

# Members' Newsletter



Labour Party —  
Droitwich and Evesham Constituency

December 2025

## *Evesham Labour Party and Droitwich & Evesham CLP — Review of the year*

This newsletter is to review the year and let members know about our activities. For about two years before the election we were producing these on a monthly basis. There was lots to report on as we built up momentum through our branch activities in preparation for the General Election. For several reasons, it has not been sustainable to continue this and there has been much happening that has gone unreported beyond our Facebook group.

Unfortunately, executive members' health issues (my own and Mary Tasker's) have curbed our activities in 2025 as the CLP and both branches rely on the same few people to keep things going. This means we lack resilience when these people are incapacitated. We would urge the wider membership to consider offering to contribute more so we can build resilience and remain active. This does not necessitate you joining the executive but offers to contribute to the newsletter or arrange periodic collections for the foodbanks

would support us to be more active and visible in our communities. Please consider what contribution you might be able to offer. We do our best, but are aware that with wider engagement we could do more!

Steve Ainsworth the CLP treasurer has indicated his wish to step down and we need to find a replacement. If this is something you would be interested or willing to pick up please get in touch. Steve has been a stalwart of the CLP and Droitwich branch and wants to have a rest. We rely on people's goodwill to keep things going and need more support from the wider membership.

What follows is a summary of some of the things that have happened this year to give you a flavour of what we are up to politically and socially. If there are things that you are interested in getting involved with, or that you feel that you can contribute to, then please get in touch with Sue Wood-Griffiths (CLP secretary) at [sue.woodgriffiths@eveshamlabour.org](mailto:sue.woodgriffiths@eveshamlabour.org)

## *Political activity*

### **Evesham Branch Meetings**

During the year we have enjoyed a varied programme of meetings focusing on some of the Labour Party's policies and priorities. We have had visiting speakers including Sue Coleman from West Mercia Women's Aid (violence against women and girls), Dave Boucher from Evesham Adventure Playground (child poverty and young peoples mental health), Lou Bugg from Avonvale River Action Group (clean rivers), Ed Jarvis (climate change). We have also held some member-led meetings focusing on housing, local government re-organisation and council responsibilities. In the new year we shall be planning a programme of meetings looking at policy and will be looking for members to contribute ideas and suggestions for speakers.

### **CLP Annual General Meeting**

The CLP AGM was held in June and we welcomed Tom Collins MP for Worcester as our speaker. He spoke about the culture shock and general confusion associated with joining Westminster as a new MP. He gave us a clear insight in to the pressures of representing constituents and the responsibility of supporting the party. The meeting was held just before the planned vote on the reform of the benefits system. He spoke of the disquiet of many of the newer MPs who were feeling really conflicted. Mary Tasker asked him if there was anything we could do to help and he said that providing him with ideas about how people (particularly younger and people with disabilities) could be supported back into work would be helpful. Mary hurriedly assembled a

## Political activity (cont...)

small working group of members and supporters with different expertise to thrash out some ideas. These were collated and sent to him within a few days. She was thanked for the “gold standard” feedback and assured that this work would be shared with the associated ministers. The vote on

the reform was subsequently pulled but the process felt empowering. Lucy Powell the new deputy party leader has indicated that she is intending to set up routes for more of this approach and we hope that in the new year we can do this through our branch meetings.

## West Midlands Labour Conference — March 1st 2025

*Amanda Capewell and Gill Rawlings attended the West Midlands Conference in March and these are Amanda's reflections on the day.*

Feeling quite jaded by politics, this was my first Labour Conference after the somewhat ‘bumpy’ seven months since being in power. The day, which thankfully renewed my faith in the Party, allowed delegates to reflect on shared priorities and achievements already made. The programme was intense, yet bite-size in terms of the events and focus groups, which I soaked up with enthusiasm.

Setting the scene was Pat McFadden, MP for Wolverhampton. He reminded us of the state of our country following fourteen years of Tory rule and summarised ‘when change moves fast, it’s a good time to be in politics.’

Pat reminded us of all Labour has done in terms of its key priority areas – the vibe was positive – saying this is what we have already achieved, and the British public should soon start to notice. We know not all our actions have been popular, but overall we feel most are the right ones.

Hosted by Richard Parker the first Labour Mayor for the West Midlands, the next session was about how having a single settlement for local government which will mean resources can be targeted according to local need. The three-tier system is simply too confusing and too cumbersome especially for the public. Devolution provides the opportunity to move from a system of crisis management to one of targeted provision in terms of jobs, young people and Services.

‘Campaigning in and with Communities of the countryside’ was an excellent breakout session with a variety of ‘top tips for doorstep canvassing’ in the West Midlands bringing together the shared experience of serving MP’s. All stressed the importance of building relationships and trust locally — so, seeking visibility in the local comm-

unity whether that be by litter picking, talking to shopkeepers, in libraries, pubs, etc. The application of Labour solutions in local areas was stressed. The best advice I heard was ‘Be human, accept that people will have issues with some of our policies, and do NOT use the word Labour in your first sentence! In terms of ReformUK, question whether they should really be voted for with so little known about them or their policies!

Wes Streeting was then welcomed and listed the party’s achievements in health since they came to power; ending the GP strike, putting 1000 more GP’s on the frontline, and offering more dental appointments being just some of those. Wes spoke about how the change from analogue to digital communication is progressing along with his commitment to developing a more preventative NHS. The Q&A discussed concerns about mental health support with Wes highlighting his commitment to employing 8,500 more mental health staff, providing more mental health hubs and more mental health support in all our schools.

After lunch it was back into breakout groups, mine hosted by a panel of West Midlands Creatives all aligned to ‘Culture Central’ — Labour’s attempt to bring ‘the Arts’ back into focus. It was heartening to hear of the exciting initiatives happening already in our cities and a clear drive to ensure creative opportunities are available wherever you live in the region with more outreach from cities to rural areas. This was just what I wanted to hear! Lisa Nandy spoke passionately about the demise of enrichment under the Tories, running down the Arts, and referring to creative subjects as ‘Mickey Mouse’ subjects. Under Labour, the plan is to reverse this short sighted approach to Arts education, rebuilding our libraries, theatres and developing a National Youth Strategy. As George Bernard Shaw said ‘imagination is the

beginning of creation' — and I couldn't agree more. It felt as though a reset button for the Arts had been pushed at last!

The final session with Jess Phillips didn't disappoint. Jess is clearly delighted that one of Labour's key priorities is dealing with violence against women and girls. She pointed to the failure in management of Children's Services as far as Domestic Violence and Abuse is concerned and why prevention is so important. Education is clearly called for when the age of the largest group of predators is currently 15! A plenary on Safer

Streets followed, pointing to the increase in Police Officers on the streets. Poojna Kanda spoke movingly about her son, a victim of knife crime when he was killed in a senseless attack by a young person. Poojna campaigns tirelessly with Labour to ensure weapons are taken off our streets to ensure that no parent should endure the misery she faces in light of her own son's death. With clear targets, Labour is attempting to make Britain, safer, healthier, happier and a more caring place to live – we need to embrace this message and help in its delivery – for all our sakes.

## Elections

### County Council

The County council elections were held in May, and despite Labour being represented across the majority of the 57 available seats, we were only able to secure two, in Worcester City (Worcester St. Johns and Rainbow Hill & Fort Royal). In the districts local to Evesham, we were able to field a candidate in each one.

Since then there has been one WCC by election, in Bromsgrove South, where the Lib Dems gained the seat from Reform UK.

### District Council

In October there was a by-election in Bretforton and Offenham Wychavon District Council by-election. Thanks are extended to Amanda Capewell for standing and to all our members and supporters who gave their support and leafleted.

Regrettably the Reform UK candidate won the seat. Unsurprisingly he was the only member of the district council to vote against the proposal that there should be two unitary authorities in the county.



## Wider engagement

### Worcester TUC Hope Not Hate

The Evesham branch supported the Worcester Hope not Hate event with a donation and helping with refreshments and marshalling. It was a really uplifting occasion with some inspirational speeches, music, cakes and curry. It is a sad reflection of our times that the free event was ticket only (applied for in advance) and could only be advertised via supportive networks

### The Great British Spring Clean

On a very wet March Sunday, members of Evesham Labour joined the Evesham Anti-Litter Great British Spring Clean to clean up the town centre and got soaked. It is fair to say that the town was filthy and we found some of the businesses shop fronts in a terrible state. The tidiest shop front was The Card Factory and we thanked the staff in their for keeping their frontage tidy and free from weeds. We were told it was something they built into their weekly work schedule.





## Worcester TUC International Women's Day Event

On a glorious March Saturday, several of us attended the International Women's Day event at the Worcester Guildhall. The event organised by Worcester TUC was well attended and had some interesting exhibits representing the work of women in the region both current and historical.

## Evesham Branch Quiz Team

Evesham Labour's quiz team "Steir Karmar" has had a very successful year. Led by Mary and Dave Tasker, and a combination of Michael Worrall, Sue Wood-Griffiths, James Davies, Su Crouch and Neal Cartwright, the team has been active and was represented in charity quizzes at the Rowing Club, Boat Lane Brewery, Hampton Social Club (Mayor's quiz) and monthly at the Red Lion, where they won the £50 cash prize for branch funds no less than four times. If members would like to get involved with this get in touch and if there is sufficient interest we can form a second team so people can see the local branch active in the community.

## Evesham Remembrance Sunday

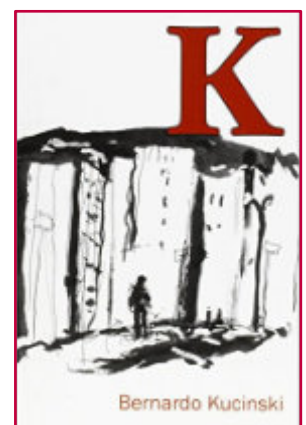
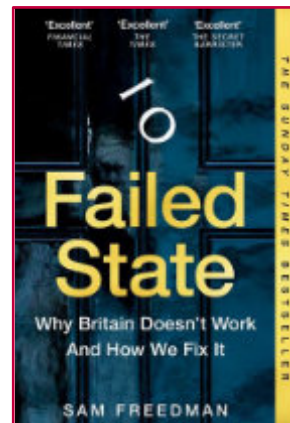
We were delighted to ask our youngest member to lay the Evesham Party wreath at the war memorial on Remembrance Sunday. He was joined at the ceremony by our oldest member Brian who was laying a wreath for the civic society. Thanks are extended to both. It was a very well attended event this year with a large crowd gathering in remembrance.



## Evesham Branch Socialist Reading Group

The Socialist Reading Group has had a busy year, meeting monthly to discuss a selected political book. Thanks are due to David Haslam for hosting these occasions.

We have covered critiques of modern capitalism, such as George Monbiot & Peter Hutchinson's *Invisible Doctrine* and Will Hutton's *This time no mistakes*. Discussion of our flawed electoral and governance included the provocatively titled *How Westminster Works: and why it doesn't* by Ian Dunt and *Failed State* by Sam Freedman. Environmental and land ownership



issues featured strongly in Guy Shrubsole's *The lie of the land*. More biographical studies included *Chums*, Simon Kuper's darkly amusing take-down of Cameron, Johnson, and their Oxford cronies, and Victor Bogdanor's *Making the Weather*, about five post-war politicians who have influenced British politics without becoming Prime Minister. A highlight of the year was our May Day group outing to Chipping Campden Literary Festival to attend an interview with Bogdanor. Most recently we have tackled political fiction, discussing Donal Ryan's exploration of social change in rural Ireland, *Heart be at Peace*, and *K*, a story of the 'disappeared' under Brazil's former repressive dictatorship.

We have all learned a lot, from the books and each other. New readers are always welcome.

### **Councillor News (Mary Tasker)**

After a period of leave of absence from May to September while undergoing medical treatment for breast cancer (thank God for the NHS, free for all and there when you need it), Mary has returned to her councillor role and has been working with other party leaders on the district council to enable a focused approach to planning for the move towards a unitary authority. This has involved



consultation with other districts to co-ordinate services for the people of Wychavon.

Two authorities, Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest district council favour a single unitary authority in Worcestershire. The other five: Wychavon, Worcester City, Malvern Hills, Redditch and Bromsgrove favour the North /South option as it would be better able to reflect the urban/rural nature and needs of the county. The final proposal was submitted to government at the end of November.

Throughout the year Mary has done local casework, and she is currently working on a combined neighbourhood project with Prince Henrys High School regarding the traffic around the school. If you are in the area look out for her in a high-vis jacket counting cars! For the third year running she has been asked to be on the budget scrutiny committee where she analyses and makes recommendations on the proposed budget.

### **Social Media (Brian and Neal)**

Most social media activity on Facebook and Instagram this year has focused on supporting candidates that stood in the county council and by-elections. These achieved a wide reach across the relevant divisions/wards. Unfortunately, we continue to be plagued by derogatory posts from right-wing contributors and increasingly, from automated 'bots'. The good news is that a filter has been put in place that allows offensive posts to be hidden from public view, while allowing genuine posts to be made visible following review. Other social media activity has focused on the impact of government policy on the constituency as well as advertising the plethora of beneficial policies that have been introduced more broadly. If anyone has suggestions with respect to social media content, please contact [briangregory@eveshamlabour.com](mailto:briangregory@eveshamlabour.com).

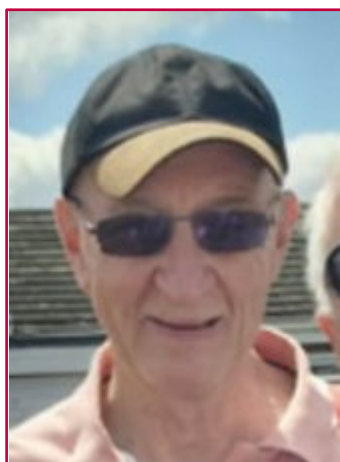
### **Other representation**

Brian Gregory and Neal Cartwright were both active in Avonvale River Action Group, the citizen-science pollution-monitoring effort. Neal is also on the committee of the Vale Bus and Rail public transport campaign group, advocating for better public transport in the area. Mary Tasker has been appointed a trustee of Wallace House. If other members are involved in a community or campaign group, please let us know.

## Sad Goodbyes

It was with great regret that we had to report the deaths of two active members of the Evesham branch, Vic Scutt and Joan O'Hagan, who sadly both lost their lives to cancer.

Vic was a relatively new member of the branch who supported us greatly in the run-up to and during the 2024 election campaign. He was an active member and contributor to the book group.



Joan was a long-standing member and campaigner who worked tirelessly during the 2017 and 2019 election campaigns. She took on the CLP political education role and will especially be remembered for that. During the lockdown she developed an on-line programme of discussions and presentations to keep the membership engaged. These were highly successful and much better attended than CLP meetings. The programme was varied and engaging and included opportunities to engage with academics, politicians (Clive Lewis and Jacqui Smith) and wider issues (racism, Black History and the travelling community) at a time when many were feeling vulnerable and isolated.

We send our love and best wishes to their families, and especially to Jan Scutt and Anne O'Hagan during this festive season.

## A message from the Branch Chair

I hope that you have all had a happy and healthy 2025. This year has been an active one for Evesham Branch; with members supporting many local events and initiatives, and some members stepping up to stand as candidates in the Worcestershire County Council election, and Evesham Town Council and Wychavon District Council by-elections.

It has been a politically turbulent year and a difficult one for the incumbent Government. I am not sure that the current situation is quite what we hoped for when the Labour Government was elected in May 2024, but hopefully better times are to come in 2026. As well as the very real challenge from the Populist Right and Far-Right, we now have

the threat of the newly-formed 'Your Party' diluting the traditional voter base that we have always relied on.

There is some hope, as there now seems to be a significant movement arising in united opposition to the Far-Right and hopefully this will gain enough traction to take away some of their momentum; we will be providing information in the New Year on how members can get involved in these activities.

I would like to finish by thanking all the members who have supported the Evesham Branch during 2025 and to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2026.

Kind Regards,

David Tasker – Evesham Branch Chair

**Contacts:** Newsletter submissions:

[newsletter@droitwicheveshamlabour.org](mailto:newsletter@droitwicheveshamlabour.org)

**General enquiries:**

[welcome@droitwicheveshamlabour.org](mailto:welcome@droitwicheveshamlabour.org)

Call us:

01386 293035

Facebook/Instagram:

droitwicheveshamlabour

X (formerly Twitter)

DandECLP

Web site:

<https://www.droitwicheveshamlabour.org>