

2018

HAVERING FABIAN

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HAVERING FABIAN

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Introduction

Welcome to the new edition of the Havering Fabian Newsletter. Congratulations to the three new Havering Labour Councillors, we look forward to working with you to improve the Borough – Havering does indeed deserve better.

This edition contains details of the recent meeting with Jonathon Hawkes, Labour Leader on Dartford Council. The feature article is from Havering Momentum co-ordinator Kim Arrowsmith, who reflects on the Council Election in his second contribution. We have an update to the series on Havering Council elections, and details of an exciting programme of future meetings. We are pleased that Havering Young Labour have relaunched, and look forward to working with them in the future. Congratulations to Nicholas West who is the new Chair, and the rest of the Committee. New Chair Nicolas West writes below.

Our presence on social media is bringing us closer to a number of new organisations; we now have over 1,100 followers on twitter. Keep up to date at our twitter site @haveringfabians for the latest news. We are affiliated to the four local Labour Parties, and will do all we can to support their campaigns. Havering Young Labour are on twitter @ylabourhavering and hope they reflect a growing interest in Labour politics in Havering.

As opinions are the lifeblood of politics, we welcome a reply to any of the articles. The Fabian Society exists to promote political debate, both within and outside the Labour Party. Progressive politics extends beyond the Labour Party and contributions from the Labour Movement as a whole are welcome.

Attendances at recent meetings have remained good and the quality of speakers remains exceptional. We are glad to see a number of new people attending the meetings, and have an ever increasing number of followers on Face book LinkedIn and Twitter.



Website – Our new website address is <http://haveringfabians.org> - a little different from the previous one so please update your Favourites. As you are no doubt aware GDPR means we need to keep our mailing list up to date. If you are not on our mailing list (we use MAILCHIMP – please check your spam folders!) contact us via the website and we will add you in.

Tessa Jowell RIP

Like the rest of the Labour movement, we were saddened by the death of Tessa Jowell. Pictured below Tessa addressing a joint meeting of Havering Fabians and Hornchurch and Upminster CLP at Langtons in early 2015.



Tessa Jowell addresses the meeting in Langtons in 2015

Young Labour returns

Recently, young members across the borough elected Havering and Dagenham Young Labour's new committee for the forthcoming year. I'm proud to be elected as Chair and even more proud to be surrounded by such a passionate and accredited group of young activists on the committee.

For the last 12 months Havering and Dagenham Young Labour has been largely inactive due to a mixture of key figures being focused on the local elections as candidates or moving from the borough however young members still have had many achievements to celebrate in that time. One achievement for example was that we had 6 young candidates standing in "winnable" wards across Havering and Dagenham with 3 being elected as councillors. This gives young people a genuine voice on local councils and we're all looking forward to the change they make to their communities. Even those who missed out (myself included) can be proud of helping delivering improved results across Havering. It's clear that we've got a group of young people who not only joined the Labour Party to make



The new Havering and Dagenham Young labour committee

change, but are leading the way in every community to deliver it.

That being said, we do recognise the need for a local Young Labour group that will nurture the next generation of leaders in our communities but to do that we must address the challenges that stop young members attending and engaging in the local Labour parties. At the Havering & Dagenham Young Labour AGM I stood on a proud manifesto which I believe will help tackle these challenges and improve engagement and improve the perception of Labour in our area. My pledges included to work with CLP chairs and Youth Officers to make Labour Party meetings more welcoming to young members, guaranteeing youth representation at every level of the local Labour Parties and finally supporting young workers across the three constituencies in getting a fairer deal at their workplaces. Let me expand on those three points.

Working with CLP chairs and Youth Officers to make meetings more welcoming

It's not a trend exclusive to Havering and Dagenham. Most CLP meetings have a disproportionate level of youth attendance compared to the membership data. We have around 300 young members in Havering and Dagenham and so "why don't we see many at meetings?" is a question often asked. Many could be at university and we know many move out of the area for a variety of reasons but how do we engage those who simply don't find the current culture of our party particularly attractive? Well first of all, I think CLP meetings need to be much more inclusive. If you're not an officer at the CLP meetings, you tend to have very little input. There's very little engagement and that must change. The democratisation of our party has (and will continue) to further members' say in how the party is run and I definitely believe we need to give them a bigger role to play in CLP meetings. We also need to have other events which aren't full of business and bureaucracy. For instance, Havering and Dagenham Young Labour will be hosting regular social events such as picnics in the park or politics and pizza nights which will be much more casual. It's not to say CLPs business isn't important but we must find ways to change and adapt for those new to politics and political meetings.

Guaranteeing youth representation at every level

This is a much needed change for the local Labour Party to ensure young people will always have a say in decisions that are made. We currently have a Young Labour group and Youth and Student reps in every CLP which certainly is positive but we can still go further to improve youth

representation and so we should. On the Local Campaign Forum, every CLP has representatives but there is nothing to ensure that at least one young person will be in the group. Therefore I have proposed that Havering and Dagenham Young Labour can elect a Young Labour Representative to the LCF who will listen to young people in our borough via the Young Labour group and community engagement events and then feedback ideas and suggestions to the LCF. I passionately believe this is a great step forward in building local policies for local people.

Supporting young workers in getting a fairer deal in their work places

Trade unions are the heart of our movement and the decline of union membership over the past 30 years has correlated in a rise in inequality and real terms pay cuts. Young workers usually the effected by these circumstances. Currently, all across the country, workers are fighting back. Massive companies such as TGI Fridays and McDonalds are facing industrial action as they refuse to pay and treat their staff fairly. In my opinion, it is the role of Young Labour groups locally, regionally and nationally to support these workers in getting simple yet important improvements in their deal at work. One way we can improve young workers deals is to support these campaigns by standing in solidarity with the workers on the picket lines and helping them organise campaign events but we also should look to persuade young workers to join relevant trade unions. It's a very well known fact that workers in a trade union are usually paid more and receive better pensions and so for the price of a Tesco meal deal a month, it's a no brainer.

To conclude, it's a very exciting time to be a young member in Havering and Dagenham in my opinion. We have talented young councillors in both boroughs and we have many other future leaders who are getting involved in their local parties. We have a clear vision as to what we want to achieve over the next twelve months and we welcome any support with our campaigns and activities during that time. If you are a Young Labour member, you are more than welcome to attend our next meeting on Wednesday 25th July at 19:30 which will be held at Saffron House where we will be planning a summer picnic and more!

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Winning in Havering by following Attlee by Kim Arrowsmith, local organiser, Momentum Havering

3 am, Friday May 4th 2018. I stagger to my bed, having had to leave the count for the local election results at Hornchurch Leisure Centre earlier than I would have liked, so that I can face my class of demanding 11 year olds with at least a couple of hours sleep behind me. Even though the counting is, at this point, still in progress, I know in my heart that we have not made the gains in Havering that all of us in the party were hoping for: the pile of votes for Labour is healthy and respectable in most wards, and in some is very impressive, but it's not going to be enough to deprive the Tories (or possibly the local Residents Association) of control of the council. I manage to sleep and awake to have my suspicions confirmed. The results are, indeed, encouraging: increases of between 8 and 11% in the Labour vote in some wards; three newly elected Labour councillors and candidates coming within 100 to 200 votes of being elected in Rainham and South Hornchurch. Yet the fact remains: we have lost. Again.

The days immediately following the election passed in a haze of disappointment and frustration. I know I was not the only former candidate to experience something close to despair that our campaign in Havering had not entirely succeeded. However, we are Labour and defeat is never a reason to surrender. One consolation of not being elected a councillor was that I finally had the time to enjoy John Bew's excellent biography of Labour's greatest Prime Minister, "Citizen Clem". Reading of Attlee's early political life was encouraging, as it seemed to confirm many of the thoughts I had been having regarding the way forward for Labour in Havering. More of that later.

Having more free time also meant more time to reflect on the local election campaign, and to realise that there was much in it to be proud of and build upon. Firstly, our campaign had been very positive, especially in comparison to the Tories, with the dog whistle racism they used in their "Keep Havering Special" leaflets. While they were busy encouraging divisions in our community, Labour was celebrating diversity by persuading the council to fly the LGBT flag above the town hall, in the face of furious opposition from the Tories. In Rainham, we focussed relentlessly on issues that would benefit local residents, such as improving local rail services; controlled parking zones for streets plagued by commuter parking; opposing building on treasured green spaces and measures to

increase safety at local bus stops. All of these issues had been suggested by local residents and proved very popular on the doorstep. No doubt, they helped bring us to the brink of victory in the ward. But, we still lost. Given how popular our campaign was, why was this? I believe the answer lies in one word: localism.

The people of Havering like local candidates; the more local, the better. They like to think of their councillors as a part of their community and some, such as Labour councillor Denis O' Flynn, achieve a status akin to that of local celebrities. This is also part of the explanation for the continued success of Rainham Residents leader Jeffrey Tucker, who I found myself running against. Whatever we in the Labour party think of Councillor Tucker, he has a 16-year track record of electoral success in Rainham and many people there feel that he speaks for them. Furthermore, as the campaign entered its' final days, there were challenges made on social media about the bona fides of Labour candidates in terms of their relationship to the areas they were standing in. Most notably, a small group of Rainham residents challenged me online several times about whether or not I lived in Rainham itself. My reply that I had lived in Havering for 11 years and was well aware of the issues affecting the area seemed to cut no ice with them. Since the election, there have been comments on many social media groups devoted to different parts of Havering that Labour only appear in the area at election time and are invisible the rest of the time (of course, those of us who have witnessed the sterling work of Jon Cruddas, Keith Darvill and Denis O'Flynn know this is not the case but it's a perception many have).

So, how do we, as a local party overcome these barriers and perceptions? Firstly, we need to address the issue of selections. The selection for Rainham, where I stood, took place in August 2017, nine months ahead of the election. We have to ask whether it is realistic to expect candidates to become known locally and overturn the majority of an incumbent of 16 years in just nine months. I would argue that the answer is fairly obvious. Candidates either need to be selected earlier or there need to be action teams in place for the four years running up to the local elections. This will give them time to become embedded in their communities. Which leads into the matter of how they are to become embedded. It is here that much can be learnt from Clement Attlee. Aside from the time he spent serving his country in World War 1, Attlee spent much of the early years of the 20th century serving the community in East London, providing what were, in effect, youth services through organisations such as the Haileybury Club

and Toynbee Hall. Clem did this not out of political ambition but out of a sense of citizenship and because he believed it was his duty as a Socialist. He built a relationship with members of the community that eventually resulted in his election as mayor and, later on, MP for Limehouse. To succeed in Havering, and to counteract the incumbancy of local councillors, Labour candidates need to be embedded in their communities and serve in a similar way to Clem. What avenues are open to us to do so? One obvious route is social media. There are numerous Facebook pages devoted to various parts of our local area, such as Rainham Rant and People of Elm Park. These pages are used to disseminate information and opinions about the local area and to advertise events and services. Labour members need to make their presence felt in these forums and many of us are now doing so. I have even had people speak to me in local shops and in the street as they have begun to recognise me from my posts on one such forum; the interactions have generally been positive. This is one way to both show our interest in our communities and to become known as people who care about what is happening.

Another route is actual practical involvement in our local community. This can take many forms: being school governors; attending meetings of Safer Neighbourhood teams; joining clubs and societies; engaging with faith groups and even forming clubs and societies of our own. Showing, in other words, that we are by your side as well as on your side. To put it another way, being Labour in the community at all times, not just election time. One recent example is the growing relationship between members of Romford Town CLP and the proposed Havering Islamic Cultural Centre. The future of this project has been put in doubt by development proposals put forward by Havering Council. The council has refused to guarantee the future of the project. Labour members have raised the concerns of the Islamic Centre with councillors and attended community events to show support and solidarity with their cause. This relationship has continued to develop now that the election is over. This is the kind of community engagement we need to be supporting and following through on to become a genuinely local party in Havering.

What I am suggesting is by no means a fail safe recipe for electoral success in Havering. Many factors will ultimately determine what will happen the next time these wards are contested, not least the possibility that it may coincide with a General Election in 2022. However, unless we begin to plan earlier by putting willing action teams in place; considering selecting candidates earlier; engaging with those whose support we seek on social media and finding more and more ways to become involved in our local

communities, we will continue to be open to the accusation that we disappear between elections and are not truly a part of the areas we seek to represent. It requires action being taken now, rather than lengthy discussions that simply postpone the problem. If we can truly achieve the aim of becoming an authentic local party, then I might wake on a bright May morning 4 years from now and say: we won. At last.

Fabian Summer Conference

The summer Fabian Conference was arranged for FA cup final day and a fourth round exit in January meant your average West Ham fan had no need to worry about a clash.

The Royal Wedding was then announced for the same day, so Conference ticket purchased within the hour.

The Conference was opened by Fabian Chair Kate Green MP, who introduced Fabian General Secretary Andrew Harrop, speaker at the Havering Fabian AGM four years ago.

The first speaker was Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott. She set out a Labour agenda for an immigration policy based on human rights. The key policy announcement was the intention to close the immigration detention centre at Yarlswood. This was well received.



Diane Abbott is the opening speaker

The next session took the form of an interview between Labour List Editor Sienna Rogers and Keir Starmer on developing issues on Brexit. As ever, Keir was all over the detail and clearly knows his brief. The balancing act of respecting the referendum result whilst protecting Britain's interest is a delicate one, and needs to be carefully managed.

The third session was a panel discussing whether Labour is on track to win the next election. The panel was chaired by Kate Green and included Owen Jones, Andrew Harrop, Stella Creasy and Spectator journalist Katy Balls, included to give a Conservative perspective. As expected, Owen Jones was optimistic, others less so, given the mixed messages around Brexit and dealing with the different views of Labour voters. Katy Balls believed the Tories now saw Corbyn as a credible threat which they had not done in 2017. The Conservatives had many problems of their own. Given the fluid nature of the opinion polls, these should not be given too much credence. Stella Creasy came across well, delivering an articulate case, basically that there is more to be done.

There was no lunch break, so I skipped a session for a coffee and sandwich, returning to catch the end of a session on skills development.

The afternoon session began with a conversation between Melissa Benn and a very relaxed Ed Miliband. This concentrated on Ed's period as Leader and what he would have done differently. With hindsight, be more radical, although it wasn't clear at the time that the electorate was ready for the approach later adopted under Corbyn.

The afternoon session was on defence, an issue which while important, is not normally one that attracts Labour activists. The panel included Shadow Defence secretary Nia Griffiths, Professor David Betts, Christy Quinn and Charlotte Norton. The session was chaired by Vassilis NTousas, international policy adviser for the event co-sponsors The Foundation for a European Progressive Studies. The main points were the need to be wary of the cyber threat posed by foreign governments and terrorist groups. The world was not currently stable, with many areas of conflict. Overall an information exchange but a depressing one, with no indication that a reduction in defence expenditure will be advisable any time soon.

The final session was question time style, with Kate Green again in the chair, joined by Tracy Brabin MP, Lisa Nandi MP Lucy Anderson MEP, journalism Ayesha Hazarika and celebrity cooking and political columnist Stephen Bush from the New Statesman.



Kate Green Lisa Nandy, Stephen Bush

The overall mood was optimistic, certainly more so than the conference after the 2015 Election which featured the leadership candidates. Politics in Britain is in flux, and the vast increase in Labour membership and the collapse of the third and fourth party support means we are now either president back to two party politics if the 60s and 70s, or more likely into an era of uncertainty. There was caution throughout the day that the Left is in retreat across Europe, and Britain is the exception in this respect - although there are left governments in Portugal (and now Spain). So any optimism has to be tempered, and (as you would expect from a Fabian audience) the prospect of a messy Brexit could complicate matters.

May Meeting

We had originally invited Tom Copley, however he had been elected to Lewisham Council and had member training that night. So we asked around our contacts, and the wonderful Sam Tarry put us in touch with Jonathon Hawkes. Jonathon is the Leader of the Labour group on Dartford Council, and was invited to speak on the English Labour Network. Previous speaker Vince Maple touched briefly on this, and there was an article in newsletter 34 covering the background. Jonathan began by drawing parallels between Dartford and Harold Hill, both having a strong sense of place and of community, with a mix of a strong settled community and a new more diverse community emerging.



Jonathon Hawkes (right)

Labour has to win in such areas in order to get back into government. He asked the audience whether they felt British or English. In line with most Labour leaning audiences, the majority felt British more than English - this is not the case with the population at large, which, including Labour voters, see a more equal British / English identify.

The English Labour Network exists to make a case for clearer appeal to England and English voters. There is a shared identify and common interest with core Labour values about community, not just nationality.

Devolution is on the agenda across the United Kingdom but not to the same extent in England. Putting England on the same basis would be a rational extension of this.

Labour needs to win in England to form a government on its own, particularly with the current position in Scotland. This is about policy a rather than electoral politics, as the former will give a sustainable outcome. This is not an easy argument for the left, and a progressive identity is needed.

The divergence between Labour members and Labour voters on this issue is not easily explained, although this may be about a difference in values. Why should identify matter to the left? Labour is and strives to be an inclusive Party, and the majority of the Party membership has a strong sense of place (note - defined as identify with and taking a pride in the area you are living in).

This aligns with the Labour of the Attlee era, with echoes in both Wilson and Blair governments- Labour winning when there is a positive sense of what the country is. The values of positive place and a strong identity, and community are aligned with Labour values and history.

Why does Labour get uncomfortable about this and in some ways feels unnatural is considering this? There is no one answer, and the English Labour Network is an attempt to provide the space needed to talk about these issues and explore this.

Politics generally can be soured by racist overtones that can enter discussion on nationality. Labour needs to get over this and ensure that this issue is not connected to the right - there is a risk that by not debating and engaging in the issues and giving a voice to our own views, Labour voters who otherwise share our values will be driven elsewhere, even if they align with Labour on for example economics. The population are not generally racist, but are patriotic, wanting their town and country to do well.

England is a country divided by

- Wealth and income
- Geography
- Liberal Metropolitan elite v rest of the Country
- Towns
- Class
- Race

And the list goes on .

Brexit has crystallised this. The country shares a common interest in economic recovery. National identity can bridge the Brexit discussions and move on from the Leave/ Remain debate.

Labour is currently moving away from the working class, a group where English identity is strong. This brings some hard truths as more working class voters move to the Tories in the North and Midlands - in 2017 there was a loss of some seats and other close calls in former safe Labour areas.

North Kent and Essex had relatively uniform (and for Labour disappointing results) and Labour's recent policy changes are not breaking through in these areas, or nationally outside the main cities.

National identity has a part to play - towns are forgotten, investment being concentrated elsewhere. These areas typically get the downside

of immigration and not as much of the benefits, and occupy a political space outside, of the Westminster bubble. Currently Labour is not seen as addressing these concerns.

England and Englishness are part of the regional narrative. Labour never mention England even when talking about it. Labour does not couch arguments about England even when talking about issues where there is a whole list of English only policy areas. For example, English plans for the NHS in England and education - matters devolved to the Scottish and Welsh assemblies. Labour needs an honest look how the policy offer resonates with the working class. The rules of the economy are stacked against this group. Labour rarely wins by shouting about the economy, but represents those parts of the population that see the worst side effects. If Labour is to win needs to be able to adequately articulate measures for these communities that rely on government.

Celebrating Englishness - Labour is generally uncomfortable about this, but should of course embrace a positive progressive national identity. While some Labour activists are uncomfortable with this, the working class are not just white and right wing. Labour should reflect Englishness not a white ethnic identity. Sadiq Khan was elected Mayor and was "proud to be a Londoner and proud to be English". This is a strong message with no contradictions Labour proposing more bank holidays is the right move. In telling stories Labour should have something to say e.g. the Royal wedding will grab media attention, and the right wing will have plenty to say about Britishness, making it important Labour identifies with the national mood. We have to manage the racist view of nationalism and capture the progressive agenda.



Excellent picture by Ian Rusha of the Jonathon with the new Havering Labour Group - Keith Darvill, Jonathon Hawkes, Tele Lawal, Carole Beth, Paul McGeary, Denis O'Flynn

A lively discussion followed, with views ranging from the out and out internationalist to aligning with what Jonathon had set out. This is discussion that will continue, and is important for Labour if we are ever to regain popular support in Essex and Kent.

2018 Election Great Expectations....

The 2014 Council election had seen Fabian chair Keith Darvill left as the sole Labour Councillor, despite cautious optimism going into the campaign. Havering once again voted differently to London, where Labour made great strides including taking majority control of Redbridge for the first time. The General election due in 2015 therefore offered little hope for Labour, and with key marginal seats in nearby Thurrock and Ilford North, resources were deployed elsewhere, reversing what used to happen in the 1980s and 90s.

Nationally, Labour had reasonable expectations of progress going into the General Election, with polls showing a hung parliament and a Miliband government the likely outcome. There was concern about what might happen in Scotland, where the ill-feeling on the independence referendum had boosted support for the SNP at Labours expense. Polls suggested a large SNP breakthrough, which resonated in England as well. UKIP were a further factor, with significant support in the south, including Havering, and in Labour seats in the North.

Once again the exit polls punctured the optimism, with the Conservatives predicted to be the largest party and potentially moving into a majority. The early results were inconclusive, with a long touted (and in reality unlikely) Conservative breakthrough in Sunderland not materialising. The results were confusing, although the Liberal Democrat vote was collapsing, meaning Tory gains in the South West, and occasional Labour gains in Birmingham, Manchester and the return of Bermondsey. Labour took several of its target seats in London, including Ilford North where Wes Streeting, who had first been involved in politics helping the successful Romford campaign in 1997 elected by 420 votes.

The SNP won 54 of 57 seats in Scotland, with the main national parties taking one each. UKIP polled four million votes and won one seat, the Greens a million and only seeing Caroline Lucas elected. The Conservative campaign had been subliminal, and aimed at winning the key marginal and Liberal Democrat seats, enough to win a small overall majority.

In Havering, there was little prospect of a breakthrough, and given the support for UKIP across the East London/Essex borders, it was no real shock when Paul McGeary came third in Hornchurch and Upminster and Sam Gould did the same in Romford.

In Hornchurch and Upminster, Angela Wilkinson was elected with 27,051 votes (49%) with Paul McGeary third with 11,103 votes, 2,874 behind UKIP candidate Laurence Webb. In Romford, Andrew Rosindell secured 51% of the poll (25,067 votes) with Havering Fabian Vice Chair Sam Gould coming third with 10,268, 940 votes behind the Gerald Batten the UKIP candidate

In Thurrock, a close three-way contest saw Labour candidate Polly Billington defeated by 436 votes in a close three-way contest. Ed Miliband resigned the following day. This meant another Labour leadership contest, and a real fear that the same introspective thinking that had stymied the Labour Party in 2010 could be repeated. This looked likely to be the case until Jeremy Corbyn entered the campaign and struck a chord with the Labour membership to storm to victory. This was preceded by the announcement that Sadiq Khan would be the Labour candidate for Labour Mayor in the 2016 GLA election, ahead of the favoured Tessa Jowell.

Nothing would be the same again. David Cameron announced the European referendum, which would end his Premiership. Before the poll in June, the GLA elections saw a horrible campaign by Conservative Zak Goldsmith, with dog whistle overtones. This boosted the Khan campaign, and saw a vast Labour vote, with a Khan winning by 317,000 votes securing 56.8% of the vote on second preference votes.

In the GLA constituencies, Labour came within a whisker (1,438) of seeing Ivana Baroletti being elected. This was all the more remarkable, as all the Havering wards saw a majority for Goldsmith, although Labour were very close in a few wards in the party vote. But there was some compensation as Denis O'Flynn was victorious in a by-election on the same day to double the size of the Labour group. Unmesh Desai was victorious in the neighbouring City and East seat, with a majority just under 90,000.

Seven weeks later the Brexit referendum saw Britain narrowly vote to leave. Havering and Barking and Dagenham voted heavily to Leave, while Redbridge and Newham saw only small majorities for Remain, while almost the rest of London voted heavily to Remain. All wards in Havering voted Leave.

The narrowness of the unexpected result saw David Cameron resign by 9 am the following day. The country was divided as never before, with the result viewed as meaning different things to different people. Two years later this remains the case. The campaign itself was every bit as bad as the previous national referendum on the voting system, with facts secondary to propaganda.

Perhaps the best way of explaining the result was that emotional factors were dominating the economics, but the campaign failed to reflect this. This meant a disconnect from all sides, leading to the areas that received most EU funding - Cornwall, west Wales and northern Scotland - all voting leave.

Labour took the unexpected result badly. Jeremy Corbyn had not taken part in the big TV debates - keen not to be sharing a platform with Cameron perhaps, in light of the Scottish referendum. The parliamentary Labour Party forced another leadership campaign, which ended with Corbyn re-elected and secure in his role.

With Theresa May having taken over from Cameron, the Tories began the Brexit process. Despite promising not to do so, May called an election in 2017, with the aim of increasing her majority and ability to shape the Brexit she wanted. What followed was perhaps the ineptest election campaign in modern history.

The Conservative poll lead neared twenty percent at the start of the campaign, which would have left Labour with a 1931 style result (30.8% of the vote and 52 seats). She had badly underestimated Corbyn as a campaigner and overestimated her own abilities. A weak manifesto committed the Tories to very little, save reform of adult social care. Within days May announced a change in this policy, and the robotic “strong and stable” mantra was easily undermined by “weak and wobbly”.

The polls narrowed, and with UKIP marginalised and no meaningful Lib Dem revival, the exit polls would once again provide the first insight. As in 2015, the polls didn't pick up what was happening in Scotland, which would prove crucial.

The Conservatives lost their overall majority, with Labour 2.4% behind in the polls. In Havering, Labour moved back into second place in both seats. In Hornchurch, Julia Lopez replaced Angela Watkinson and secured 33,750 votes (60.15%) of the vote, Rocky Gill securing 28.57% (16,027 votes). In Romford, Angela Leatherbarrow secured second place

with 15,893 (31.82%), 13,600 behind Andrew Rosindell. In Dagenham and Rainham Labour benefited from support across London and Jon Cruddas was re-elected with a 4,652 majority, a small reduction, although the Conservatives moved into second place.

Although Labour had done better in Havering, analysis of the results suggested Labour was not ahead in any of the Havering wards.

So going into the 2018 elections, Labour was cautious about the prospects. Target wards were identified, and resources focused. With the national polls roughly level, and London polling showing a significant Labour lead, some improvement was likely. However, the London only polls had been good in 2014, and Havering voted differently. The fear was a repeat despite good responses in the doorstep in the areas most likely to vote Labour.

The resident presence in the Borough provides an option for the apolitical/anti-political/protest voter not available elsewhere in London, partly explaining why the Liberals have only briefly featured on the Council. The residents started from a strong position, and with UKIP no longer relevant, anything could happen.

Very little changed. The Labour Party gained three seats in Harold Hill, while Denis O'Flynn retained his by election gain. Elsewhere, despite significant campaigning in Brooklands and Romford Town, there was no breakthrough in Romford. The targets in the south of the borough were missed as well, with the Independent Residents holding on with reduced majorities on a lower turnout.

In Heaton, 22-year-old Tele Lawal joined Keith Darvill and Denis O'Flynn, probably becoming Labours youngest ever Labour Councillor - Tony Rew was a similar age when elected in 1990. Paul McGeary returned to the Council in Gooshays , with newcomer Carole Beth elected for the first time. The third Labour candidate Adam Curtis missed out by 46 votes, squeezed out by the Harold Hill version of the residents.

In the South of the Borough, a lively campaign in Rainham dented the resident's majority and left top placed Labour candidate Fay Hough 74 votes short of being elected, Kim Arrowsmith 140 short and Chris Freeman 228. A marker for next time and a potential Labour gain in future very possible.

Labour was also just short in South Hornchurch, Pat Brown (243) and Trevor McKeever (267) being short of the independent residents, with Nicholas West some way behind 347 short of third place.

In Elm Park, Simon Darvill came fourth, but with 795 votes was well short of the resident in third place who had 2,012. The Labour decline in Elm Park from the 1990s has reflected not only the boundaries changing, but a very different community. It remains a seat that Labour could win in future, although grounds for optimism are needed to see this being the next election in 2022.

Elsewhere in the borough Labour had made substantial efforts at toppling the Conservatives in Brooklands and Romford Town. The 2017 General Election candidate and Romford Party chair Angelina Leatherbarrow came fourth in Brooklands, but with 1,592 was 546 votes of the third placed Tory. Labour candidates came second behind the elected Conservatives Romford Town ward, with Neil Cassidy 624 behind the third placed Conservative.

Elsewhere Labour was well behind the winning candidates, although did come second in Harold Wood, although Christine McGeary was 1,900 votes behind the third placed Resident candidate. A feature of the election was a number of former councillors standing in unwinnable wards- Chris Purcell, Ray Shaw and Mick Wood were all some way short of reelection.

Elsewhere in the borough, the Conservatives made some key gains, to leave them just short of an overall majority. They gained one seat in Hylands, giving them all 21 of the seats in the Romford constituency. John Mylod has defected from the residents to the Conservatives just before the election and narrowly (25 votes) retained his seat to give the Tories a gain from the residents. In Emerson Park, a Tory gain from UKIP seemed likely once UKIP declined following the referendum, although they were pushed close by the residents who fell four short of gaining a seat. This left the Conservatives up three from 2014.

The Residents did well and were within range of being able to form an administration if they were able to form a cohesive group. That was always unlikely given the views of the Independent Residents in the South of the borough and the variety of different groupings.

However within a fortnight of the election South Hornchurch councillor Michael Deon Burton defected to the Tories, and became Deputy Mayor as a result. A deal appeared to have been done with the Resident's councillors from Harold a Wood to give the Conservatives a working majority. Roger Ramsey stood down as Council Leader to be replaced by Damien White, the replacement of the old guard by the younger Romford Councillors being reflected in the new Cabinet.

Labour with five seats had greater influence than before, having representatives on almost all the committees. None the less the Party was disappointed not to have broken through.

Elsewhere in London. Labour won all the seats in Barking and Dagenham for the third election in a row, and made further gains in Redbridge. The relatively strong election performance in 2014 meant that there were few opportunities for Labour to make significant gains, although the Labour vote increased by 2 percent across the capital.

So the future for Labour in Havering is uncertain. On a positive note, this was the first election since 2002 where Labour had won two wards. Newly elected Tele Lawal was only 45 behind Denis O' Flynn, who in turn won the by election in 2016 due to his strong personal following. It was particularly pleasing to see a young black women elected in the ward that returned a BNP councillor 12 years ago. There was a lot of energy in the campaign, giving hope that in the next election - the GLA in 2020 unless a general election is called - Labour votes from Havering can see a Labour candidate elected in Havering and Redbridge for the first time.

Future Meetings

June 26th Labour for PR

The UK first past the post system has led to two coalitions in the last three elections, Votes in safe seats have less influence than votes in key marginal seats – and yet the last election saw the two main parties poll over 80 % of the votes for the first time in a generation. Is it time for some form of proportional representation? was the AV referendum a help or hindrance? Graham Lane, former Newham Councillor and past Chair of the Hornchurch and Upminster CLP will lead the discussion – is it time for changing the voting system? Tuesday 26th June 8 pm Saffron House Romford.



Graham Lane is also a former General Secretary of the Socialist Educational Association and is a former Labour Party Parliamentary Candidate (runner-up in May 1979: South West Staffordshire). In 1992 Graham made the short list of our then Upminster Parliamentary Constituency – he came 3rd in a contest won by Terry Ward, who many thought to be a “dark horse” in that contest. Graham is also an author, having written books on Education,

July 12th Paul Embery – how to close the disconnect...

The Speaker will be Paul Embery. Paul describes himself in his twitter feed (well worth following) as “Firefighter, Trade unionist. Democratic socialist. Pro-Brexit. Blue Labour. Made in (Barking and) Dagenham” The meeting will be on 12th July (no clash with the World Cup fixtures) at the ROYALS in Rainham with an 8pm start.



The subject will be the growing disconnect between Labour and its one-time heartland communities and how to close it?



Paul Embery

September

In September, re-arranged from May, the speaker will be GLA list Member Tom Copley. The subject is still to be finalised, but will probably be Housing. The date and venue are to be confirmed, date likely to be 20th September subject to hall availability.

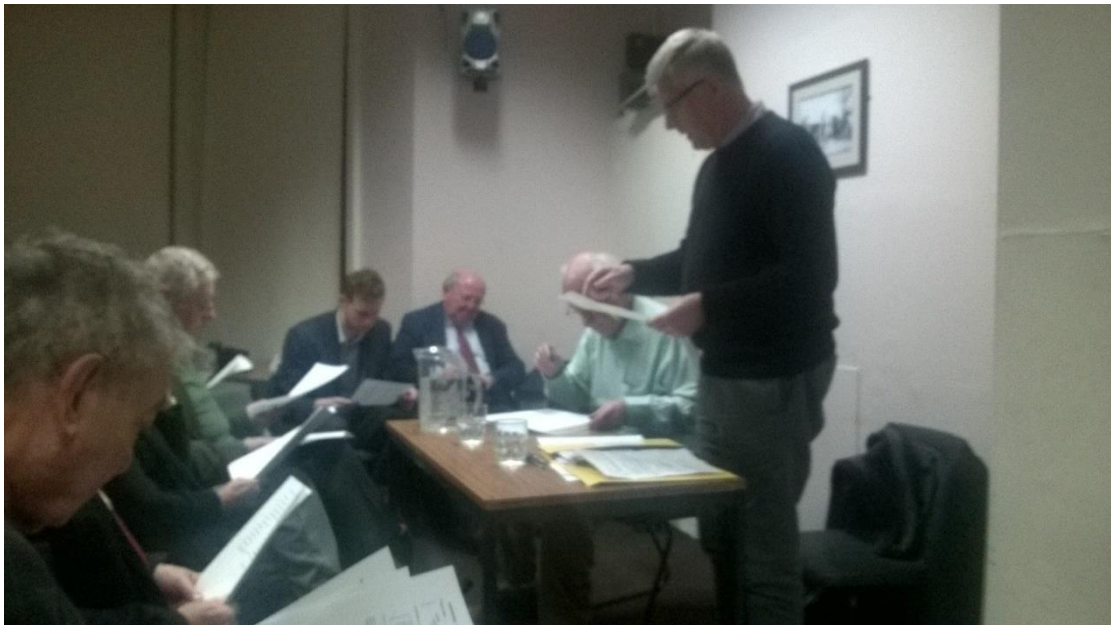


We value your input!

The Society invites speakers on a range of subjects; if you would like us to invite speakers on a particular subject let us know and we will try to oblige. The Society has a policy of rotating meetings around the Borough; if you need or can offer a lift or if you know of any suitable venues we could use, contact David Marshall.

Local Fabian Society Contacts

		Contact
Chair Councillor Keith Darvill	Secretary David Marshall	David Marshall
Membership Secretary		31 Vicarage Road Hornchurch RM12 4AS 01708 441189 david.c.marshall@talk21.com
Vice Chair Sam Gould	Treasurer Dave Baldock	
Committee Members		
Cecile Duerinckx	Graham Lane	Sanchia Alasia
Mike Flynn	Ian Carnochan	Hannah Dixon



Chair Keith Darvill reports on another successful year

The AGM saw Graham Lane join the committee. Graham is currently Chair of Hornchurch and Upminster Labour Party and will be speaker at the June meeting.

Future Editions

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. The Fabian Society exists to promote progressive ideas from within and outside of the Labour movement. As such we are happy to publish articles in keeping with this broad ethos, but reserve the right not to include all or part of any material which falls outside of this parameter. Our next edition will be in September,

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and given the speed with which politics changes at present, topical issues could cover any subject.

Links

The following links should be useful in keeping up with the debate in the Labour movement

National Fabian Society www.fabian-society.org.uk

The Labour Party www.labour.org.uk

Jon Cruddas MP for Dagenham www.joncruddas.org.uk

Twitter @joncruddas_1

Barking Labour Party www.barkinglabour.org.uk/

Twitter @barkinglabour

Romford Labour Party www.romford-labour-party.org.uk/

Twitter @romfordlabour

Hornchurch and Upminster Labour Party

Website <http://hornchurchandupminsterlabour.org.uk/>

Facebook Hornchurch-Upminster-Constituency-Labour-Party

Twitter @HULabour

HaVering Fabian Society is affiliated to

- National Fabian Society
- Dagenham and Rainham Labour Party
- Romford Labour Party
- Upminster and Hornchurch Labour Party
- Barking Labour Party
- HaVering Young Labour

HaVering Fabian Membership

To join HaVering Fabian Society, please complete the following and send to David Marshall. You can also join the Society nationally, David has

more details. You do not have to be a member of the Labour Party to join Havering Fabians, but you will need to be a Labour Party member to take part in Labour Party selections and elections.



Havering Fabian Society

Founded in 1974, the Society promotes progressive political thought in Havering and beyond. Membership of the Society is not necessary to attend meetings, and neither is membership of the Labour Party.

However, to participate in nominations to the Local Labour Parties or in selection conferences, membership of both is required. The Society meets regularly throughout the year, apart from the summer and during election campaigns. Local Membership is currently £10 waged, £5 unwaged.

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I\ we wish to join Havering Fabians

Name

Address

.....

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.....postcode.....

E-mail.....

Phone number

02030Waged (£10) unwaged £5