

Members' Newsletter



Labour Party —
Evesham Branch

April 2023

From the Vice-Chair: Sue Wood-Griffiths

Given that we were unable to hold a Branch meeting in April due to the election rules, I thought that putting this newsletter together would be a breeze. How wrong I was! Members of the Evesham Branch have continued to work really hard for election success; prospective councillors have been out in the community raising the visibility of the Labour movement and listening to local concerns, we had a sociable afternoon at the Brew Bear café and topped up our Easter egg collection for Caring Hands There was a successful launch to the constituency campaign where Jess Phillips MP presented a keynote speech, and many members have been out pounding the pavements to deliver campaign leaflets to the local electorate. We continue to receive lots of feedback on the newsletter and

would like to thank members who have provided us with images and news for this edition. Like many of you I have had a few days away this month and have not been able to support every event so this really is a collaboration and, as always, I would encourage members to share details of activities and campaigning. As the 4th May local elections loom, most of our efforts are focused on leafleting and campaigning but we still want to report on our wider activities, so please continue to contribute, updates and images to our newsletter inbox newsletter@eveshamlabour.org. After the elections we will put together the calendar for future meetings and I shall be getting in touch with those of you that offered suggestions to firm up dates.

Jess Phillips Campaign launch, 01 April 2023

About seventy members and supporters gathered at The Norbury Theatre Droitwich for the constituency local elections campaign launch. We were delighted to welcome Jess Phillips MP as our 'launcher'. Members reported that they found her an inspirational speaker whose socialist values rallied the candidates standing for election.

We were enthralled hearing Jess describe her historic links to both Evesham and Pershore and her happy childhood memories of visits to relatives in our town. Jess specifically commented on how sad she feels when driving through Evesham as the place now looks so untidy. Jess spoke at length about her fundamental belief that life should always be better for the next generation, and she reflected that this had very much been the case for her attributing her success in life to several historic key labour policies that were introduced as she was growing up. This no longer seems to be the case for young people today. Jess is a first-generation graduate in her family, comes from a simple hard-working background who is



Photograph of Jess Phillips:
David Woolfall, CC BY 3.0

through-and-through a proud socialist. Her down-to-earth attitude and the insights into her parliamentary work made her speech both funny and informative. She certainly made us laugh with her views on Parliament's Tory-driven obsession in debating the things that only matter to the wealthy, which never affect the people in her Yardley constituency.

Our branch chair Matthew Rea also spoke at the event and gave the audience an holistic view of the focus of the campaign in Evesham which has been built on the concerns shared with us by Evesham residents who support our view that change is needed and that we are the people with the energy and vision to accomplish this. Matthew's speech can be seen at: <https://tinyurl.com/bd8sj59k>



Cuppa and cake

The Easter Cuppa and Cake event for Caring Hands at Brew Bear café on 24 March was a sociable afternoon where members and supporters donated very generously to top up the egg collection we started at the March Branch meeting. We managed to create an impressive display. Thank you to everyone for the very generous donations at the event and meeting, these contributions are really appreciated by the recipients.



Our thanks are extended to the staff at The Brew Bear who always welcome us and support us by delivering the eggs on our behalf. Sue apologises that the event was interrupted by her urgent call from the police to return to her runaway car!

Town Council meeting

On 03 April Sue Wood-Griffiths, Dave and Mary Tasker and Neal Cartwright attended the Town Council meeting hoping to hear from the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. He didn't show up!

So, after a review of the year from Mayor Mark Goodge, members of the audience questioned the councillors about local crime, drug problems and the general poor state of the town. There was a palpable anger in the room and most of the councillors sat stony still and made no contribution at all. People do care about our town and feel it has been neglected and problems are being ignored and insufficiently policed. This echoes our belief that there is a real need for change. We do recognise that being a councillor can be a thankless task and thank the Evesham Town Councillors for their service, while believing we have the energy and enthusiasm to do a better job.

April Branch meeting

We are not able to hold Branch meetings during April once the campaign is underway but to honour our arrangement with the rowing club some members gathered to fold and bundle leaflets and have a drink together.

It is encouraging to see the enthusiasm of candidates and the members' support for them. Thank you to everyone who turned up to help. We had thought we might use the time for delivery but the inclement weather spared us!

The BIG Evesham town spring clean

Members of the Evesham Branch joined forces with Evesham Anti-Litter group as part of the Great British Spring Clean on 26 March.

There was a good turnout from members who gathered at the end to listen to the musical bin and enjoy a well-earned complimentary coffee at The Red Lion. Thanks are extended to the staff at the pub who also generously provided food for those who had participated.

A massive amount of rubbish was collected and members expressed concern at the number of nitrous oxide canisters that were picked up across the town.



School visit

An idea that came out of the January Branch meeting was that we should try and engage more with young people in schools and colleges, and this is something that we are keen and plan to do. Is anybody interested in taking on this as a role? Helen Russell has made a start and was invited by a teacher she met at an NEU rally in Worcester to speak to pupils at Chipping Campden School about her work with trade unions and standing as a prospective parliamentary candidate. Thank you, Helen, we look forward to hearing how it went.

The gazebo

This has been a prolific month for our Gazebo, hardly surprising considering this is the run-up to an election. The Gazebo has been out in Hampton, Badsey, Offenham, and Bretforton (though this had to be Gazebo-lite as space was very limited). At every outing we encountered lots of support.



At Hampton, we resorted to our trusty spot opposite Austen Court where the passing traffic had the opportunity to quickly indicate their approval by honking their horns or shaking their fists. As usual, there was much more honking than fist shaking.



In Badsey, Mary arranged an amazing spot for us right outside the village shop, just three doors down from Nigel Huddleston's house.

New housing developments was the hottest topic in Badsey, with much frustration about the lack of a neighbourhood plan and a deep mistrust of the District and Country Council in their approach to selling off land for building.

In Bretforton we pitched up just outside the Fleece Inn and had several great conversations, including



getting to meet Mike Butland (a local resident) who went on to volunteer for leafleting and ended up delivering to over half of the village.

Consistently, when we take the Gazebo out, we meet with strong support and always end up adding a few contacts to our mailing list. We hope to see many of the people we have met at our Branch meetings in future.

Meal at Pasha

Those standing for election have been engaging with local businesses and, to welcome a new business to the town, Mary Tasker hurriedly arranged a get-together on 13 April for election candidates and members of the executive (who were not away at the time) at the new restaurant 'Pasha' on the High Street. It was a lovely opportunity for us to get to know each other better, support a local business and relax. Thanks again to Mary; this is becoming a repetitive feature of these newsletters but is gratefully acknowledged because she does so much for the branch.

The food, wine and company was enjoyed by all.



Our candidates...



Heather Kelleher

I have lived in the Hampton area for seven years.

I would like to give something back to this beautiful, but sadly often undervalued, town.



David Tasker

Having lived in Evesham for fourteen years, I have seen a decline in the appearance and facilities in the town and feel that it is time to take positive action to improve the community for all residents and visitors.



Brian Gregory

Having lived in Evesham for over thirty years, I understand and experience the same issues faced by residents. I am fully committed to delivering the change that the town urgently needs.



Mary Tasker

I have lived and worked in Evesham for the past fourteen years. I am passionate about the town and the people who live here. I want the people of Evesham to have a representative who is prepared to listen, take their concerns forward and deliver positive results.



Mary Campbell

I have lived and worked in Badsey for twenty years. I am committed to my local communities and have campaigned extensively on both local and national issues.

I am keen to see Evesham properly resourced with adequate clinics and surgeries and I am not afraid to speak out in support of local services and residents.



Matthew Rea

I have lived in and around Evesham for twelve years.

I see that our lovely riverside town has huge potential and I know that local residents share that view. I am keen to see that potential realised and will work as hard as I can to make sure that local voices are heard.

From the Chair: Matthew Rea

April is a month that has just flown by! Normally I like to take April very slowly and savour every moment of the transition to Spring with longer, warmer days. This April seems to have mainly been rain, accompanied by a lot of leaflet delivery! I know that all our candidates and the leafleting team will have easily clocked up, and exceeded, their monthly step quota and I am immensely grateful to them for this effort. From a personal perspective I've enjoyed being out on the streets and have met a great many supportive people who have welcomed the arrival of our leaflets. Many have stopped to chat and the

common theme every time is that the Tories really have run out of ideas and credibility.

As I write this we have just over a week to go before the election and we are still busy putting up **Vote Labour** banners and flags everywhere we can. I'm particularly looking forward to the next Branch meeting. Whatever the election outcome we have proven that we are a fighting force, we've mobilised an impressive campaign and we deserve a drink and a rest. Thankfully, Sue has arranged something very relaxing for our next meeting and I look forward to seeing you all there on 10 May.

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May Branch meeting

Our May Branch meeting will be held at Evesham Rowing Club on Wednesday 10 May at 7 p.m.

We hope that we shall be celebrating election success at this meeting for all or some of our candidates and, whatever the outcome, it is important that we reflect on our campaign to identify and learn from what has gone well and what we might do better.

We also want to share our meeting programme for the next few months and gather ideas for future meetings, to build on what was identified at the start of the year.

To raise our high spirits or temper our gloom and lighten the mood, in the second half of the meeting we intend to hold a fun quiz with prizes. If you have been assisted with campaigning by supporters and friends, please bring them along to join members so we can thank them for their support.

As you may now have time for reading again, we will also have the branch library available for members to borrow and exchange books.