

HAVERING **FABIAN** SOCIETY

HAVERING FABIAN

Volume 2 Edition 41 December 2019

Havering Fabian Society

Covering...meetings
with David John
Beesley on climate
change, the three
Havering
candidates in the
General Election,
the General
Election aftermath
and details of future
meetings

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Introduction

Welcome to the new edition of the Havering Fabian Newsletter.

This edition contains a review of recent meetings with Claire Ainsley and Charlotte Norton

There are articles from Havering Extinction Rebellion and Councillor Tele Lawal.

We now have 1,244 followers on twitter. Keep up to date at our twitter site @haveringfabians for the latest news.

We have a blog now as well as our website
<https://haveringfabians.org/posts/>

You will need to follow us to get updates.

We are affiliated to the four local Labour Parties, and will do all we can to support their campaigns. Havering and Dagenham Young Labour are on twitter @HavAndDagYL 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 Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.



Our website address is <http://haveringfabians.org>. 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.

Climate Change

Our October meeting considered the major issue of the time, Climate Change. Our speaker was David John Beesley from Barking Dagenham and Havering Green Party. David is currently doing a PhD in fine arts. He began with the science. Fuel and energy comes from ancient plant matter, formed millions of years ago via photosynthesis. burning fossil fuels reverses this. In effect the release of energy gets trapped in the atmosphere and causes the temperature to rise, which is causing the ice caps to melt.



Figure 1 David and Keith before the meeting

The first glacier had been lost in Iceland in 2019, with similar events elsewhere in the world climate change deniers still exist and some are influential. There are many scientists who are in the pay of the denier lobby, mostly on the political right. For evidence, follow the money.

NASA are a generally accepted source of independent information and put 95% of climate change down to manmade issues. Clearing land for farming and livestock also contributes.

It is possible to trace the impact of climate change via settled ice from 160 years ago. Human activity has changed rapidly over this period, and while there are peaks and troughs in respect of temperature movements over this period, the current increase is much more significant than previously.

Change has not been uniform over time, although the warmest years on record are all recent. The growing season has less threat from frost, but is vulnerable to greater flash flooding. This is reflected in dramatic price changes for crops - for example a cauliflower can vary 60p to a pound on a daily basis, so this is having an economic impact.

Flooding is more frequent and causing the insurance market to look at a new approach. As sea levels rise, the extra heat will cause water to expand, gravity will impact on the melted ice, giving higher sea levels elsewhere. The Gulf Stream temperature will drop, and the land mass currently compressed by ice will expand into the ocean adding further to rising sea levels.

There is growing resistance to this and a political will to seek an alternative. While neo-Liberal politics in America and Europe have been dominant and driven values, there is a sign of change but limited government action. The lobbying has been effective at delaying and blocking change.

George Monbiot of the Guardian and others have written in this, and Naomi Klein "This change everything" is a good source of information.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=this+changes+everything+naomi+klein+enotes&view=detail&mid=63BF557F9B82FDA8E5D663BF557F9B82FDA8E5D6&FORM=VIRE>

Government is getting advice but not legislating on it.

There are some positives- solar power can meet some of the needs and renewable energy sources provide 25% of energy on Germany. Bio gas and wind power are other potential energy sources. This sets a narrative for the UK to follow.



Figure 2 David in full flow

The need to create support requires a fresh narrative, and need for a response from multiple agencies. Profit and a rising GDP are not the be all and end all of economic policy if survival is at stake.

The technology we need to survive now exists, the need for a new economic model is how to implement it. Kate Rowlands in her book sets this out (Doughnut Economics).

An interesting discussion and a wide range of questions from an audience which included many newcomers, who provided some detailed responses to the more technical questions. A good meeting and a theme we will return to.

General Election 2019

The major event of 2019 was the General Election. Here we cover the Fabian meeting in late November with the three Havering Labour candidates, have an interesting exchange of view between our members and supporters on what happened and why, and a long article on the same issue and the local campaigns.



Figure 3 Havering Labour Candidates Jon Cruddas, Angeline Leatherbarrow and Tele Lawal with Keith Darvill

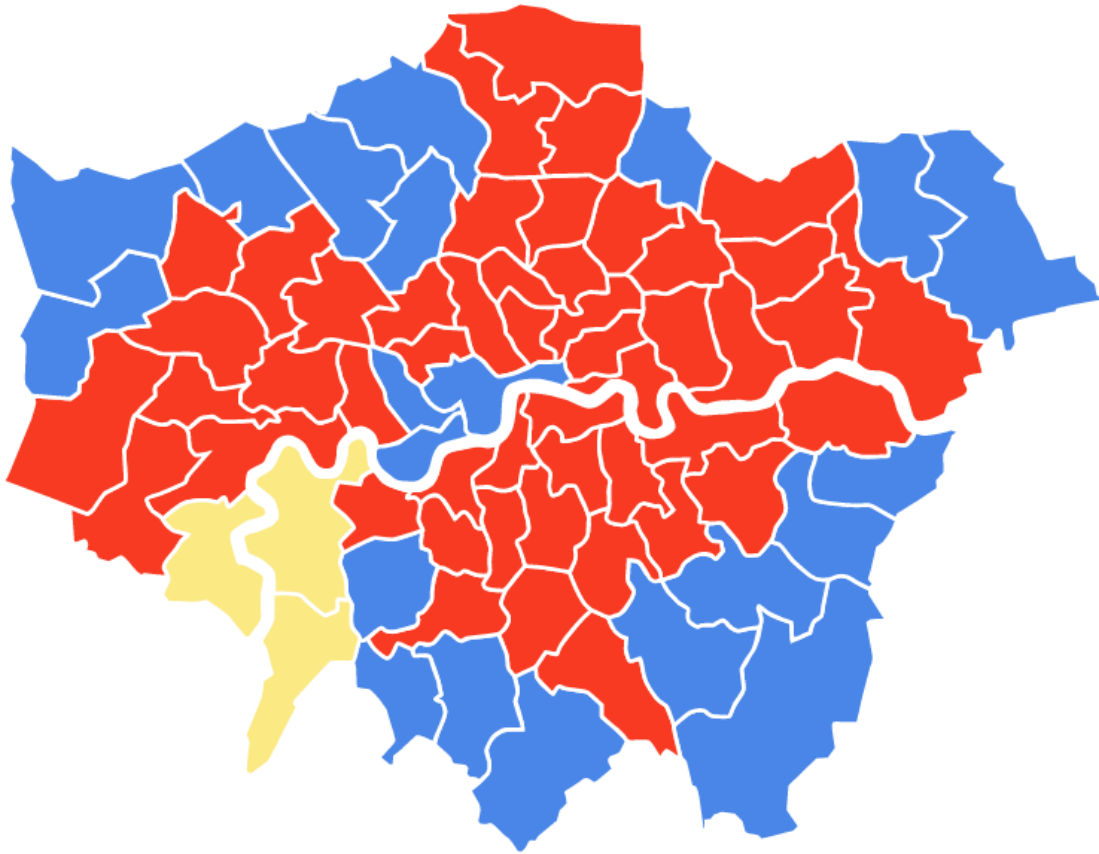


Figure 4 London after the election

The electoral map of London changed little – Labour gained Putney and lost Kensington; the Lib Dems gained Twickenham and lost Carshalton and Wallington.

This hid the wider picture with Labour losing support in London from the 2017 position. However, London was not where the election was won or lost and the following articles address the why, how and what next.

Havering Fabian Society meeting of 27.11.19

A meeting was held in the convivial environment of St. Joseph's Social Hall with all three Labour candidates in Havering. The batting order of the three was Councillor Tele Lawal (Upminster & Hornchurch) followed by Angelina Leatherbarrow (Romford) finally MP Jon Cruddas (Dagenham & Rainham).



Figure 5 Tele Lawal leads the discussion with Keith Darvill in the Chair

All three demonstrated how passionate they were about the politics of manifesto. Tele was especially concerned about the effects of austerity on provision of care for children (see her article in last newsletter 40 re magic money tree). Angelina was deeply concerned about poverty in our society in particular whilst Jon had a passionate concern regards improved involvement/ inclusion of workers in management in similar style to other European countries such as Germany and the Scandinavian countries.

A very wide range of question/comments followed. with Brexit being inevitable, with both Leavers and Remainers in the audience. All three speakers indicated they had voted for remain and felt the current Labour policy was the best way forward if we want to bring about a healing and bring the nation together. A better deal regards environment and workers' rights subsequently put to the people, seem best for the country.

Questions included a comparison with Switzerland and Northern Ireland when it came to concerns over the border, but discussion revealed this was NOT comparing “apples *with apples* “as peace in Ireland was based on the Good Friday agreement which required no border controls, unlike Switzerland.



Figure 6 Angelina makes a point

Also the issue of “free “broad band was raised, with Tele showing a passionate response regards need for *equality both geographically and socially* but conceded could be concerns regards “free “for both rich and poor.

Several expressed concern at the manifesto not focusing much on environmental issues, including climate change and Farmaggedon and Compassion in Farming, with excessive use of agrochemicals and where USA has significantly weaker regulations regards agricultural and food industry.



Figure 7Jon sets out the issues

Agreement that if Jermyn Corbyn is to broker a deal with rest of Europe, in accord with the last referendum, it is best to be an impartial broker and remain himself neutral on the issue of Brexit. It was agreed our society / country and the union could drift into something we regret.

The evening was a very positive event allowing informative discussions on major issues of our time.

David Marshall



Figure 8 The candidates wait for the question...

Election – the aftermath

The result was disappointing with the Labour Party losing 60 seats and only gaining Putney. In the days that followed, this sparked an interesting email exchange between a number of our Members and supporters on why this happened and what happens next – the following exchange is an interesting read...

David Ainsworth

For over 18 months "floor speakers" have told Labour Party meetings, including our local Fabian Society, of what **would** be coming Labour's way.

Defeated Caroline Flint said it all in a tweet - made even before her result was announced - that Labour had taken their support in the North and Midlands for granted, and had let them down over leaving the EU.

The main reason was, of course, **Brexit**. Few in my circle of friends on Harold Hill mentioned Corbyn's past, or indeed Labour's huge spending plans, which were difficult to take-in (even for committed supporters). I don't mention Corbyn or McDonnell's past speeches; as politics is what

you say today and what you'd do tomorrow, not what was said and done decades' ago!

Jeremy Corbyn doesn't deserve blame, as his Shadow Cabinet forced him to go easy on his own anti-EU stand. Only in 2014 he made a major speech condemning an anti-democratic and unrepresentative European Union - which he'd been against for as long as one can remember. Those 17-and-half million "leave" voters are hardly likely to warm to a Party wanting to remain are they? As a Registered Supporter, I'd vote for Jeremy again - as I don't blame him for all that's gone wrong!

Labour's 2017 pledge to honour the 2016 Referendum result now seems far gone. At this 2019 General Election nearly all the Shadow Cabinet were for Remain, while 122 Labour MPs had committed themselves (in public) to campaign and vote against any possible renegotiated deal that may be offered (**even without seeing it**).

Farage ran an appalling campaign, keeping all his domestic policies (if he had any) well "under the counter". But one thing he said was entirely correct: "Labour is now the Party of Hampstead and not Huddersfield".

I received a 'phone call on Tuesday morning from a friend in Collier Row I've known for decades. He's a recently retired BT Engineer who is "left-of-left" and has always voted Labour (but never joined any Party). He rang to tell me he'd voted Tory for the first time in his life. He did so, saying, "I just want out and only the Tories can do it". **Like so many**, "Out" was his first and only priority in this election. For him the "last straw" was when Rebecca Long-Bailey let slip that Labour in Government would alter eligibility of a 2nd referendum by allowing up to 2 million EU citizens living in the UK to have a vote. Such a "fix" would see Remain home and dry. The 2016 EU Referendum (like General Elections) is for UK citizens only. Foreigners resident in the UK vote in their own Countries. Ms. Long-Bailey's statement was widely covered by the media.

As it happens his protest vote in Romford was meaningless, as like Hornchurch/Upminster, it didn't really matter how one voted (or if one didn't vote at all), due to a ", it didn't really matter how one voted (or if one didn't vote at all), due to a "first past the post" system.

Havering Fabian Society had heard it all "first". Vince Maple, an excellent speaker (on campaigning) from the Medway told us - in the wake of Corbyn's Labour Party Conference speech when he'd stated Labour was the only Party which could unite Remain and Leave - that to have a foot in both camps was a difficult campaigning strategy with which to achieve success. Then an excellent speaker from York, Claire Ainsley explained "Why the working class in the North vote Tory". The Midlands also played its part in Tory success, as in the 2016 EU Referendum, the **only** town or city in the whole of the Midlands to vote "remain" was Warwick. And then we expect such areas to turnout in support of a rigged 2nd Referendum - no wonder things went downhill for Labour, but it was no surprise. Havering was a solid "Leave" Borough and this, also is reflected in a sky high Conservative majority, as was the case in nearby Thurrock.

My sadness is that, as this General Election was called on a single issue of "*Get Brexit Done*", the Tories poor record in Government never came under proper scrutiny. This won't be the case come our next General Election, so there's hope for a comeback. For those seeking another run in the European Union, after we've left, then Michael Heseltine made a speech (largely unreported) suggesting a campaign for re-admission could commence in about 10 years' time. I suspect I'll be gone by then, so won't be concerned.

End on bright note: the odious twerp **never** got elected in Dagenham & Rainham! Well done Jon Cruddas (who'd voted for the "Leave" deal - which probably saved him, as his majority is now so thin).

Keith Taff

The voters stated 3 reasons why we did not win -

1. Brexit
2. Corbyn
3. Unrealistic Policies

Unless we review our approach on Brexit and make real efforts to ensure there is an open and honest dialogue with the 'left behind' working class leave voters, we will never win them back.

Unless we end the extreme left-Wing Corbynite/Momentum hold on the party and accept that offering jam today and jam tomorrow does not work and it is not workable we will never be able to revitalise the party and actually win.

Accept that the only way to correct the appalling injustices that have been brought to bear on the people of this great country is to win power.

I never did and still do not support Tony Blair or his appalling sycophants like Peter Mandelson, Ruth Kelly, Alan Milburn, Hazel Blears and many others I care not to remember on the right - New Labour.

Accept there are moderates and they are neither on the right or left of the party.

Pat Brown responded to David

Had you been on the streets all over the borough in the local elections you would know exactly the problem and it wasn't about leaving the EU, it was 'I can't vote Labour because of Corbyn'. No matter what you or I want to believe, it was very obvious at that time we would never be in government with the current Labour Party leader. It certainly did not help in the South of the Borough and the residents missed out on Trevor (McKeever) and Fay (Hough) representing them in the Town Hall as excellent local community Labour Councillors.

I also understand it was an issue during the General Election campaign all over the country.

Sorry but you have got it wrong if you think Jeremy Corbyn was not one of the main issues. I can only think that you would vote for JC as Leader again because you want to keep Labour out of Government!!

The many will be let down by this Tory Government and we have let them down by continuing with a Leader that was going to fail. Most of the policies I agree with but you cannot do anything without first getting into Government.

I said the leadership would be an issue during the campaign for the Local Elections so I too can say 'I told you so', but that is futile and backward looking. I want to go forward with a strong leader who is hopefully female and elected by full members of the Labour Party.

David Marshall

A coalition was needed *prior* to the election. A friend didn't at first realise what I was saying when I told him I had one LEAVE candidate and three REMAIN candidates to choose to vote for.

In Wales and Scotland there were four Remain candidates to choose to vote for.

As a result, more votes were cast for a remain candidate than a Leave candidate (Tory, UKIP, BREXIT)... 47 % cast their vote for either UKIP, Brexit Company or the Tories !! As Scotland is about to test... we have a bizarre form of so call democracy

John Reid

Must get away from the idea that just because a party was for Remain it's voters were remainers and if there had been a Remain electoral pact there would be a different outcome.

Not that I know many Greens, but there were 11 Greens in Hornchurch and Upminster during the referendum (some of whom I met again at the Council count) who were leavers.

My brother was a lifelong Labour voter who canvassed for Jon Cryer as a brexiter quit Labour recently and voted Lib Dem as he couldn't vote for The Tories with the cuts to public services and couldn't vote for Corbyn- but as he said he knew the Lib Dems had no chance of winning so it didn't matter.

My parents voted to stay in the common market in 1975 but voted for Michael Foot in 1983 as they knew he had no chance of winning so it didn't matter they disagreed with leaving the common market in that election.

David Ainsworth responded

I'm pleased my thoughts have ignited serious and reasoned debate.

In 2017 Labour had the same Leader who also got bad media coverage. Yet there was a swing to Labour. I suggest because Brexit **wasn't** an issue - as the Labour Party pledged to honour our 2017 EU Referendum.

At a time when Labour's finances were low - Corbyn pulled in many new members, getting close to half-a-million. They came because an existing membership elected (by huge majority) Jeremy Corbyn. Look at that election - members wanted Socialism, rather than Blair/Brown's version of it. Will Labour's membership nosedive to 2015 levels if Jeremy steps down? - of course his followers will disappear!

Put yourself in the place of any one of 5 million Labour voters in the North & Midlands who actually "won" that 2016 EU in/out Referendum for "Leave". The 2019 Labour Manifesto says to each one, "**Your vote doesn't count - you'll have to vote again**". What an insult? Then along comes another Party Leader (aka Boris) saying, "Vote for me and you'll get what you voted for in 2016 without a further Referendum". Boris uses *mild* language asking Labour voters to "**Lend** them their vote on this one occasion to *get Brexit done*". No wonder took this offer in droves, as the Labour Party had betrayed them. Then Boris produces a "kind" manifesto promising to sort out the NHS, improve law-and-order, produce more affordable housing etc. etc. I'm convinced many Labour voters who supported the Tories on Thursday will come back. BBC News Channel visited Rother Valley on Friday (Labour for as long as anybody could recall - until Thursday). Some voters said parents would be turning in their graves if they realised their sons and daughters have voted "Blue". ***They'll be back!*** *Private Eye's current issue front cover has a line of folk entering a Polling Station, all with a nose clips on!*

Never forget, thanks to Rebecca Long-Bailey's slip, we all knew a 2nd referendum would be fixed by allowing nearly 2 million EU citizens resident in the UK to participate!

Prior to Thursday a number of TV Channels visited marginal Constituencies to interview the general public. Time-and-time again such

persons said they'd desert Labour to support Boris and Brexit. Yes, some quoted Jeremy as a reason for deserting Labour - but most did so only for Brexit. In Jonathan Ashworth's leaked phone call, a day before Polling Day, he said the battle in key Northern and Midlands seats had been lost. Labour knew what was coming. Some of us locally knew that over 18 months ago, but few listened.

In 2015 Labour also lost an election over a Referendum. It's policy to oppose a Referendum, while Tories promised one. Labour canvassers and workers were sent onto the doors to state this Policy. Polling experts said it cost up to 50 Labour seats, as those Labour supporters who wanted a EU Referendum switched to Conservative in order to get one. Cameron got an overall majority of 13 seats! Yet 10 days' later, without consulting any Party members, acting Leader Harriett Harman went on the Andrew Marr show to announce, "We've listened to the people and have now decided to support a Referendum". They then voted for it, voted for Article 50 and then in 2017 pledged to honour it. Yet in-between Labour did everything possible to thwart Brexit. Those 5 million Labour supporters in the Midlands and North have given their verdict - to the surprise of few. In 1975 I supported leaving, yet fully accepted the outcome - and we didn't have another referendum until 2016. Yet Labour promised one (in 2020) just 4 years after the last one.

Yes, many voters disliked Jeremy, but it didn't manifest itself in 2017. In 2010 Gordon Brown went into a General Election as the most unpopular Party Leader in opinion polls since Michael Foot in 1983. In 2015 Ed Miliband's personal ratings were even lower!. Having unpopular leaders goes with Labour - much due to bad press they always get. One hopes the next one will do better - certainly Emily Thornbury won't win back working class support - witness her attack on "White Van Man" at the Rochester by-election. Labour needs van delivery drivers to vote for them!

Jeremy's there because an overwhelming number of members want what he stands for. I was an active Labour Party member for 31 years. I came back (albeit as Registered Supporter) when Jeremy was elected leader - and voted for him in his big win over challenger Owen Smith

Finally let Margaret Hodge have a last word. Many voters also criticised Labour's vast spending programme - so soon after austerity. Our Shadow Chancellor stated that only our top 5% of tax payers would pay for it. Hmmm! I recall, after Denis Healey's "Squeeze the rich until the pips squeak" speech, that the rich didn't wait for their wealth to be raided. So, heaps of their assets were transferred to the Isle of Man, Guernsey, Jersey, Cayman Islands, Monaco and anywhere else where it could be stashed safely! I criticise myself for, in the past, often advocating spending money we haven't got - but even I thought this manifesto promised too much that we'd be unable to deliver. Not in the manifesto, but a few days after publication Labour announced it'd compensate all those ladies who'd suffered pension loss. It was **laudable** - but independently costed at £58 billion. On top of all the rest! Many voters didn't buy our economic plans - as indeed they didn't when Ed Balls presented plans in 2015! yesterday in a major speech Mrs. Hodge drew attention to Labour's unrealistic promised spending plans, and how many voters it deterred from supporting the Party. This speech was widely reported on Radio 4 and on local Time FM radio.

In 2010 Labour had a front bench, from Miliband down, who were out-of-touch with working class aspirations and life. This time Labour had an out of touch set running things from Hampstead drawing room. **The next leader** needs to have socialist views, be a lady and preferably one with Northern connections. Maybe even one who'd listen to "floor speakers" at Havering Fabian Society instead of pressing on toward certain failure?

Del Smith

No leader with his political agenda could have won through with the fanatical anti socialist media bias we have in Britain. I believe in the agenda but I fear any new leader will be slandered in the same way. The only "Labour" leader to get media support was a tory.

John Reid

The Tory press was worse in the 70s and 90's and Wilson and Blair won Maurice Glassman, Wes Streeting and Emma Dent Coad from Labour were on Newsnight last night

Maurice saying, if Labour doesn't understand the level of this defeat then we could never win again this isn't hyperbole

David Ainsworth

I also saw BBC2 Newsnight (Mon) where 2 of those 3 taking part in a discussion were former Havering Fabian Society guest speakers. Lord Maurice Glasman said he'd predicted this **3 years' ago** when leading Labour figures appeared not to accept the Referendum result of 17-and-half million voters, many being Labour supporters!

John Reid

A very good discussion from Maurice Glasman.

The Tories percentage has gone up from 30.2% in 1997 in the last 6 elections the LibDems who were ex Tories could come back and the Brexit party got 2% they could all go Tory, so the Tories could go up to 48% or more if there are lower turnouts

So the Tories stand to become a dominating party, and are in power for 20 years. Then Labour becomes a London Liverpool Manchester Party

So after 30 years in power the Tories will have 2 wings;

A South West England Cornwall Pro EU Liberal “Cameron” party and a Christian Democrat Blue Collar “Ester McVey” Party;

They split and people who would have voted LibDem vote for the south West Cameron Liberal Party

And the Tories become the party of the northern working class

So it is over for Labour we become the 3rd party in Britain.

Election 2019 More thoughts

The reasons for defeat are subject of much discussion and many interesting articles. While most of the seats Labour lost were in Leave voting areas, there is evidence that in many of the seats the loss reflected a long term decline in the Labour vote.

Bishop Auckland sounds like a seat that should be Labour forever

The results since 1997 suggest otherwise

Labour Majority in Bishop Auckland:

1997: 21,064

2001: 13,926

2005: 10,047

2010: 5,218

2015: 3,508

2017: 502

2019: Lost

This is a stark example of long term decline. The 1997 result was at the peak of New Labour, but the signs of decline came quickly, an indication of problems ahead.

Another leave voting seat that provides an insight – Mansfield

Labour Vote in Mansfield 1997-2019

Election	Labour vote	% of vote	Labour majority	Swing
1997	30,556	64.4	20,518.	+11
2001	21,050	57.1	11,036	-6.3
2005	18,400	48.1	11,365	-0.1
2010	18,573	38.7	6,012	-9.5
2015	18,603	39.4	5,315	-0.6
2017	22,235	44.5	Conservative 1,057	-6.7
2019	15,178	30.8	Conservative 16,306	-15

So a seat that voted Labour in 2015 now has a huge Conservative majority – the scale of defeat needs perspective.

Locally the boundary changes make strict comparisons more difficult –the results Romford and Hornchurch and Upminster have not been seats in doubt since 2010. Dagenham and Rainham is more interesting and the 293 majority in the 2019 election reflected a downward trend.

The table shows the results since 1983 for the Dagenham constituency, which show that the seat has been marginal through the 1980's. With the Chadwell Heath ward moving to Romford if the boundary changes do happen, the new seat could well be a notional Conservative seat by 2024. Had the seat existed in 1983 and 1987 the large Conservative majorities¹ in Hornchurch and the loss of two wards to Barking would probably have

¹ Conservative majority 1983 9,184 1987 10,694 1992 9,165

meant Dagenham and Rainham would have been a Conservative seat and In 1992, too close to call.

Labour vote in Dagenham \ Dagenham and Rainham 1983-2019

Election	Labour vote	% of vote	Labour majority	Swing
Dagenham				
1983	15,665	39.3	2,997	
1987	18,454	44.4	2,469	
1992	22,027	52.3	6,733	
1994 by election	15,474	72.0	13,344	
1997	23,759	65.7	17,054	
2001	15,784	57.2	8,693	
2005	15,446	50.1	7,605	
Dagenham & Rainham				
2010	17,813	40.3	2,630	
2015	17,830	41.4	4,980	-12.6
2017	22,958	50.1	4,652	-3.4
2019	19,468	44.5	293	-4.8

So bleak, with a downward trend – and within Dagenham, demographic changes and a more diverse population probably dampened the impact.

The 2017 election saw an increase in the national Labour vote that meant these issues were overlooked – but the warnings signs were clear. At Fabian meetings both Paul Embery (see newsletter 36) and Claire Ainsley (newsletter 40) pointed to the Party losing touch with its working class base, and that this was about more than Brexit- the Brexit vote was a symptom of the issue not the cause.

The decline from 1997 was almost inevitable, given that it was a highpoint. The fear for Labour is a repeat of the trend seen in 2001 – voters having put their faith in Labour in 1997 did not switch back (although locally and in parts of Essex this was not the case) – giving an almost identical result. So unless Labour can address the issues, there is a real risk in 2024 of a similar result – and in 2001 Labour made some gains!

There are other worrying trends that show no signs of helping Labour. Scotland shows what can happen if voters lose faith – Labour has 1 MP and needs a 1997 scale landslide to form a government.

There are also trends across Essex and Kent that show it will be a long way back. There were 15 Labour MPs in 1997, 13 in 2001, 10 in 2005 and only Rosie Duffield in Canterbury since.

Election	Labour MPs in Essex	Labour MPs in Kent
1983	1	0
1987	0	0
1992	1	0
1997	7	8
2001	5	8
2005	3	7
2010	0	0
2015	0	0
2017	0	1
2019	0	1

In the list of 120 or so seats Labour needs to gain form a majority – there are no seats in Essex or Kent.

Thanet South is the first at 131. Thurrock is 142; Mansfield 200 and Romford 242. Hornchurch and Upminster is beyond 250.

Depress yourself by looking at this link

<http://www.electionpolling.co.uk/battleground/targets/labour>

Dagenham and Rainham is the 4th most vulnerable Labour seat.

That sets out the depth of the problem facing Labour.

There are several articles setting out why this happened and what to do next.

It is my view there is no single reason we got here, and the answer is not a factional response. It is depressing to read misrepresentation of others views as that does not help. The Labour Party has always been a broad coalition of the working class and elements of the middle class, and always will be.

The working class of the 1930s is different from the working class today, and of course it now includes many from the BME communities. It is

depressing to see cheap shots about use of the phrase “the traditional working class” as implied racism – it is nothing of the sort, it refers to the working class of any race.

Labour can only win by keeping what is left of the existing Labour vote together and broadening its support. This means taking no groups for granted, which is easier to say than to do.

The Party has the harder job of engagement with elements of the potential Labour leaning electorate, which is ever changing as the nature of employment changes, housing tenure types change (greater renting means a changing electorate) and the population becomes more diverse.

Engagement is easier to achieve in the areas where membership is thriving, harder where the active party membership ship is smaller and dependent on a few individuals.

An unintended consequence of the party membership increase is that areas often referred to as the “liberal metropolitan elite” are best placed to do this, being based in London, the university towns and big cities. This has inadvertently worked against the interest of the northern and midland towns. Lisa Nandy has much to say on this - that these areas mostly voted to leave and were the main source of Labour losses is not a coincidence.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/14/if-we-can-take-the-right-lessons-from-defeat-we-can-give-people-reason-to-vote-labour-again>

The Party has to become relevant again for these areas to return to Labour. As the position in Scotland has shown, this is not easy to achieve. If voters have turned their back on Labour, they will need good reason to change back again, the long term trust and related loyalty has been lost.

In this context the Brexit vote has soured politics. The campaigns were negative based on dubious premises and as previously argued (newsletter 40) the Leave campaign was focused on getting the result and sorting the details later, while Remain focused on project fear and the negatives while any positive reasons to vote were secondary.

This has left a divided electorate, and the chance to “Get Brexit done” proved tempting to enough leave voters to give the Conservatives a

majority. Brexit will not be settled any time soon.

Reasons to be optimistic

History would suggest that it will take several elections before Labour returns to government, and it is by no means certain this will happen.

Here are some reasons to be optimistic. Bear with me.

Claudia Webb was right to be pleased that Labour now has a majority of female MPs for the first time, and that there are significantly more BME and LGBT MPs. That should enable Parliament to better reflect the diversity in society. Labour must ensure that the interests and concerns of all sections of society are heard and not played off against each other.

We can learn from the Tories in 1997. They chose the wrong leader at the wrong time and were unable to dent New Labour until leader number four. The prime role for the next Labour leader is to ensure Labour is credible to be a government again - the next leader but one may be the eventual beneficiary, but it may take longer.

Labour did engage with policies aligned with the climate change emergency - the home insulation proposal would have made a significant difference and remains a policy to promote.

Although subject to some cynicism, the free internet access policy is credible. The Daily Mail recently ran an article bemoaning poor internet speeds and lack of access in rural areas. A government funded universal provision would address this, but the case has to be made and explained not launched in isolation.

Brexit is going to be a bumpy ride. Even the optimistic leaders have expressed concern about the initial period when anything could happen. This is a Tory project and they are going to have responsibilities for whatever happens. The previous government was some way from competent. This should create plenty of opportunities for Labour to advocate alternatives. Being a credible and focused opposition is vital, if energy sapping.

It is crucial that the Party leadership sets out a positive vision. Brexit in some form is now inevitable and there is not going to be a clamour to re-join the EU anytime soon. Let's not waste political capital on this.

Another difficult issue is the likely clamour for a second Scottish independence referendum, which would mean Scotland leaving the union. Labour are likely to be a bystander to the debate. Forming a government without Scottish MPs is going to be a struggle and there now seems no route back to a majority for Labour in Scotland.

The Party is discussing proportional representation which is only going to be feasible if introduced by a government prepared to lose a potential majority. That takes a lot of courage and will not come from the Conservatives.

British politics is by nature confrontational rather than cooperative and so PR is not popular. However, with much talk of tactical voting to ensure that the party you don't like are defeated, together with vast swathes of the country unrepresented by parties that significant number of people have voted for, there is a growing level of support. A brave Labour Party leadership will break this cycle and gain much capital for doing so.

Local Campaign

The results in Hornchurch and Upminster and Romford were not in doubt from the date the election was called. Both Conservative MPs had big majorities and the withdrawal of the Brexit party meant any lingering doubt about a split vote was removed.

A thankless task for the Labour candidates Angela Leatherbarrow and Tele Lawal.

Romford Conservatives have a well-oiled machine that acts as a model for the national party. They have a hyper active MP who for all his many faults is well known and visible. There is virtually no local issue he won't appear to support or photo opportunity he will miss. His voting record places him on the right of the Conservative Party on every major issue.

One of his most annoying traits is to claim to speak for the people of Romford as if they all support him. So the task for Romford Labour was a difficult one, knowing a win given the opinion polls was not going to happen and that everyone else knew as well.

His digs at Angelina for not being visible were particularly irritating, and almost certainly aimed at winding up opponents. Unnecessary in the

circumstances, and untrue - Angelina had wide support in the party, is known locally and is playing an important part in a democracy of giving the opposition a voice. It is also unworthy of a full time politician to abuse a working mother making sacrifices to ensure the democratic process works as intended. This was not Rosindell's finest hour, there was no need to be so personal.

Angelina had a good campaign and the daily video's where local voters gave reasons why they were voting for her were a welcome development in the use of social media and drew some positive feedback. Best wishes to Angelina when the GLA campaign resumes in the new year.

In Hornchurch and Upminster, the Conservatives have a relatively new MP, who had been on maternity prior to the election - congratulations to Julia Lopez.

Tele Lawal brought a different dynamic to the election, with interesting use of social media to advertise her campaign and attract publicity. She did attract some bizarre comments, both on her apparent youth (although Sam Gould drew few such comments standing in Romford in 2015 when of a similar age, so some sexist overtones?) and her dress sense!

This was dealt with as it should have been and Tele was rewarded with coverage in The Stylist magazine.

<https://www.stylist.co.uk/people/tele-lawal-labour-unacceptable-campaign-photo-twitter-general-election/334868>

Tele had a good campaign and brings a younger perspective as well as an energetic approach. This will pay dividends in the long run both for the party locally and for Tele herself, who has a chance to make a big impression on the national stage.

There will come a time when Labour fortunes locally revive, and the work done by all in the local parties will have helped achieved this. Keeping the Labour Party functioning as a viable entity helps this and when a breakthrough comes, the work of all of those door knocking, leafleting, phone banking and lending support in other ways will have contributed. Those local campaigners who braved the weather in what was always

going to be an unsuccessful campaign are to be congratulated, and remembered when the breakthrough comes.

The campaign in Dagenham and Rainham was ultimately successful and was covered in labour list inset link.

<https://labourlist.org/2019/12/solidarity-in-dagenham-and-rainham-how-labour-held-the-key-tory-target/>

<https://www.compassonline.org.uk/defying-the-right-how-labour-in-east-london-fought-back/>

We regroup, the GLA elections are in May!

Future Meetings

15th January 2020

Journalist Chris Smith will be the speaker, with a discussion on lessons from the Grenfell fire. Chris is writing a book on the subject due for publication later in 2020. The first report from the enquiry is due on 30th October, and there will be many lessons to be learned. 7.30 pm Fairkytes Billet Lane Hornchurch.



7th February 2020

AGM 7.30 PM – Followed by guest speaker Miriam Mirwitch at 8PM . Miriam is the current chair of Young Labour, and is seeking nomination for the GLA seat of Barnet and Camden. 7.30 pm Fairkytes Billet Lane Hornchurch.



Figure 9 Miriam Mirwitch our speaker in February

Politics in Havering

Many of you will already be aware of the excellent Politics in Havering Blog, which we repost via our twitter feed. This gives a regular update on politics within the borough – a link is below, please follow them (and our blog!) for regular updates!

<https://havering.blog/>

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 <u>david.c.marshall@talk21com</u>
Vice Chair Sam Gould	Treasurer Dave Baldock	
Committee Members		
Cecile Duerinckx	Graham Lane	Sanchia Alasia
Mike Flynn	Ed Glasson	Hannah Dixon
Ian Rusha	John Reid	



Chair Keith Darvill reports ...

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 March 2020 and will cover the run up to the GLA elections in May.

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 and Dagenham 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

Waged (£10) unwaged £5