'Meeting the Candidates' (picture left) followed by a 'Question Time' activity.

Thanks are extended to Wendy Logan, Mary Tasker and ticket seller Patrick for organising the fundraising and donations which resulted in us adding £81 to our funds, and we thank everyone for their contributions.

Meet Will...

As we have been out and about with the Big Red Labour Gazebo, we've been encouraged by how many young people we have met who, not surprisingly, feel passionate about the need for change in the way our country is run.

Meet Will — he is the newest member to join the Evesham Branch. Will is currently studying car mechanics at Evesham College. We asked Will to share a bit about his motivation in joining the Labour Party.

'I joined the Labour Party because I want to get involved in politics, but am too young to vote. I'm frustrated because I feel the education system failed me — it isn't built for people like me who struggle writing essays.'

Will went on to say that now he is studying at the college he is really enjoying himself. Getting young people's voices heard is something that really matters to him. *'I do believe the voting age should be*



lowered to sixteen. I know people will argue that young people will be influenced by their parents, but that isn't the case at all for me, I think I'm far more left-leaning than my parents'.

Since we met Will, he has

been out and about supporting us with the Gazebo — the picture shows Will encouraging people to 'Honk for Change' when we were out in Hampton on 18th February.

Upcoming events

Branch meetings: These will now always be second Wednesday night of the month at Evesham Rowing Club. If members require a lift to the meeting, please contact Sue Wood-Griffiths (address on page 4) and we will try and arrange one. The focus of next branch meeting on **March 8th** will be Election Policy Launch.

Gazebo: We are planning a Gazebo date in Evesham's North Ward, details to be announced soon.

Other important events:

2nd March: Hampton Farm Shop — meeting about issues with local bus services, organised by the Green Party

3rd March: Droitwich Branch Quiz Night and Raffle. 7.00 pm.
Old Cock Inn, Friar Street, Droitwich WR9 8EQ

3rd March: 'She Paddles', women's-only paddling event at Fladbury Canoe Club — 11:00 am.
International Women's Day event, organised by Helen Russell.

8th March: Branch Meeting at Evesham Rowing Club — bring Easter Egg donations!

24th March: 'Cuppa and cake' at Brew Bear, see below.

1st April: Mid Worcs — Local Election Launch with Jess Philips. This will be at The Norbury Theatre & Cinema, Droitwich WR9 8ED 11:00 – 13:00

21st April: Extinction Rebellion Protest: 'The Big One', London.

Can you help with leafleting? Even if you can spare just an hour (or two!) this would be really appreciated. If you can volunteer, please contact angela.mccan@eveshamlabour.org

Reports...

On Saturday 18th February, the Big Red Labour Gazebo was out and about in Hampton. We pitched this on the Cheltenham Road just opposite Austin Court Care Home — to take maximum advantage of the queuing traffic at the junction with Davies Road. Whilst we never expected this to be a great leafleting opportunity it certainly made us very visible. We were treated to a great many 'Honks' and 'Toots' as people responded to our 'Honk If You Want Change' sign — confirming that the people of Evesham really have had enough of the tired and clueless Tories. We also used this event to launch our new Vote ID leaflets as part of our awareness campaign to ensure everyone's voice gets heard in the upcoming local elections. More details can be found at www.eveshamlabour.org/voter-ID.

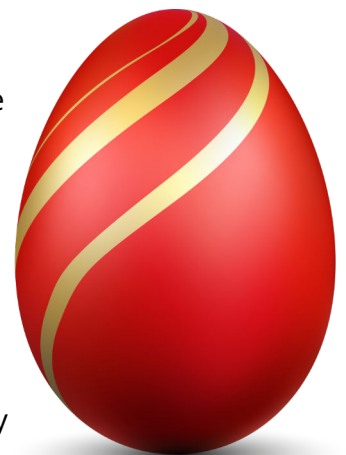


Easter Egg collection for Caring Hands

For the past four years Evesham Labour have collaborated with the Brew Bear café to collect Easter Eggs for the Caring Hands food bank and we have held a 'Cuppa and Cake' event in the café for members to get together, have a cuppa and a cake and to drop off chocolate donations for this great cause.

We are delighted to announce that we shall be repeating the event on Friday 24th March from 2.00–3.30 pm, and hope that many of you will be able to support this. For those members who are unable to attend, there will also be an opportunity to donate at our March meeting. The café owners have requested that this year donations are only brought to the event as they will not be accepting them at other times. If you are unable to get to the event and want to make a donation, please contact Sue (address on page 4) to arrange for us to collect.

We thank the Brew Bear for their continued support with this worthwhile initiative.



Hampton ward meeting — a report

District councillor candidates Heather Kelleher and Brian Gregory recently attended a meeting organised by Hampton ward residents, with the purpose of gaining a greater understanding of local issues as well as raising visibility of Labour party participation.

Held at the Hampton Farm Shop, around a dozen local residents were joined by Peter Griffiths, Worcestershire County Council Councillor and Evesham North District Councillor, as well as Barry Barnes, Divisional Highways Manager. Residents living close to Pershore Road raised frustrations and concern at repeated road maintenance disruption by telephone, electricity and gas companies, including the latest gas pipe works that are due to complete on 10th March 2023.

Following two hours of often heated discussion, one of the main takeaways was that Councillor powers are limited in ensuring that service maintenance is co-ordinated. Instead, close and strong oversight of planned work, and work being undertaken, will be needed to reduce disruption.

It is understood that the Tories intend to campaign on the need for house builders to include adequate infrastructure. But what became clear is

the level to which companies quite literally walk away having failed to do so and how limited the Council's powers are to hold them to account.

Peter Griffiths provided several credible anecdotes about this — before he discovered that Heather and Brian represent Labour!

Issues around traffic management systems such as incorrect phasing of lights were also raised as problematic. However, here the District Council do have some power, as fixed-penalty notices can be issued when this occurs.

People in Hampton were also angered that many had not received the required letters warning them in advance of planned works, and similarly about newly-built roads on the estate not being developed to a standard where the Highways Agency will adopt them. Until adoption, these roads remain the responsibility of the residents.

On a final and positive note, the presence of Labour candidates at the meeting appeared to be welcomed and they received a mostly positive response when asked what party they were standing for. Some even noted their names and gave a commitment to vote for them!

From the Chair: Matthew Rea

I am greatly encouraged by branch feedback and the progress we are making. Having a spacious, friendly venue with good parking and easy town-centre access is a big step in the right direction. The work that Sue has done to invigorate the annual meeting programme and general style of meetings is really paying off. We hear lots of positive feedback about how the branch meetings now have a much more social focus.

There is also a real sense of purpose behind our Local Election Campaign with the newly-formed working group making great strides in this area. It also feels like this is changing the profile and awareness of the Labour party in Evesham — just getting out with the Big Red Labour Gazebo is

reminding people that Labour is alive and active locally.

I urge everyone to come along to the next branch meeting on March 8th for our local election campaign policy launch; this is going to prompt a lot of interaction and engagement.

Finally, a few reminders. We are still looking to build a better Comms team and are keen to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer working on our Newsletter, our Social Media and our local PR. If you can help, please contact me, see below for email address.. Finally, don't forget that next month's meeting will also include an Easter Egg Collection for Caring Hands. We look forward to seeing you there — with plenty of Easter Eggs!

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