

HAVERING **FABIAN** SOCIETY

HAVERING FABIAN

Volume 2 Edition 56 March 2024

**Havering
Fabian Society
Covering the
Fabian New Year
conference,
meetings with
Stephen Timms
MP, Jon Cruddas
MP, and Guy
Williams. A
review of Nye at
the National
Theatre, and a
preview of
meetings with
Andrew Harrop
and David
Eldridge**

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VOLUME 2 EDITION 56 March 2024

Introduction

Welcome to the new edition of the Havering Fabian Newsletter. The Labour lead in the opinion polls remains over 20 per cent, the Conservatives continue to implode, and a Labour Government is now likely. The period up to the election will be an important one, with the GLA elections in May 2024 which could well precede the General Election. Hopefully, we will not be campaigning over the Christmas period! The Labour GLA candidate for Havering & Redbridge is Redbridge Councillor **Guy Williams**.

We now have 1,388 followers on X (previously twitter). Keep up to date at our X 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 have recently added an Instagram account so follow us on there as well!**

We are affiliated to the four local Labour Parties and will do all we can to support their campaigns. 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 are welcome.



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 or email and we will add you in.

Graham Lane RIP

Graham was an impressive and dedicated individual, with a fierce loyalty to the Labour Party and to education. He was a prominent member of the Socialist Education Association.

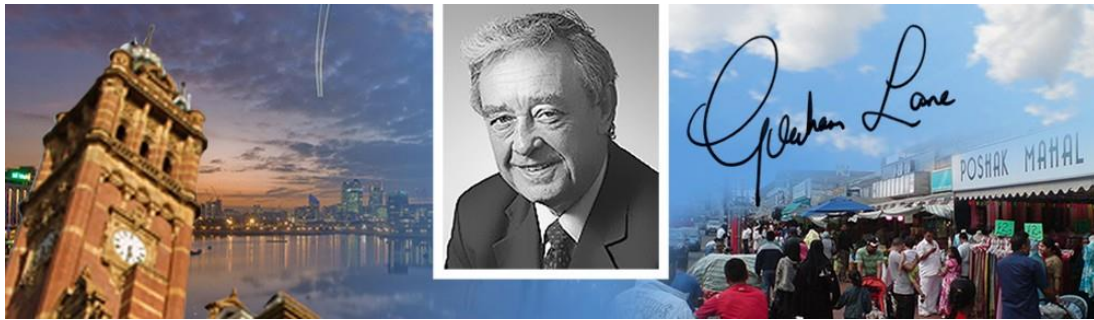


Figure 1 Graham Lane - taken from his website

He was a Councillor in Newham for 24 years, and from 1994 to 2005 he was Chair of the Education committee. He had a national role as Chair of the Local Government Association Education Committee from 1997 to 2005.

In researching this I found an interesting story. A school in the North of England had threatened to expel sixty pupils for unruly behaviour. He was invited on to Newsnight to be interviewed by Jeremy Paxman and the apparent expectation was a condemnation of the school. Graham of course had his own view and defended the school Head. He was never one to follow the herd and do the expected.

He wrote a book on why the Mayoral model for Local Government was flawed. He was a lay member of Industrial Tribunals. When he left Newham Council he moved to Havering and remained politically active, with a spell as Chair of the Hornchurch and Upminster Party, and on the Havering Fabian Society Executive. He spoke to us about Electoral Reform. He will be much missed.

Condolences to Isabel, family and friends.

Fabian New Year conference



Figure 2 The stage is set...

The Fabian new year conference was held at the Guildhall in central London at the end of January. Sue Watson and Dave Baldock have provided a written summary of nine of the sessions.

The sessions cover

- Sadiq Khan
- David Lammy
- Women and Equalities
- Arts and Culture
- Crime and Security
- Poverty and Financial Security
- Environment and Climate
- Health and Care
- An uncertain world – speakers from the Polish and Portuguese Governments

Below is a link to articles on the Website.

[Articles – Havering Fabian Society](#)

Stephen Timms - The work of the Work and Pensions select committee.

Stephen began with a tribute to the late Dennis Breathing, who had been active in Newham South when he was first elected to Parliament in 1994. As part of the post-2019 General Election allocation of select committees, Labour would chair the Work and Pension Committee. Stephen won a vote of all MPs to take the position.



Figure 3 Chair Keith Darvill introduces Sir Stephen Timms MP

Select committees exist to scrutinise the Government. The committee has a Labour Chair but a Conservative majority. The committee works on a consensus basis, which means achieving an outcome critical of the Government is difficult. It is important to find the right issue on which a common line can be agreed.

The committee has responsibilities covering.

- Job Centres
- Benefits
- Pensions Policy
- The Health and Safety Executive (which is under the Department of Work and Pensions)

With lockdown from March 2020, initial meetings were via zoom. There was a desire to look at the pandemic's impact.

The five-week delay for Universal Credit was one topic looked at. The theory is to mimic life in work, where an employee would have to wait to be paid. Pressure has been applied since its introduction to reduce this period, as many people have no financial resources to fall back on. This achieved a reduction from the six-week delay when Iain Duncan Smith introduced the scheme.

If the claimant had no money, they could obtain an advance from the Job Centre. This is clawed back from future payments over a 2-year period. With benefits already at a low level, this is not always helpful to the claimant, spreading the misery over a longer period, and is one of the issues driving a rise in foodbank use.

In 1948, when current welfare arrangements were put in place, forms were completed in biro, manually taken to Blackpool and payments were made in 10 days. The same process now takes 5 weeks to complete. The committee recommended starter payments to avoid this with payments at the start of the claim. While Conservatives on the committee agreed, the Government did not and changed arrangements.

There remains a fundamental delay of five weeks in payments of Universal Credit. It would cost £750 million to deal with this and Stephen was encouraged that Keir Starmer is aware of the issue and may look to address this.

The Health and Safety Executive is part of the remit of the committee, and in this area, they have looked at asbestos and related issues. Asbestos use had been banned by then Minister Angela Eagle in 1999, despite pressure from many sources including the Canadian Government. Once Britain had done this many countries did the same.

Asbestos remains a significant cause of death, particularly among teachers and nurses who are exposed more than other sections of the community as they work in buildings constructed when asbestos was widely used.

Asbestos is safe if left undisturbed. However, the age of buildings mean that some are starting to crumble.

The committee looked at this area and Stephen noted that the Education unions are particularly aware of the issues involved,

The committee recommended

1. A deadline for all asbestos to be removed – set as 40 years due to the huge amount of work involved.
2. A central database recording where asbestos is located.

The alterations required to buildings to meet net zero requirements will be significant and it would be sensible to undertake removal at the same time. The Government again said no to the ommittee recommendations. There is a head of steam on this issue, with The Sunday Times covering it in depth. The committee is keeping up the pressure on Ministers, who are moving slowly on the issue. Trade Union General Secretaries are also keeping the pressure on.

Another area looked at is support for childcare costs as part of Universal Credit (UC). Parents need help with childcare costs as they are expensive, particularly in London. There is some support available to parents. For those on UC, the issues again arise from cashflow.

Most providers require upfront payment, which can be hundreds of pounds per child. Payment is greater for those with more than one child. This is hard for those who are unemployed to pay, and so becomes a barrier for moving in to work. So, there is a request to make payment up front rather than in arrears. There is a cap on the amount paid, which has not increased since 2008. The Work and Pensions committee lobbied for this to be increased.

The Government has agreed to this. Conservative members of the committee were able to put pressure on to achieve this, showing that select committees can have an impact. The change will enable people to enter employment.

Stephen then took a wide range of questions.

The first was on Housing. Housing support was now part of UC, although Housing Benefit remains for those who are retired.

Local Housing Allowance has been frozen since 2011, although it did increase by £20 per week during the pandemic. This was removed when the pressures eased. Inflation has increased housing costs and resulted in claimants having to use the remaining benefit income, leaving less for basic needs.

The Government did reinstate LHA to 30% of market rent (when originally introduced it was 50%) which will have some impact, but the increase is (initially at least) temporary.

In the longer term there is a need to convert UC payments into funding for new build council homes. The introduction of council housing had been one achievement of the short term 1924 Labour government.

The Pension Protection scheme had been introduced by Ian McCartney. The scheme has performed well and currently has a surplus of £12 billion. This could potentially be used to uprate the pre 1997 scheme and this is a live issue for the committee.

Select committees are important, although the Government does not always respond, and Ministers say no to recommendations without detailing why.

A potential change could be to give committees more power, although whether any Government would agree this remains a good question. Even where committees undertake pre appointment hearings the Government typically appoints its choice anyway.

The benefit level is too low and can produce perverse outcomes. The Conservative think tank Bright Blue recently suggested the pressure on unemployed people to take any job was such that many took the first job on offer even if it did not suit their skills and this was significant enough that nationally productivity suffered as a result.

The State Pension is currently protected by the “triple lock” mechanism. This can create inter-generational issues, with pensioner income protected, while those in work and on UC have no such protection. Pensioners vote, and if more younger people did this might alter the thinking.

Public and private sector pensions have become quite different leading some to question the sustainability of public sector pensions in their current form. Private sector employer contributions are important and need to be increased if there is to be a “levelling up.”

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) are an issue. Many applications are rejected but over 60% of rejections are overturned on appeal. So, the entire system is wrong. The committee has made recommendations to reform this. For example, where a claimant has a progressive condition, there should be no need to call them back annually – but this still happens.

There is a report coming on the support for vulnerable claimants (the Errol Graham case is relevant). The current system is complex, with delays and a lack of sensitivities. It does not have to be like this.

At one period during the pandemic, there had been 100,000 claims in a day. The system had coped so improvements are possible. The levels at which UC is reduced in respect of a claimant’s capital have been the same since 2006. The committee’s report will cover this as it increases poverty levels.

An exceptionally good discussion with Stephen making complicated issues understandable. The meeting ended with Dave Ainsworth moving a vote of thanks to Stephen for an excellent meeting.

Jon Cruddas MP



Figure 4 Chair Keith Darvill, Secretary David Marshall, and speaker Jon Cruddas start the meeting.

Jon discussed his book on the 100th anniversary of the first Labour government. Why had he written it when there is an array of books on this subject already in the libraries? Jon set out the answer over the course of the discussion. The period had been at times turbulent and volatile, with triumphs and defeats.

These were covered by the biographies of those involved, from both left and right factions. The left and right within the Party were strangely similar, with a strong command and control ethos.

The 22nd of January 2024 was the hundredth anniversary of Ramsay MacDonald being asked to form a government. Books address the historical sequence of events. A novel approach could look at the key dates-1945, 1966 and 1997; or big victories or defeats; or what ifs such as what if Gaitskell or Smith had lived? What if David Miliband and had stood against Gordon Brown? Gore beaten Bush? Attlee not survived

World War One? All possible, but Jon would need to focus on an approach based around ideas.

There had been six periods of Labour government, 33 years out of one hundred and this included 1964 and 1974 with small majorities. There had been twenty-three leaders of which three have won a general election.

Post 1931, Labour lost 230 MPs, and was out of power for 14 years. The Attlee government fell in 1951, being tired and ravaged by internal conflict resulting in resignations on Health Service prescription charges. Subsequently the Party was out of Government for 13 years, then eighteen after 1979, 14 after 1997. There were a lot of policy matters that cut through – founding the NHS, equalities legislation, dreadful defeats, and factionalism. All could be the basis of a book. There is the “great man” approach although this is a right-wing approach concentrating on the individuals rather than the ideas that drove successful Labour governments.

A “just society” is at the heart of Labour values but means different things to different people. There are three main visions of what this phrase means within Labour.

1. The Fabian tradition of maximising welfare via a redistributive programme. This dominates Labour history, and is utilitarian, with a key role for the unions
2. Maximisation of human freedom and liberty, dating from the Magna Carta and civil war, Thomas Payne and “The Rights of Man,” (which had helped shaped the French and American revolutions) and after World War Two had shaped a global movement on human rights and subsequent legislation.
3. A more ancient, religious approach stressing human virtue, and aspiring to a socialist commonwealth. This has religious origins in the “religion of socialism.” This informed many radicals, anarchists, workers control, guild socialism and led the regulation of work and shaped citizenship.

The three together shaped the Labour Party, and the book looks at how the traditions are woven together and frequently fought with each other.

In the late 1890s Keir Hardie brought together an alliance of the different Labour traditions, including at this point the Liberals. This was pluralist and welcomed different traditions. Labour succeeds when all three traditions combine.

Attlee was an extraordinary figure. He joined the Stepney Independent Labour Party in 1908, as was an ally of Lansbury. This gave continuity to the early days though to Dalton, Gaitskell and Wilson. This built an economic model to create an agenda for a Labour Government.

In the 1920s Labour had no developed policy agenda, as the Party had risen too quickly; the developing economic policy filled the gap.

Attlee was grounded in human rights and the welfare state, like the American New Deal. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was in line with his approach. The welfare state model his government introduced lasted until Thatcher.

New Labour under Blair was similar in approach up until the Iraq war. Their approach spoke to the ethical traditions and took Labour back to an early almost religious form of socialism. Brown provided the economic model to support this.

Early on the New Labour project dealt with constitutional reform, an example of the three Labour traditions working together.

This fell apart post Iraq when the moral aspect was lost. And post 2008 the growth necessary to drive redistribution was lost; Labour became transactional and lost alignment with the three core traditions.

How does Keir Starmer fit with this? The press has lost interest in nuance and so his approach is viewed from outside this perspective.

There have been twenty-three Leaders of the Labour Party. All bar one have authored books¹ and policy papers which set out their background and what they believed in. Keir Starmer has not so is not trapped by history and not beholden to anyone, so can travel light and respond in a fast and agile way to a changing world. It is hard to understate this, as there is no paper trail on what he believes in.

¹ Ramsey MacDonald had written twelve.

The Party is in the same position at present. But what is the footing? Where is the Party heading? Will the traditions stay mute? What will be his inheritance as Prime Minister?

While the issues interact, to start with Starmer faces

- A climate catastrophe
- A cost-of-living crisis.
- Productivity at a low level
- Housing shortages
- A crisis in adult social care

Elsewhere in the world the state as an institution is dismantling, with authoritarians such as Trump and Le Pen on the rise.

Labour will need the coalition of traditions to hold together when things get bumpy. How robust will it be when pressure gets applied?

History can be used to shine a light on where we are at present.

The Party published a 3-volume history about the forward march of socialism covering the years to 1920, 1950 and 1970 and not that much since.

This matches the rise and fall of the working class, an everchanging group if viewed through the lens of the three traditions.

A question this raises is how well the first Ramsay MacDonald Labour government did when in minority and the alignment set out above had yet to play out.

Jon then took several questions.

The current leadership were scared by the defeat in 2019, which left few paths to power. The response had been cautious. With the press as always against the Party, it had adopted a moderate and reassuring approach, which has seen progress in the opinion polls. The important thing is what comes next and what mandate will Labour have? There is a need for a “radical government” to address many of the country’s deep problems.

NYE National Theatre

Aneurin Bevan was the ultimate hero of the Labour left, and there is always a danger of portraying him as the perfect politician. He had flaws and they are not glossed over, although you would need to know the background to notice them all.

Michael Sheen plays title role in the National Theatre production ably supported by Sharon Small as Bevan's wife Jennie Lee. Two strong characters whose marriage meant Lee took a backseat while Bevan held high office. This changed when Bevan died (see below). Their marriage was an open one which the play highlights, during a period when the public was less accepting of this.

Bevan was undoubtedly one of if not the best political orator Britain has produced and is respected by all for this.² Sheen is ideal for the role, having recently made inspirational speeches himself³

The play is set in a hospital near the end of Bevan's life and concentrates on the key moments of his life through flashbacks. Sheen is on stage throughout, and characters morph from a doctor into Churchill with admirable continuity.

The key scenes include Bevan's political awakening, discovering the joy of libraries and taking control of Tredegar Council. Bevan is elected to Parliament and begins a verbal assault on the Conservatives creating a deep and mutual animosity. With Churchill the vitriol ran deep and was even mentioned in the film *Darkest Hour*.

Sheen performs the most unlikely song and dance routine since Harold Wilson in *Made in Dagenham*, and the war begins. The two are not linked! He has a surprisingly good voice.

[The greatest Commons performance || The Guardian](#)² Bevan's demolition of Anthony Eden and Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd during the Suez debate is legendary [Weapons for squalid and trivial ends || The Guardian](#)

³ [Michael Sheen's stirring speech for Wales football team - BBC News](#)

As the war begins without Britain having immediate military success Bevan is a fierce and articulate opponent of Churchill; this is the era of “Guilty Men” (the anonymous pamphlet thought to be authored by Bevan) that opposed the way the war was being fought.

In what may be artistic licence, Churchill and Bevan meet to discuss the war and the need for Bevan to support the Government despite previously having previously tabled a no confidence motion. Churchill wins the argument by persuading Bevan that being in power is the way to do things and compromise is a necessary component of this. If you know the history, you can see what is around the corner! The lesson was learnt.

The next major scene is Attlee appointing Bevan to the Cabinet. Bevan is shown as fearing that he is being set up to fail as Minister of Health and Housing. This will enable Attlee to claim the left has failed and turn right. Attlee points out that he wants a unified Party with the left and right involved, and what bigger prize is there for the left in the Party than implementing plans for a National Health Service?

If this is delivered, Attlee wins. If Bevan fails, the left is shown to have failed and can be cast aside – compromises again to ensure power?

A slightly cynical view of Attlee, who was known to hold Bevan in high regard and at was once thought to favour him as his successor. Bevan’s abrasive nature was one reason this changed, together with a cabinet resignation (along with Harold Wilson) on a point of principle – not compromising and a period in the political wilderness followed.

The battle to introduce the NHS came down to ensuring Consultants and GPs were on board. With three months to go they voted 10 to 1 against joining the NHS. The Conservatives were on the doctors’ side and voted against the NHS.

Bevan made many compromises. Consultants could retain private practice; GPs could retain surgeries and a pledge was made to make doctors the highest paid profession. They came on board and on 7th July 1948 the NHS was formed. The implications of the compromise remain

to this day; private practice within the NHS remains contentious, GP surgeries are an issue that continues to remain unresolved; doctors' pay is no longer as high, and hence the current industrial action.

The play then concentrates on Bevan's passing – coal is removed from his body to reflect the damage done by 8 years as a miner; his wife and friend bemoan his passing and his late father arrives complete with mining lamp to escort him to ...whatever comes next. Sheen's departing words "have I saved a lot of people?"

The backdrop says it all.



Figure 5 The final scene ends with the impact the NHS has had.

Within 10 years of the creation of the NHS infant mortality decreased by 50%.

Since its founding the life expectancy has increased by 12 years.

Every day 1.3 million people are treated based on clinical need not the ability to pay.

No mention is made of Bevan's epic speech against the British Suez campaign, which saw the end of PM Anthony Eden. The 1957 Brighton speech dealing with the danger of disarmament "Naked into the

conference chamber⁴” is also not mentioned. Both are discussed in detail in the excellent Michael Foot biography well worth a read.

Locally, Bevan famously spoke in the mid 50’s at Elm Park Assembly Hall. Labour’s oldest living member in Havering Margaret Hoepelman was there and remembers among a large and supportive crowd, a heckler being removed by the ex-International Brigade member Harry Moss.

Nye is well worth seeing and Michael Sheen is excellent. The politics is dealt with well, although inevitably getting nuance within the timescale is difficult. The role of Jennie Lee is key and after Bevan died, she went on to be Arts Minister in the Wilson government and set up the Open University. Rumours of a play covering her life are to be welcomed, as there is another remarkable story to be told.

⁴ [The 10 best Labour conference speeches | Labour conference | The Guardian](#)

Guy Williams - GLA Candidate for Havering and Redbridge

Guy is currently a Councillor for Cranbrook Ward in Redbridge. This is a ward in Wanstead that was won off the Conservatives by Labour in 2018.

It is important that Labour win the Havering and Redbridge seat, which has not previously returned a Labour member.



Figure 6 Guy (left) with Chair Keith Darvill

The Tory candidate Susan Hall is an old-style right winger, having made clear support for Truss, Trump Enoch Powell and showing opposition to diversity. Like the rest of her Party, this does not reflect London at all.

A Conservative win would reinvigorate the Party in London and change the dynamics in the run up to the General Election.

The current GLA member has a low profile. This was raised slightly by the Lee Anderson defection to Reform – Anderson had been due to be guest speaker at a fundraiser the day after his defection and the press enjoyed the irony. Reform could follow UKIP and take votes from the Conservatives locally which may make the GLA seat a close call as happened in 2016. Labour have been doing well in by-elections, and with Tories likely to stay at home, the seat is in play.

Susan Hall is a divisive candidate, and with the Tories in London on the backfoot, drifting away from the mainstream is likely to reduce their appeal.

For all councils, balancing the budget has become more difficult, particularly as responsibilities increase. Both national and local government have increased tax without sustaining a high level of public services.

Sure Start has been a loss, and the removal of funding from agencies such as REMPLOY⁵ has been dogmatic and had the effect of moving the staff previously employed with meaningful employment on to welfare. The government now moans about the level of worklessness. Austerity got us here and has driven down living standards.

Guy worked for the Remain campaign. Conservatives who supported remain had a choice to make and have stuck with the Government. There is a case to target this group as potential voters who may switch. If 7,000 votes switch the seat can be won.

The war in Gaza has complicated this and may impact on the Labour vote. It is important to keep the community together; the GLA elections are about London issues rather than foreign policy.

The GLA election gives a chance to improve voter contact, and this will help with future elections. Better data will assist campaigns in 2026. Locally forming a majority administration is the long-term aim.

⁵ [Remploy: 75 years of Remploy Factories – The Social History Society](#)

What difference would having a Labour member of the assembly mean locally? The GLA is not a legislative body, and the voting system is such that a two thirds majority required for the Assembly to defeat the mayor is almost unattainable.

Having a high profile – such as Unmesh Desai has – will give Guy a profile across the constituency and give the community a contact for GLA issues, and a platform to speak for communities. Issues within the constituency can be raised at the Assembly.

ULEZ is a high-profile issue locally. Guy supports the proposal but would urge a more nuanced scheme with sympathy for key groups e.g. Health workers and the care sector. Without this care costs could increase as costs are passed on to users and was this really the intention?

Improvements can be made on bus routes – for example, the 86 bus stops two stops from Queens Hospital. The new Superloop does not cover Havering, Redbridge or Barking and Dagenham. Has this been pushed at the GLA Transport committee?



Figure 7 Guy with Councillor Jane Keane

Guy then took a range of questions.

The industrial action on the tubes was disruptive and parties need to talk. The issues on the Central Line had been raised with the GLA by Redbridge Councillors. The stock is old and other trains cannot be used as replacement. There was a maintenance backlog during Covid, and new stock is needed, which will require Government support, The tension between Government and Transport for London does not help.

The GLA election should be about more than ULEZ. Free school meals across London make an enormous difference for lower income families. Frozen tube fares have a similar impact. Fares would be 14% higher if they matched those of National Rail.

Police numbers are increasing again, with Sadiq investing funds. Mark Rowley has been empowered to change the Met Police and gain greater public support. Sadiq Khan has a high profile and is subject of threats, hence he has enhanced security. Social media comments often fail to recognise this.

Transport and Policing have been the main GLA issues on the doors. Transport on the edge of London is different from the centre, with more car use. To address the move to electric cars, more charging points are needed, and roads need to be improved.

There have been issues with bridge closures for extended periods with bus diversions as a result. These have taken longer than intended and do not go down well locally. A recent bus diversion in Romford for a cycle lane had taken more time than anticipated.

Guy is a cyclist, and cycles through eight London Boroughs to get to work. Cycling infrastructure needs to recognise distinct types of cyclists, commuters who want to get from A to B as quickly as possible and leisure cyclists who are more casual.

London's evening economy is changing. Nightclubs are closing, leaving free space; creating the Night Czar is an attempt to address this. There are often landlord and tenant issues, and the impact of pushing people into pubs instead has dispersed anti-social behaviour to more locations.

Beam Park station remains an issue locally; the development has stopped as progress on the station has stalled. Without this Havering Council will not achieve its housing targets. There is a need for the Department of Transport, GLA and C2C to co-ordinate and ensure the station is built. Planners often want developments with limited if any parking; this requires good public transport.

The practicalities of a tourist tax were worth consideration. This can generate revenue but can deter tourists.

Guy has a “go fund me” page for the campaign. The link is below.

[Fundraiser by Guy Williams : Guy Williams for Havering & Redbridge 2024 \(gofundme.com\)](#)

We look forward to working with Guy to strengthen local representation on the Greater London Authority

Future Meetings

Andrew Harrop Tuesday 21st May

Fabian Society General Secretary Andrew Harrop will be the speaker
Venue St Joseph's Social Hall Upminster 7.30pm



Figure 8 Fabian General Secretary Andrew Harrop

Andrew has been general secretary of the Fabian Society since Autumn 2011 and in that time has led the society's research on economic and social policy as well as the future of the British left.

In 2022-23 he led a project reporting to the Labour party on the roadmap to a National Care Service. He was previously director of policy and public affairs for Age UK and before that was head of policy at Age Concern England, and a researcher for the New Policy Institute and a backbench Labour MP.

Areas of expertise: ageing, the economy, education and skills, government, health and social care, housing, the Labour party, labour markets, pensions, poverty and inequality, public services, social security, taxation, UK politics

David Eldridge 13th June 2024

Fairkytes Billet Lane Hornchurch 7.30PM

As part of our series on the arts and culture, we have invited David Eldridge to talk about the arts. David is a well-known figure with local contacts, and this should be an interesting meeting.

David is a British dramatist and screenwriter, born in Romford, Greater London, United Kingdom.[1][2][3] His plays have been produced in the West End and on Broadway. He has written for stage, screen, and radio.



Figure 9 Playwright David Eldridge

His plays have been performed at major new writing institutions in the UK, including The Royal Court Theatre, the Bush Theatre, the Finborough Theatre and the National Theatre. His stage adaptation of the film *Festen* transferred from the Almeida Theatre to the West End and Broadway.

His play *Market Boy*, informed by his childhood working on a stall at Romford Market, played at the National Theatre's largest space, the Olivier in June 2006. In July 2008 his play *Under the Blue Sky* was revived at the Duke of York Theatre starring Chris O'Dowd, Catherine Tate and Francesca Annis.

In March 2011 his play *The Knot of the Heart* played at the Almeida Theatre and starred Lisa Dillon, for whom the role of Lucy was written and in February 2012 his play *In Basildon*, played at the Royal Court Theatre directed by Dominic Cooke starring Linda Bassett and Ruth Sheen. Both plays opened to critical acclaim. *The Knot of the Heart* won the Off-West End Theatre Award for Best New Play and *In Basildon* was voted *The Guardian* Theatre Critics and Arts Writers No.1 Theatre of 2012 In April 2012 the Royal Exchange Theatre presented his new version of *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg, starring Maxine Peake.

In July 2014 his play *Holy Warriors* played at Shakespeare's Globe. David's screenplay for a ninety-minute single film, *The Scandalous Lady W*, based upon Hallie Rubenhold's book *Lady Worsley's Whim*, was broadcast on BBC2 in August 2015 starring Natalie Dormer and directed by Sheree Folkson.

In October 2017 The National Theatre presented the world premiere of his play *Beginning* in the Dorfman Theatre directed by Polly Findlay. *Beginning* transferred from The National Theatre to the Ambassadors Theatre in the West End, opening in January 2018 with both Sam Troughton and Justine Mitchell reprising their original roles. *Beginning* was revived for a tour starting at the Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch, Essex in 2021. It became the first in his trilogy of plays about love and relationships for the National Theatre to be premièred in its Dorfman Theatre. The second, *Middle*, had its first performances rescheduled to start in April 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Eldridge is currently lecturer in Creative Writing at Birkbeck, University of London. He also teaches screenwriting for the Arvon Foundation

Sourced from Wikipedia. So, we apologise for any errors!

Below is a link to an interview David had with the Guardian.

[Playwright David Eldridge: ‘What’s important to me is to move people’ | David Eldridge | The Guardian](#)

Links

Blog	http://haveringfabians.wordpress.com/
Website	https://haveringfabians.org/
Twitter	https://twitter.com/HaveringFabians
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/havering.fabians
LinkedIn	https://uk.linkedin.com/in/havering-fabians

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Online payment

Details are included in the regular Havering Fabians email. Contact us for further details if you are not on the current mailing list. Membership is £5 waged, £10 unwaged.

National membership is also available via the link below.

[Join | Fabian Society](#)

National membership includes a regular quarterly magazine, regular email updates and invites to conferences. There are several theme-based groups that develop policy in areas such as Housing, the economy and environmental issues.

Politics in Havering

You may 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	David Marshall
Membership Secretary	31 Vicarage Road Hornchurch RM12 4AS 01708 441189 david.c.marshall@talk21.com
Vice Chair Sanchia Alasia	
Treasurer Dave Baldock	



Chair Keith Darvill reports ...

Future Editions

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 June 2024. – contributions welcome.

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 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.

I\ we wish to join Havering Fabians

Name

Address

.....

.....

postcode.....

E-mail.....

Phone number

Waged (£10) unwaged £5