



Looking back over one year of action



Articles, letters and activities from Windsor Constituency Labour Party

**12TH
DEC
2020**

*There is no final victory, as there is
no final defeat. There is just the same
battle. To be fought, over and over
again. So toughen up!*
Tony Benn.

Windsor Labour Newsletter has been on hiatus, but will be returning in due course with new articles and updates on previous ones. We will be making a call-out to all budding writers!

The newsletter group came together as a positive way of communicating with all local voters outside of election times, and plans to widen our distribution, beyond on-line, to a deliverable leaflet, remain our ambition.

In the meantime, take a look at some of the articles, now archived, written last year. They represent a good cross-section of all our concerns in 2019; though now sadly eclipsed by the terrible events of Covid-19, many of these issues have become perennial challenges under Conservative rule, so will doubtless require our attention way into the future.

The lions share of this content is now historical, but publishing this on 12th December 2020 as we hurtle towards a no deal Brexit has its context. The overriding concern is not Brexit - whichever way you voted. The Labour Party respects democracy and we're committed to carrying out the wishes of the people as decided at our last meaningful conference in 2019.

The concern is the 'no-deal' bit which is wantonly irresponsible by a Boris Johnson government who were given the mandate on this day, one year ago. Countless hardships will ensue and it is our remit to continue fighting this policy to protect the rights and the social and economic well-being of this country.

THE TROUBLING RISE IN VIOLENT CRIME

On Friday, May 24th 2019, Theresa May announced she was stepping down as Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party. She comforted herself by listing some of her achievements in government; this was a wise move, since none of the national news outlets bothered to, that day or the next, focusing instead on the Brexit debacle, over which both she, and before her, David Cameron, had presided. About the larger picture, May avoided some uncomfortable truths, as reported by the BBC: she had haemorrhaged staff in office, with "resignations coming thick and fast"; she did not win the hearts and minds of the voters; and she suffered the largest defeat in the Commons since 1918.

The UN recently published a stinging rebuke of Britain for presiding over "systemic and tragic poverty".

But there are many other "lows" of her premiership she seems to have painted out; these have not gone unnoticed by other high profile observers, however, the UN recently publishing a stinging rebuke of Britain for presiding over "systemic and tragic poverty". Elsewhere in the UN report, by Prof Alston, an independent expert in human rights law, and an unpaid appointee of the UN Human Rights Council, it stated that the UK's social safety net had been "deliberately removed and replaced with a harsh and uncaring ethos". It went on to say that it appeared as if the Department of Work and Pensions had been tasked with "designing a digital and sanitised version of the 19th century workhouse, made infamous by Charles Dickens". The report states that a "highly combustible situation" has been created that will have "dire consequences" in an extended economic downturn (cue Brexit?). The government has said that Alston's final report was "barely believable". No surprise then that Shadow Home Secretary, Diane Abbott, accuses the government of being in complete denial about the multifarious effects of their drive for austerity.

But what does this all have to do with the crime figures? Firstly, and most notably, knife crime is at its highest level since recording started in 2011. This coincides with a period of sharp reduction in police numbers, reduced by 21,732, or 15% in England and Wales, resulting in a figure, in March 2018, of the lowest recorded numbers since the early 1980s. Nationally, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) recorded a 9% rise in recorded knife crimes in the year ending September 2018; Berkshire has followed this pattern, with a year on year increase in the number of people being stabbed. Thames Valley is seeing its highest level of serious knife crime in 8 years, with almost 1500 reported incidents, a rise of 19% on last year. In a figure considered to under-represent those actually involved in a stabbing incident, the NHS report that 40 people in Berkshire were admitted to hospital with knife wounds in 2018, compared with half that number in 2012/13.

Research shows that a targeted approach by the community may help break the cycle of youth violence, but since the Conservative - Liberal Democrat coalition

government came to power in 2010, they began to slash their contribution to the policing budget, reducing it by 20% by 2015. Policing is funded also by local authority money; and part of this "massive disinvestment" in the social safety net has seen central government make huge reductions to the money they give to local authorities. As a result, (as reported by the Windsor Observer in January of this year) Thames Valley Police have seen a cut of £100 million to their budget in the last eight years. You would rightly imagine that this meant fewer "Bobbies on the beat", engaging in the much-debated "Stop and Search" or just keeping a watchful eye on vulnerable young people, particularly since the numbers of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have also dropped - by a staggering 40% since 2010. But the ripples go much wider than that. For instance, police activities to check which retailers are breaking the law by selling knives to teenagers, are under threat, due to drops in police numbers; and there is a similar negative impact on police forces' abilities to apprehend violent suspects and bring them to justice.

Thames Valley is seeing its highest level of serious knife crime in 8 years...

Anthony Stansfeld, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner since 2012, is a strong advocate of neighbourhood policing, but points out that police are often stretched dealing with non-crime business, especially in reference to mental health issues in their areas. Last October, the former Children's Commissioner, Sir Al Aynsley-Green, spoke of a crisis in childhood in the U.K: "Inequality reigns supreme in Britain today" and there exists "a failure of effective advocacy for children in this government." He cites his concerns over the lack of funding for Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS), many never accessing help, as the bar is set so high. And Javed Khan, Barnardo's Chief Executive,

concur: "Children don't feel safe", with 31 out of 43 Police Forces in England and Wales recording an increase in knife offences to the year ending December 2018. Yvette Cooper, Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, feels "the police are completely overstretched and crime prevention work is far too limited".

The Labour Party reported in April that Youth Services have been cut by 70% since 2010, and a staggering 900 youth worker jobs have been axed from 2016 alone. And according to Jeremy Corbyn, spending on Youth Justice Councils, working with young people to reduce re-offending or keep them out of the justice system in the first place, has been cut by 45% since 2010. And the reduction in Youth Centres providing after-school activities is lamentable, in light of new research showing that the majority of children under 16 who are victims are stabbed in the period after the end of the school day, and most of those, not far from their home. Cuts to Sure Start Centres for the young and education support grants for teenagers have also had negative impacts. Praise is therefore due for a 3-year initiative launched by London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, in 2018: named Young Londoners' Fund (YLF), this commits £45 million to a range of youth services, including supporting young people with mental health difficulties. Perhaps this could provide a template for elsewhere?

Poverty plays a significant part too, with only 1% of London victims coming from richer areas but nearly three-quarters from poor neighbourhoods. This, coupled with a rise in school exclusions across cash-strapped English local authorities, where 1 in 3 admit they have no places in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), led Javed Khan to call it a "poverty of hope", with children seeing no possibility of a positive future. One fifth of the UK population (14 million people) now live in poverty, according to a new measure which now takes into account costs such as housing and child care. Despite the government's focus on work, and high levels of employment, many jobs are so poorly paid that 60% of people in poverty are now in families where someone



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Youth knife crime is undoubtedly complex, with so many threads - poverty, mental health, exclusion from education, too few police, no or poor employment, a lack of youth services, and many more.

works. Problems with the rolling out of the government's catastrophic Universal Credit system (which has now lost millions in fraudulent scams) meant people had to wait weeks for money, one of the reasons given for the dramatic rise in food bank use, up 13% from 2017 to 2018.

Youth knife crime is undoubtedly complex, with so many threads - poverty, mental health, exclusion from education, too few police, no or poor employment, a lack of youth services, and many more. Society is very stressed, but the truth is, it need not be. Cuts-of-choice made by governments since 2010 are impoverishing

people to a great, unnecessary and cruel extent. Far from investing in our future, we have seen spending on services for children and young people cut by nearly £1bn in six years. Join us in Windsor Labour to keep calling out the Tories on this travesty and fighting this dreadful government all the way to the ballot box - and beyond!

Lesley Hunter, Election Agent, Windsor Labour, October 2019

THE (ONGOING) HOUSING CRISIS

It has never been more important to carefully consider and analyse the messages coming out from political parties. And that means not only by the bluster and promising statements which are more part of chaotic political posturing but at genuine, long-term commitments to principle.

Housing is one issue which has dominated the media almost as much as the NHS, education and the climate crisis. People in Windsor are no strangers to the impact of the housing shortage on families, on young people and on our homeless. There was much press coverage, and particularly at the time of the Royal Wedding, but the fact remains that the problem is not getting any better and we still have our homeless.

After the 2nd World War, our housing situation was a severe problem. A Labour government took the crucial step of introducing a massive programme of council housing. The aim was to provide decent, good quality homes at genuinely affordable rents. This enabled the development of a well maintained housing stock to provide for the then current and future generations.

However now we are seeing the long term effects of such wanton and ill-thought policy. It has never been more important to carefully consider and analyse the messages coming out from political parties. And that means not

private houses and flats are out of the reach of many people including those who work in the public sector and increasingly the number of people working zero hours contracts or who are without work. This is an outrage given that we live in the 6th richest economy in the world.

A recent report in The Independent headlined the news that "The Government has failed to build a single 'starter home' after promising 200,000. Some £174m of taxpayer cash was used to prepare land intended for the 'starter homes', but the budget allocated for them has now been siphoned off elsewhere."¹ The Conservative Party pledged in 2015 to create 200,000 new homes in England to be sold exclusively to first-time buyers under the age of 40, in a bid to help young people take their first step on the property ladder. But the National Audit Office says none of these homes have been built. The government has failed to build any of its promised "starter homes" despite having set aside more than £2bn for the project, the government watchdog has revealed.

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The scale of the housing emergency was reported again by the Children's Commissioner's report in August 2019. This found 210,000 children registered as homeless, some of them "growing up in shipping containers." Although not all of us face such dire circumstances, many of us have first-hand experience of the problems around housing. We know how

While the Housing and Planning Act 2016 created the statutory framework for the project to go ahead, the watchdog said the relevant sections of the legislation have yet to come into force. Furthermore funding which had been earmarked for the scheme has instead been spent on acquiring and preparing brownfield sites for housing more generally - some of which was "affordable" housing. Many homes under this general umbrella are for sale or rent at 80 per cent of the market value and for many people, they should really be called 'unaffordable'.

The Labour Party has focused on its housing policies over the years and particularly under Jeremy Corbyn. At the 2019 conference, a resolution was passed which demanded a pledge to build 100, 000 council homes per year and the end to 'right to buy'. Under a Labour government, people could have been confident that when such a policy was realised, our young people might have been able to think about living in a secure dwelling in an area of their choosing. So too homelessness might have been reduced out of existence as housing would have been prioritised to support the vulnerable, a policy which featured highly in the Labour Party's agenda at the time. We, at long last, might have been able to look forward to a time when housing becomes a right rather than an investment.

A spokesperson from Shelter said in the same report that "Social housing is what all political parties must focus on if we're going to have any hope of solving the housing emergency. A commitment to build at least 90,000 social homes a year over the next parliament is their best shot at turning failure into success." Council housing is key to ending the housing emergency disgrace.

The Labour Party remains right on board and committed to these policies.

Margery Thorogood, Press Officer, Windsor Labour, September 2019

¹ https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/starter-homes-housing-first-time-buyers-national-audit-office-report-a9185371.html?fbclid=IwAR0saRqKt9eF5_sJy0UfWNR1ltrrjKVMzMLdAhIfwgyQe9ovRCzVUR1KHW



Extinction Rebellion Occupy Protest in Oxford Circus, When Greta met Jeremy, Flooding in York, Australian forest fires.



Labour for a green new deal

This was the motion that was proposed by one of our members, Ian Steers. After being voted on unanimously, it was forwarded to Labour Party HQ in preparation for Conference where it sat alongside others in the compositing process for debate. Its continued validity is obvious and will remain so until we achieve these targets. The motion was as follows:

Conference notes:

To prevent the worst effects of climate change, we must keep global temperature rises below 1.5°C.

Over 1°C of warming has taken place, causing floods, droughts, heatwaves, pollution, and hundreds of thousands of deaths. The poorest - particularly in the Global South - suffer most. Tackling climate change is thus indivisible from social, racial and economic justice. Just 100 companies are responsible for the majority of carbon emissions; and the Conservative government is deregulating the fossil fuel industry and cutting support for renewables. Labour supported the youth strikes for climate and Extinction Rebellion, pushing the climate



emergency up the national agenda. A Green New Deal (undiluted) is now a demand we must make.

Conference therefore calls on the Labour Party to include a Green New Deal in the manifesto: a state-led programme of investment and regulation for the decarbonisation and transformation of our economy that reduces inequality and pursues efforts to keep global average temperature rises below 1.5°C.

This will include:

- Commitment to zero carbon emissions by 2030;
- Rapidly phasing out all fossil fuels;
- Large-scale investment in renewables;
- A just transition to well-paid, unionised, green jobs available for all;
- A green industrial revolution expanding public, democratic ownership as far as necessary for the transformation;
- Green public integrated transport that connects Britain;
- Supporting developing countries' climate transitions by increasing transfers of finance, technology and capacity;
- Assuring everyone's basic rights through the provision of universal services;
- Welcoming climate refugees while taking measures against the displacement of peoples from their homes.

Ian Steers, July 2019

Source: <https://www.labourgnd.uk>



ANTI WOS GETS STARTED

Deborah Foster, Trade Union Liaison Officer (TULO) for Windsor Labour Party and UNISON Branch Secretary at Frimley Health, is currently actively involved in the shared unions' campaign (UNITE, UNISON and GMB) against WOS. See her report from June 2019 [here](#).

Plans by Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust to transfer the jobs of caterers, porters, estates, security workers and housekeeping staff to a private company are a form of back-door privatisation that will be opposed, says UNISON.

Up to 1000 staff would have their roles moved to a wholly owned subsidiary company being set up by the Trust as a way to cut costs and exploit a tax loophole.

Wholly owned subsidiary companies, or subcos, also save money by not having to honour future NHS pay agreements.

While all Frimley Health workers currently receive salaries based on a national NHS pay deal, after April 2021 those transferred to the trust's private company may not be entitled to any pay increases their NHS colleagues receive, despite doing similar jobs.

"It's particularly disappointing that the Frimley NHS trust is trying to outsource its staff, especially as it has a history of keeping services 'in house' which has helped it to be regarded as a flagship trust."

Staff are concerned that being forced out of the NHS by the trust opens the door to the creation of a three-tier health system based on savage cost cutting, rather than patient need, says UNISON.

UNISON South East Regional Secretary Steve Torrance said: "Hard working hospital staff are being thrown to the wolves in order to make up for the crippling underfunding of the NHS. It wasn't the porters, admin workers or housekeepers who created the problem and we will not stand by while they're targeted".

"It's particularly disappointing that the Frimley NHS trust is trying to outsource its staff, especially as it has a history of keeping services 'in house' which has helped it to be regarded as a flagship trust."



"UNISON will continue campaigning to keep all workers in healthcare employed directly by the NHS. We will also mobilise our membership in the campaign to protect their terms and conditions."

Notes to readers:

– Wholly owned subsidiaries – or subcos – are private companies established by NHS trusts. They are not liable for VAT payments in the same way as NHS trusts. This has led to accusations that trusts are using them to avoid paying VAT.

– NHS Improvement is responsible for overseeing foundation trusts and NHS trusts, as well as independent providers that provide NHS-funded care.

– UNISON is campaigning across the country to ensure outsourced health workers don't lose out when it comes to their pay, terms and conditions. Recent notable successes with winning NHS rates include: catering workers employed by Sodexo at Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospital; 50 cleaners, porters, catering and security staff employed by OCS at Liverpool Women's Hospital; over 330 staff at iFM Bolton, a wholly owned subsidiary.

– UNISON is the UK's largest union, with more than 1.3 million members providing public services – in education, local government, the NHS, police service and energy. They are employed in both the public and private sectors.

Deborah says "This is privatisation of our NHS by another name. The staff affected will no longer be NHS employees and will have no guarantee of retaining their NHS pay, terms & conditions. New staff joining this private company will not have access to any NHS benefits, effectively creating a three tier work force. It is shameful that the most poorly paid members of staff are being targeted so the Trust can avoid tax payments. These staff groups provide essential services for the Trust and they are proud to belong to the NHS family. We are one team, one NHS and stand in solidarity together against these proposals. The Trust is effectively facilitating the break up and privatisation of the NHS."

Maura Price, Chair of the Trade Union Staff Side at Frimley Health, added "Privatisation of the NHS in any form is unacceptable. As a Staff Side we will work together to ensure all members of staff are treated fairly and supported throughout these discussions."

[Update: Negotiations between Trade Unions and management were on going during January and February, although little progress had been made. All WOS negotiations have been on hold since February 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.]

"It's dangerous", "Unsustainable" – School funding crisis continues

As I'm sure local residents with school-age children are aware, every year local Head teachers send out letters regarding the deteriorating financial situation of the schools in Windsor, and the surrounding area, which children attend. Unions have called the funding shortfall "worse than estimated", with the shortfall running at an estimated £5.4bn¹. That was earlier in 2019 and just research by the National Education Union (NEU) has found that most schools in England will be worse off next year than in 2015².

The issue of school funding and cuts made by the Tory Government since 2010 have come into the national spotlight, with governors taking the unprecedented step of organising and demonstrating in Westminster, and with Heads and parents alike calling the current level of funding "dangerous"³. Teachers have become more vocal and organised in their protests, as the funding cuts by the Government are making it increasingly difficult for schools to afford basic resources, such as paper and textbooks.

It has become an increasing concern that many schools have been forced to cut the school week by half a day. Some parents have become increasingly vocal as, for example, in Stockport in July 2019, a primary school made 9 staff redundant on top of introducing midday closure every Friday.⁴

Parents will no doubt have noticed that alongside direct appeals for extra donations to make up for the lack of Government funding, schools have been using soft approaches to raise money, such as increased non-uniform days (where students are often asked to bring



School funding has become a national crisis with our children's education being harmed by the negligence of the Tory Government towards schools.

in one pound) and looking for volunteer lunchtime staff. Teachers – including support staff on lower pay – have been frequently using their own money to plug whatever gaps they can, trying to ensure children in their schools don't suffer as a result of the funding crisis.

However, this is not enough to prevent the axing of subjects, such as foreign languages and the arts, due to the strain put on resources. Often, this has led to children not having the access to the subjects they would like to take, and thus can limit their future life choices and career paths, which may be of particular disadvantage to less-academic students who thrive in areas such as Drama or Art.

To try and mitigate this, schools are increasingly "subject sharing", meaning that children wishing to do a subject not available at their school may have the choice to take it at another school, alongside their lessons at their current school.

This has become increasingly common for students taking their A-levels; while it is better than nothing, students may have to walk up to half an hour to reach the partner school, which often results in lost lesson time at both schools, thus hindering their education. Such tactics are often unsustainable lower down in the school, with GCSE students faced with a narrower subject choice.

School funding has become a national crisis therefore, with our children's education being harmed by the negligence of the Tory Government towards schools. While the crisis is national, the effects are more than noticeable locally, with parents and children in Windsor and the surrounding area familiar with the effects, whether it be the pleas for parent donations, or the complaints of children regarding the axing of their favourite subjects. The Government has ignored recent and previous appeals to remedy the crisis, and as long as the Tories are in power, the situation will likely deteriorate further.

Patrick Green, Youth Officer, November 2019

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/mar/25/schools-funding-shortfall-of-54bn-worse-than-estimated>

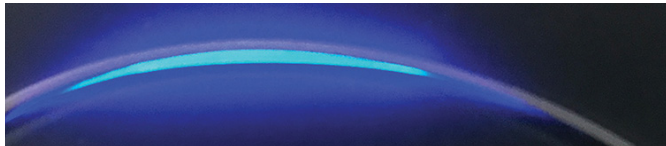
² https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/nov/09/most-schools-england-worse-off-next-year-than-2015-study-says?CMP=share_btn_link

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/mar/08/its-dangerous-full-chaos-of-funding-cuts-in-englands-schools-revealed>

⁴ https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/jul/08/families-in-stockport-protest-against-friday-early-school-closure?CMP=share_btn_link

Letters from Peter Shearman, our GE candidate in the 2017 & 2019 elections, all originally printed in the local press *November 2019*

THE FUTURE FOR BROADBAND



Our ambitious plans for previously state-owned but now privatised industries were a key reason our manifesto attracted so many to the Labour proposition ahead of the 2019 election, even though it was other factors that ultimately lead people to vote otherwise. It was an agenda updated for the 21st century including the fourth utility, broadband.

Our online connection is now essential to our ways of life. For two decades, successive governments have looked to the Internet and an online population as a way to restructure public services & drive economic growth. But to do that, we need universal provision and access, something no government has achieved.

I've been a telecommunications policy professional for most of my career. I used to work in a think tank focused on telecommunications policy and have built digital inclusion projects for my current employer. For the last decade, I have tried to fix our broken broadband market - and am yet to succeed.



*From left to right: Peter | Angus - Chair
Rick - Exec member | Alison - Secretary*

Competition in the UK has not created deep investment in the network. It has created slow, incremental investment focused on competing over profitable areas. It leaves behind rural and disadvantaged areas. Ultimately, infrastructure competition has been a fleeting transition based on a specific technology - copper-based broadband. With the introduction of fibre, this form of competition is now redundant and, as a consequence, BT is closing thousands of local exchanges and moving back to a monopoly infrastructure provider.

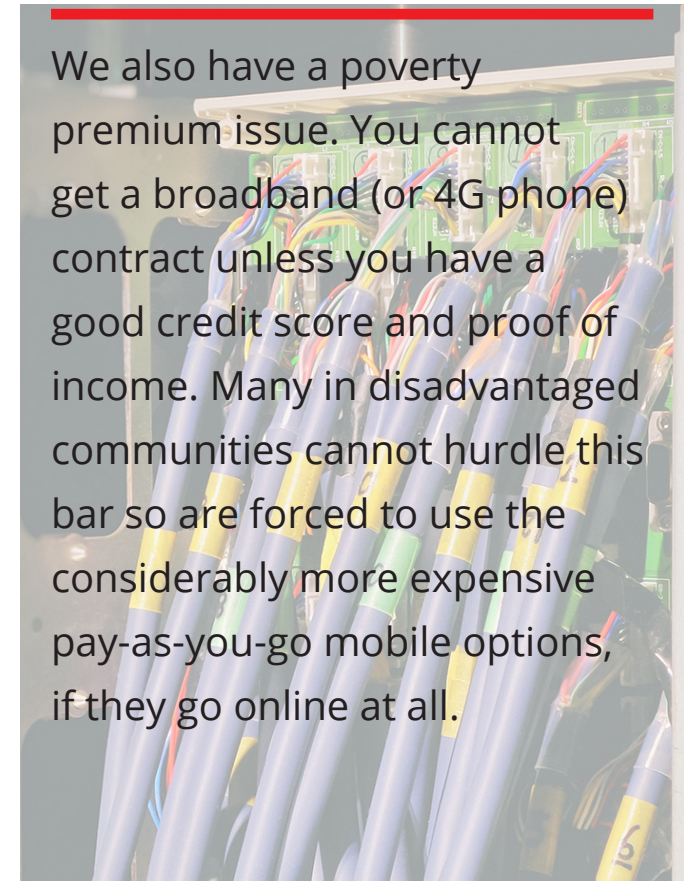
We also have a poverty premium issue. You cannot get a broadband (or 4G phone) contract unless you have a good credit score and proof of income. Many in disadvantaged communities cannot hurdle this bar so are forced to use the considerably more expensive pay-as-you-go mobile options, if they go online at all.

This then compounds the 'Digital by Default' public service mantra where government want all transactions/services to go online. Very difficult to achieve when most of your service users are not regularly online! And if they are, but on a PAYG basis, why would they spend their valuable data on a government website over their other priorities? Indeed, why should that have to be a choice?

Public provision of broadband is only absent in the UK. It is very common in Europe to have municipal broadband & telecoms providers run by a city. Indeed, this model even exists in the most capitalist of markets - the US. In the Far East, it is state-directed private investment. In Korea, although they are nominally private enterprises, the state directs the investment and it mandated fibre in housing developments (often high-rise) in the 90s.

This is the ambitious, forward-thinking policy we need as a country unleashing the full creative talents that exist. It would allow our digitally excluded communities to participate fully in our digital world. Ultimately, I think the additional investment would eventually pay for itself allowing us to become a beacon of digital inclusion across the world.

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THE GENDER PAY GAP (GPG) AND LOCAL STATS

Labour's plans to address the Gender Pay Gap would have been an important step in creating a more equal society and have a significant impact on the lives of women in Windsor.

For every £1 a man in Windsor earns, a woman earns 65p. It is one of the highest pay gaps in any constituency in the country.

According to the Office for National Statistics, the median pay for women in Windsor is 35% lower than for men (it is 9% for the whole of the UK). For every £1 a man in Windsor earns, a woman earns 65p. It is one of the highest pay gaps in any constituency in the country. This structural prejudice is shocking and has gone largely unaddressed by recent governments.

All Peter's articles have been edited to place them in the past tense - otherwise they are as published.

And yet it still does not tell the full tale of the impact of the last ten years of Conservative-led government on the women of Windsor.

During these years of austerity and public sector 'pay restraint' – a real-terms pay cut while taxes were cut for higher earners – women bore the brunt of government cuts. 73% of public sector workers affected by the pay freeze were women. Changes to benefits have also disproportionately affected women (£22bn of the £26bn cut since 2010 have fallen on payments to women) who are at higher risk of poverty than men. Single mothers are particularly at risk due to Universal Credit and the two-child limit on child benefit.

This says nothing of the unpaid carer roles that predominantly fall to women and which have become increasingly critical as government has continued to do nothing about the social care crisis facing this country.

Governments should exist to root out and address these structural injustices. It is clear that in the last ten years, women have been an afterthought to governments focused on austerity and Brexit. Only the Labour Party is putting forward a truly progressive agenda for the country, focused on genuine equality for all – and that means a fair deal for women.

CRISIS IN OUR NHS AND LOCAL IMPACT

The Conservative Party have promised to increase the number of GPs in the UK by 6000 by 2024. This is the same party when in government that promised 5000 extra GPs at the last election. They failed comprehensively to deliver on their first promise. The question for voters in Windsor is who should they trust with their health service?

After ten years of Conservative government, Windsor has seen the effect of the increasing scarcity of GP appointments. If a GP isn't available, you go to A&E.

This barely scratches the surface of the chronic underinvestment in Windsor's healthcare system – waiting lists for Frimley Park are up 83% from 2010 – and demonstrates the false logic inherent in austerity.

Despite the best efforts of the CCGs and Trusts, Emergency Department attendances continue to grow: for example, by March 2019, Frimley Park attendances were up 27% from the level inherited by the Conservatives in 2010.

This barely scratches the surface of the chronic underinvestment in Windsor's healthcare system – waiting lists for Frimley Park are up 83% from 2010 – and demonstrates the false logic inherent in austerity. The Conservatives planned to open up the NHS to Trump's Republicans. With the new administration in the US, we wait with baited breath. The Tories have proven they cannot be trusted with the NHS.

Only the Labour Party can be trusted to secure the future of the NHS for the people of Windsor. We will continue to campaign to bring the message of investment in the health service to the people of Windsor.



2019/20 Activities

Windsor Labour Party continues to be an active branch as a result of all the energy and ideas emanating from its members. We engage in local community events and activity as well as supporting campaigns nationally. There is a growing and concerted effort to work together with other Labour Party branches and community minded groups. We publicise everything we do on Facebook, on our website and by letters and press releases in the papers. Here is just a taster of what we have done during 2019 - 2020.

2019



Photo - copyright 2019 Mark Kerrison (used with permission 2019)

January was the start of a campaign led by UNISON against RBWM cuts in funding and local services. Joint action coordinated by Windsor and Maidenhead Labour Party branches culminated in a rally and demonstration in Maidenhead in February with a follow-up rally in protest outside the Town Hall prior to the Council debate. There was extensive press coverage in the local press.



We supported in person and by financial donation the Housing Campaign initiated by DOCS & SHH (Defend Our Community Services and Save Heatherwood Hospital campaign group). We attended the 'End the Housing Crisis' launch in May 2019 at the Old Court arts centre and engaged with local residents at a street stall in September of that year.



February saw us host Chris Williamson as guest speaker. A very powerful, inspirational talk and much appreciated by all that attended.



March 8th saw Windsor and Slough Labour Party branches take part in a march and street stall to celebrate International Women's Day. Dressed as suffragettes we created a stir. The response was fantastic!

This was followed by Windsor & Slough LP branches' winning entry for the IWD international competition in the 'Community Services Activity' category.

<https://www.internationalwomensday.com/BestPractice> and <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Activity/14262/Windsor-and-Slough-Labour-Party-branches-reinforce-gender-equality-in-their-community>

Also in March, we had Ben Chacko, the editor of the Morning Star come to speak to us. Representing the only true socialist daily newspaper and owned by its readers, it was both a testament to the longevity of the newspaper and willingness to open its columns to guest columnists, poets and politicians. (Jeremy Corbyn wrote a regular column for about 10 years)



April 2nd saw our Press Officer interviewed by TalkRadio on the Matthew Wright show, discussing homelessness with representatives from other local parties.



April 12th marked the date of an extremely enjoyable gig at the Waterman Arms with Naomi Bedford and Paul Simmonds. The Observer press release with photo 'Bringing their singing' did them credit. Having topped the Guardian Folk rock charts last year, they have subsequently released an 18 artist charity single in aid of 'We shall overcome', a recording of the Bob Dylan classic, 'Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts'. Coming in at 9 minutes, it was an outstanding feat to get all these remote artists in synch. Our chair was involved in some of the artwork for the project.



May was election time, both for local council and European elections. A busy time for us all, engaging in leafleting and canvassing across the borough

How to get in touch



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SL4 5QR

June also saw members of Windsor, Slough and Bracknell LP branches attending the demonstration in London called to protest against Tommy Robinson.



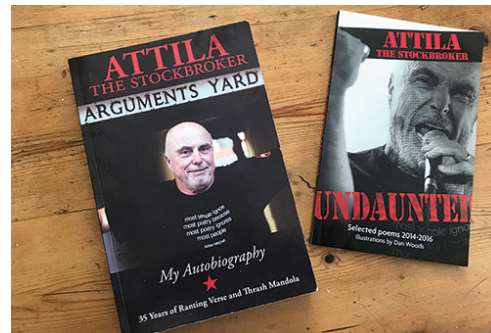
June 7th saw several members of Windsor Labour Party attending the live recording of Any Questions in Ascot. Keir Starmer was one of the speakers and stayed behind to chat with us.



Our monthly **July** debate was 'Declaring an Environment and Climate Emergency in RBWM – with Dr Andrea Berardi (Senior Lecturer in Environmental Information Systems, The Open University) & Sarah Bowden (founder and co-coordinator of the RBWM' Climate Emergency Coalition).



July 5th and a few of us were at Chalvey Working Men's Club in Slough. Windsor Labour Party joined up with Maidenhead and Slough to present Attila the Stockbroker. The press release 'Fierce poetry with emotion' from the Maidenhead Advertiser and Windsor & Eton Express said it all!



On **August 24th**, Windsor Labour Party handed out leaflets and further information at their street stall in support of the anti-WOS (Wholly Owned Subsidiary) campaign organised by the 3 trade unions Unison, Unite and GMB. The move by Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust to introduce a WOS has been hotly contested by the campaign as another move towards privatisation of our NHS. It is a national issue.



August 17th also saw our annual bbq hosted by Geoff and Barbara (many thanks). A good time was had by all and funds were raised by a raffle.

Members of Windsor and Slough CLPs demonstrated in **August** as part of a 'Rainbow Coalition' against the proroguing of Parliament. A very large turnout challenged the capability of the bridge to accommodate so many people at the same time!



In **September** we had Lucy Coleman (Early Years teacher, Oxfordshire) and Megan Quinn (Primary School teacher Camden) talking about their experiences when they went on a National Education Union delegation visit to Cuba.



September was Conference. We sent our two delegates, Alison Carpenter and Deborah Foster. Quite a number of our other members visited Brighton under their own steam.



The Conference speakers were brimming with fresh innovative ideas and the multiple fringe events were very enlightening as well.

This is a nice segway - the fabulous Robb Johnson finished off Conference with rousing renditions of Jerusalem and the Red Flag. Two nights later he was performing for us at the Waterman Arms in Eton!

[An extremely prolific socialist songwriter, Robb has been wrapping up the zoom show 'Grassroots Labour' with a song (usually new). This twice weekly event has become the must see online gig during lockdown and tiers with tributes to Dennis Skinner, Jeremy Corbyn, Diane Abbot and Tony Benn along with contributions from union heavyweights such as Matt Wrack and Howard Beckett. The show is a mix of political discourse, comedy and music, along with contributions from the previous Shadow Cabinet - Jeremy, John, Rebecca and Richard amongst others.]





We had two very special guests during **October**. October 1st saw Peter Stefanovic, the prominent political commentator, give a wonderful, insightful talk. The event was so oversubscribed we had to move it to The Old Court from our usual venue at the Watermans.

Second up in October was Janine Booth on the 15th. Back at the Watermans but still with a very healthy turnout, Janine was promoting her book 'The Big J vs the Big C.' We were also treated to some excellent leftie poetry.



[Once 'the new normal' happens, it is our aim to get more poetry to inspire us. Janine is part of a collective called 'Poetry on the picket line' and we know several members who we could get down.]

November and **December** had no events due to the run up to GE 2019. The traditional time for an election is usually May /June when it's light till late, and the weather is not really an issue. Having a GE in the midst of winter presented its own problems.

Our condolences go to the family and friends of David Knowles - Leak, former chair of Maidenhead CLP who was taken by Covid - too soon.



The hardy and the willing were out canvassing in the bitterest of weather – often at night, in the rain. There were health and security issues in that sometimes you couldn't see the steps or a light.



We also had our Xmas party in December and despite circumstances, the atmosphere was one of hope for the future. Little did we know what 2020 would bring.



2020

January saw a visit and talk from our comrade from Beaconsfield, Alexa Collins - seen here with Jennie Formby, previous General Secretary of the Labour Party, at conference 2019. Alexa is passionate about education and the lack of options in Buckinghamshire for decent state school provision. A very interesting evening that veered off into a variety of subjects.



In **February** we had a visit from Matt Rodda who is the MP for Reading East. Matt was adamant that he could offer help and assistance to our CLP, in his position as a serving member of the Shadow Cabinet. (The other is Tan Dhesi in Slough of course).

Matt's portfolio is Shadow Minister for Buses. Obviously this has made an impact on his constituency and indeed on our own as some of the bus network in Windsor is run by Reading Buses – a council owned service.

Matt was the last speaker we had the opportunity to invite in person to our pre CLP meeting gatherings due to lockdown.

Lock down 2020 & beyond

If you would like to get involved, we send an email out 2 weeks before our CLP meetings, with details of guest speakers and any other campaigns/ events. You can also find up-to-date information on our facebook page.

Covid restrictions have meant that our last three CLP meetings have been on zoom, but we have continued to have guest speakers such as Tan Dhesi MP for Slough, Mohammed Shoab from MEND (Muslim Engagement & Development) on the subject of Islamophobia: Causes and cures, and Professor Peter Leary of Oxford Brookes University on the History of the Irish border. Scheduled for January's meeting, is a Q&A with Clive Lewis MP.

Our Xmas party was held via zoom on Tuesday, 15th December. We had Robb Johnson back to entertain us, as well as a quiz hosted by Mark Olney and a raffle.

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