

2016

HAVING FABIAN

December 2016

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The next installment of our series to mark 50 years of
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HAVERING FABIAN

VOLUME 2 EDITION 29 December 2016

Introduction

Welcome to the new edition of the Havering Fabian Newsletter. We reflect on the referendum, recent meetings and there is a welcome contribution from Hannah Dixon. We start this edition with a brief obituary of Arthur Latham, who died in early December.

Our presence on social media is bringing us closer to a number of new organisations, with 884 followers on twitter.

We continue the series on the Council elections in Havering since 1964, bringing you the results, the personalities and the movement in the politics of the borough. This edition covers 2002, which was all postal votes. For the political anoraks out there, I intend to collate the whole series when we finish and publish the complete edition, updated with the information gathered as we go.

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.

Both Romford and the Hornchurch and Upminster Labour parties have upgraded their websites and are active on Twitter – no doubt both will be used to keep you up to date as the campaigns take shape.

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 and Twitter.



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

We have an open and a closed Face book site, the closed site deal more with local administration while the open site is used to publish interesting articles; please contact David Marshall to be added to the site or e-mail

Haveringfabians@outlook.com

Arthur Latham

Arthur Latham was one of the leading personalities for Labour in Havering, from the formation of the Borough in 1965, through to 1998 when he stood down from the Council. He had previously been on Romford Urban District Council; he was elected to the inaugural Havering Council in 1964. From 1969 to 1979 he was the MP for Paddington. His defeat in 1979 by a tantalising 106 votes ended his period in Parliament. For the majority of this period he remained on Havering Council, which now seems unusual.

Arthur had the distinction of being the last Labour candidate to stand against Winston Churchill in the 1964 election, and had also stood against former Chancellor Ken Clarke.

After his defeat in 1979 Arthur assumed the position as chair of the London Labour Party, a daunting task. In 1983 he sought the nomination for the Bermondsey by election but was defeated by Peter Tatchell who went on to lose the seat in a famously dirty campaign.

Arthur returned to the Council in 1986 and was elected Leader of the Labour group. As the strength of the group on the Council increased after subsequent elections the party moved into minority control with Arthur as Leader of the Council.

Arthur was not a universally popular individual and had a somewhat robust style of leadership. However, he did command loyalty from his close followers and for a while seemed impregnable as Leader of the group. During a turbulent spell which saw defections and loss of control, he was replaced as Leader and did not stand for re-election to the Council in 1998.

Arthur remained loyal to the Labour Party (and Chelsea, where he was a season ticket holder) to the end, although he did leave the party briefly over Iraq. In his later years he was struck down by cancer and died in Queens Hospital early December.

I Daniel Blake

If you've been on social media recently, you've probably witnessed the hype surrounding the recent Ken Loach film *I, Daniel Blake*. Loach won his second prestigious Palme d'Or award for the film at the Cannes film festival, creating a buzz at home and abroad. The social-realist style of the film tugs at the viewer's heartstrings from start to end. With hard-hitting messages throughout, *I, Daniel Blake* exposes the truth about Conservative austerity: unflinchingly damaging to ordinary families of the UK. It's been called "the Cathy Come Home for the 21st Century."



The film follows a carpenter, Daniel Blake (played convincingly by the actor Dave Johns), who suffers a heart attack in his late 50s. The film then tells the all too familiar tale of Blake being failed by the Tory welfare benefits system, being incorrectly deemed fit for work by the government's DWP. He becomes friends with a young Mother, Katie, who has been moved to Newcastle because of high rent prices and a lack of social and affordable housing in London. She is displaced away from her family, friends and children's school; she is made to start a new life up North but struggles, like Daniel, with the limitations of the Job Centre's rules and has to join the long queues at the local food bank. This is just the start of both

of their spiral into poor living conditions amid frustrations towards a system that works against them.

On Question Time, in media statements and even in parliament, prominent Conservative MP's such as the notorious Ian Duncan Smith and the current Business Secretary Greg Clark have criticised the film for being 'fictional', 'unrealistic' and 'unfair.' There's a wave of irony in these statements, Tory MPs who vote for cuts to the welfare system suddenly feel victimised when a film director highlights the unfair living standards of people at the bottom of the hierarchy. Conservative's denying the truth at the heart of the narrative, in my opinion, show that they're scared of their power becoming threatened. When critical of a problematic bureaucracy, films can be powerful.

But in order to be effective in opposition, we can't be complacent that a film will fight our corner for us, although it can be a springboard for real change. Real people in poverty need Labour to stand up to Tory cuts. As you're reading this, a real person may have had their Employment Support Allowance cut and been deemed fit for work, is struggling to qualify for Job Seekers Allowance and is starting the humiliating and long drawn-out appeals process. With the prospect of their appeal being accepted in arms reach, they too like Daniel Blake could meet an early grave.

Real statistics show that the film is honest. Between December 2011 and February 2014, 2,380 people died after their Work Capability Assessment told them they should start looking for work. In the first half of 2016, The Trussell Trust reported that more than 500,000 three day emergency food parcels were distributed to people in crisis. Food banks are struggling to cope with rising numbers of people in poverty under Tory austerity. In Havering, your local supermarket's food bank boxes are in need of being filled up more than ever.

I highly recommend seeing *I, Daniel Blake*. Turn your tears into fuel for campaigning and we can draw attention to detrimental Conservative cuts and merciless Work Capability Assessments. The film itself is convincing, with excellent acting and directing from Loach. But it is the effective mirroring of real people's strife that will stay with you long after leaving the cinema.

- *Hannah Dixon (Romford Labour Party Youth Officer, Co-founder Havering Young Labour)*. This article first appeared on *Havering Young Labour's blog* <https://haverinyounglabour.wordpress.com/>

Jon Cruddas

Jon has been a regular visitor and this was his first visit since Jeremy Corbyn became Party Leader. He had not been part of the recent 172 MPs that were part of the “coup” against Corbyn. He thought a challenge would have been preferable, the non-confidence vote would do a lot of damage.



Jeremy Corbyn becoming Leader was a symptom of Labour's current position not the cause. The 2010 Election had been the worst since 1931 and

Ramsey MacDonald. The 2015 election was worse still, with Labour wiped out in Scotland and UKIP making large inroads into the Labour vote (if not seats). Jeremy had caught the wave of anger that this caused within the Party, and had been elected leader as a reaction to the perilous state of the Party.

There were deep longer term issues – effecting the role of the State, and the managerial/ technocratic approach the Party had adopted. This was not unique, as Social Democratic Parties across Europe had similar issues- the Right was on the rise, while traditional social democracies were in freefall.

The Party is in a bad position and after 2010 didn't realise how bad that position was. The Leadership debate after the 2010 election obscured things, and there was no ownership (or understanding) of the defeats in 2010. The resignation of the leader did not help – history repeating itself.

There is no discussion about the size of the crisis, or why social democracy is in crisis across Europe. This could be explained by the light touch regulation and approach to workers' rights, reflecting the previous compact with financial capital – large scale profits would be taxed to pay for Public services, but when the crash came this would no longer be sustainable. This model is now in freefall.

The Party needs to take a year out and rethink our aims and values- what is social democracy for in 2016? There is a rapidly changing class structure, and a need to rebuild the trade union movement. There needs to be a modern constitution for the Party. The Party needs to rethink the relationship it has with the working class; we need a conversation – what do people think?

Brexit was a further shock to the system. The potential inflationary impact of a falling currency and potential for an increase in interest rates could see the architecture of the British economy fall over. The Tory response would be greater austerity.

The Labour Party has responded by the PLP taking lumps out of each other.

There is a crisis in the Tories as well – there are prominent MPs briefing against Chancellor Philip Hammond, and the Tories are all over the place, with no plan or route map on how to deliver Brexit.

This ought to give Labour a platform, but the Party is currently 18% behind in the polls (the position at the date of the meeting).

The Party must unite and take the arguments to the Government. This means respecting the office of the Leader, and getting the electorate on side. We must hold the Party together. Instead we have two factions arguing with each other.

Jon has helped launch Labour Together to try and unite the Party. This happened on the Saturday before the resignations that led to the second leadership election- not a great start.

Labour Together will build and fund projects to help build the Party and build up the centre of the Party. The first stage would be relaunching of the Parliamentary Tribune Group of MPs, those who are not aligned with either Corbyn or Blair. William Hutton, the Guardian journalist will launch the

campaign. There will be a focus on policy work, and the group will work with Hope Not Hate to take on UKIP.

UKIP had been ignored in the run up to 2015 as a Party likely to attract Tory defectors. This had not been the case, and currently there is a vacuum as UKIP (literally) takes the fight to itself.

Jon had been working with Faith communities to build links with Labour, and linking Labour candidates for Mayoral positions across the Country.

Twelve projects had been launched to deal with renewal of the Party, and ensure Party funders were kept inside.

The lack of ideas coming from those opposed to Corbyn did the Party no favours- there seemed to be a group waiting for a charismatic alternative leader to emerge, and no significant attempt to address the big issues facing the Party. Brexit allowed the people a “free hit” at the governing elite. There is a need to understand this and develop long term ideas while the Party establishes what exactly it stands for.

Can the Party get out of this position? Political Parties have no right to exist, and we need to use a period in opposition to rebuild what we stand for. Labour Together would be relaunched soon.

There was a flurry of questions from the audience – it’s clear there are no magic solutions and the Party needs a major rethink of the current approach. The view Jon put forward built on the analysis he provided in the lead up to the 2015 election; it is disappointing that we are still having the same discussions and do not have a raft of policies that resonate with

the electorate. Jon suggested that the Party had considered making the cost of Adult Social care a key issue for 2015, an issue that impacts on a wide range of the electorate, but had backed off- reflecting a lack of ambition and confidence?

Maurice Glasman



Maurice Glasman and chair Sam Gould get the meeting underway

Maurice Glassman made his first visit to Havering Fabians in November. The meeting generated more reaction than any in recent memory. The meeting went on for two hours, and Sam Gould only called a halt as we had to vacate the room. No doubt the discussion then continued in the bar of the Queens Theatre afterwards. The reaction after the meeting was more positive than normal, with a flurry of e-mail traffic from those who had enjoyed the evening.

With several people who haven't been before including some from visitors from central London this was as an engaging discussion as we have had.

Maurice was excellent entertainment as well as providing political insight. He managed to include quotes from both Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan as well as an excellent anecdote about an invitation to meet the Pope that I will not spoil by repeating here in case you have a have a chance to hear Maurice deliver it.

He began by reviewing recent political events, in particular the General Election of 2015, the Brexit vote, and the election of Donald Trump. In each case the opinion polls had been spectacularly wrong and predicted the opposite result.

This had become too much of a coincidence and had to indicate something substantially wrong with the way that polling was conducted. There had been a misreading of people's perception of politics and the analysis that flowed from this was weak. In each case the reasons people voted the way they did was not understood or anticipated The outcome couldn't just be the candidates or the quality of the campaign, it must be something more fundamental.

Maurice contended that the common theme was alienation from the political process. The loss of support for the working class for Labour and the Democrats flowed from this.

Maurice was one of the few members of the House of Lords on the Leave side that had campaigned to exit the European Union. He was very clear he wouldn't campaign with UKIP as it was important to be seen to be campaigning on a credible basis and be careful of the company you keep.

His analysis of how a substantial number of Labour voters supported the Leave campaign flowed from this. Labour had created of credibility gap with the working class electorate and in the in the vacuum that has been created it is highly unlikely that the working class vote will break to the left; rather it will break to the right.

This is the position of being becoming increasingly common across Europe so you could tell this by the lack of votes for staying. In the American election, there was no breakout from Clinton to the right to the left.

Maurice estimated that at the moment there are roughly 7,000,000 voters describes itself as Labour that will not vote for the party.

Hillary Clinton have described Trump voters as “a basket of deplorables” and yet wanted these people to vote for her. It is no real surprise that she created a climate of hate and in this context Clinton’s comments as helped to create the atmosphere of hate rather than calming things down.

Labour had a proud history to draw on. Labour had been one of the great anti-fascist parties ever to emerge and was one of the reasons why Britain didn't follow other Western European countries and embrace Communist. The establishment of a Labour party engaged with the working class ensured that the Country itself did not go towards the fascists in the 30s.

Maurice been working in Dagenham during the 2015 General Election with Jon Cruddas, and on the doorstep it had become clear that in some areas people identify with Labour as a movement and get an identity from that.

When Attlee had come to power into government he was joined by Morrison, Bevin and Greenwood, all three of whom had left school at the age of 12 – this was the working class members of the movement at the seat of power – very different from the recent (and current) Labour leadership. The lack of engagement with the working class therefore is an issue for the Party.

This had occurred before – in the 1930's across Europe the left parties were losing contact with the working class – this happened particularly in Germany France and Italy. In Britain, alignment with the working class helped the Labour movement defeat fascism initially at home and then abroad.

Maurice had recently been in conversation with people who are considering creating a common movement based on the 48% who voted to remain - as Maurice described “a coalition of the defeated”. There is a risk of appealing just to this group and the Party being seen to polarise against the working classes that voted to leave, as a result pushing people to the right.

Labour had durable roots in the traditions of the country as a whole however in 1930 the party had fallen to 52 seats and Snowden the McDonald's left to join the national government. So there is a precedent.

This was an era of austerity; the cabinet was split (so many there are many parallels with today).

Ye within 10 years the party was in government, and 14 years later achieved in the huge majority of the 1945 election. Looking realistically that the state of the party and the electorate at the moment these are the sort

of timescales the Party has to think of in terms of renewal and speak to the electorate and find a route back to power.

With the current condition of the Country perilous at present, the role of the Labour Party should never have been more vital. The current approach to politics leave the real danger of the party slipping away to permanently irrelevance which is a really bad proposition for the people as a whole who need the party.

Blue Labour had been set up in part as a reaction to this and to take part in the renewal of the Party.

In retrospect Morris regretted the name “Blue Labour” as it had too many connotations of being on the right of the party and therefore close to the Tories Clearly it wasn't. Paul McCartney was quoted as having said he didn't really like the name of the Beatles, so Maurice was in good company. “Blue” indicated depressed, not a political allegiance.

The position that the Party find itself in has been building for a long time. In many respects Blair and Corbyn come from similar traditions. Both would like a liberal agenda and a borderless world. Both don't really have deep roots in the Labour movement.

During the Blair era, policy was planned on the basis that basically things can only get better and for a while this seems to be that this was the case, giving rise to the quotes about the end of history and an end to boom and bust.

In reality the position was of course somewhat different; it's not things can only get better, but more likely by how much they will get worse. Blue Labour had been chosen as a name to reflect the difficulty of issues, rather than any direction of political outlook.

Maurice had a community organising background. He had been campaigning for the Living Wage and working with both churches and mosques.

In an attempt to change the Party's thinking he had been linking in with Jon Cruddas while Jon was developing the policy review for the party - however no one was listening. For a while the Party was keen on Community organising, bringing in Arnie Graf from America, this did not last long, and Arnie returned to the States with little publicity.

Maurice has calculated the average time to have discussions at a party meeting before someone would tell you that you are going wrong was a whole eight seconds. So as part of the review, when engaging with Community Groups, Jon and Maurice asked them to allow people to develop arguments; this changed the culture a bit, and they found that the average time rose to 45 seconds. This is an interesting observation, which we later put to the test.

Maurice suggested a ten-minute break in which people present had a one-to-one conversation with somebody that they didn't know on what was the single biggest issue we were worried about. The person I was talking to interrupted me within eight seconds, and was telling me what he thought would be my issue... the point Maurice was making is that the Party has to

listen and understand what people are concerned about, not tell them what they should be concerned about

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The top three items that people raised during the review were;

- 1) family - overwhelmingly this was the case although the respondents didn't define what the family unit was.
- 2) the place they live – Maurice deliberately reversed Bevan “In Place of Fear” had become “in Fear of Place” with concerns about the area they lived in.
- 3) work and how people felt they were treated.

It was the intention from Jon to build the policy review around these areas, only to be told these were not Labour core values- which were instead diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility. So the work that John and Maurice had been doing would not be used. While the Blue Labour agenda would be built around these values, the leadership built the agenda around equality. So in effect the Party not listening, but deciding for people what they ought to be concerned about.

Maurice suggested that for most people, the human condition would not be dominated by money, but by the need to build something better and reconnect with the people that had been left behind, the losers from globalisation.

The Labour Party should be for and act on behalf of the poor. It is tragic that the capitalist system treats individuals as a commodity to buy and sell. Although a horrible word “commodification” was becoming prevalent.

Faith communities don't believe the free market created the world and that there is something special about human nature. So there is (or was) some common ground between these groups and the Party. Faith groupings were among the building blocks of the Labour Party – in the 19th century the ability of protestant and catholic communities to support trade unionist in protection workers' rights helped give birth to the Party.

While the 1945 Government was a great leap forward, it also aligned Labour with the State, in a way that it had not been before. The pre-war Party built on the co-operative and insurance societies that existed in the absence of the welfare state. This was particularly the case in East London where credit unions were prevalent.

By creating the State as an institution, Thatcher was able to take it over and fundamentally alter it. There was little resistance and as a result communities were left isolated, alone and disposed.

So how do we work to recreate the State as an object of affection? We need to keep hold of the promise that Labour can help redeem and rebuild the Country. We need to resist capitalism without becoming an administrative state. We need a vision people can relate to.

The Tories have a majority in parliament for Brexit and can call an election on “in or out” to capture the national mood. Maurice was one of very few members of the Lords who was in favour of Brexit, and was concerned that an election called to take forward the Brexit agenda would be calamitous for Labour.

The Liberal Democrats would campaign for remain in such an event and would have a clear vision. (The meeting was before the Richmond by-election).

The danger would be that Labour would claim such an election was not about Brexit at all, and campaign on anti-austerity and welfare; the result could well be a defeat of 1931 proportions. (Not listening again?). The Conservatives would have a big majority; the Liberal Democrats would be revived and Labour nowhere. This is a real possibility, and the Party does not seem to grasp the crisis it is in.

Free movement of Labour is again treatment of people as a commodity; people have an obligation to family and colleagues, and realise that they cannot meet these on their own. The European union recognises this, and is arranged for the benefit of capitalism not the working class. Brexit will mean it will no longer be illegal for Governments to have an investment strategy and interference in markets will no longer be seen as bad. Whether the Conservatives would do this remains to be seen.

The community organiser Arnie Graf had been to Carlisle, Crewe and Doncaster. He had met a number of people and had one on one conversations. People he met did like talking about politics and relationships, and are also interested in policy. One-to-one conversations are the foundations of politics and 10 minute discussions can make a big impression.

At this point in the meeting the one-to-one meetings took place and a great deal of conversation took place. There was then the usual in and answer session with the audience and Morris which reflected people's concerns with the way the Labour Party is currently losing touch with its roots.

Maurice had set out the makings of an alternative agenda. This will take some time to come to fruition and it was quite clear that the Party had a lot of thinking to do in order to get a self to a position where it could hope to win a general election.

This was a really positive meeting, with input from a wide range of viewpoints.

. The reaction after the meeting was more positive than normal, with a flurry of e-mail traffic from those who had enjoyed the evening.

Perhaps more than any of our recent meetings, this showed there is a political energy that exists for change. This is more about dealing with getting back to some kind of working class solidarity that perhaps hasn't existed in this (if indeed it ever existed) since the early 60s.

The meeting was an interesting extension of the conversations at the previous meeting with Jon Cruddas. One of the things that came through both meetings was the political parties have no right to exist and if we failed to engage with this group then electoral oblivion could well follow- and very rapidly

2002 - Havering Council Elections – The beginning of the end?

The 1998 election had left Labour in a strong position in Havering. The next test would be the European elections in 1999. The complication was the change to a list system which saw the end to a constituency link and a London wide list system. Election was via the D'hondt system (which is described here https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%27Hondt_method) . In

effect it meant Labour could only win 4 of the London seats – and sitting MEP Carole Tongue was fifth on the list. This caused much upset and accusations that her stand against the Murdoch press had cost her a higher place.

In the event the European elections followed the traditional pattern of going against the Government, and London elected only three Labour MP's. There was a strong showing nationally by the Greens, and UKIP began to register.

Labour remained popular nationally and an election in May 2001 seemed likely – it was delayed a month by an outbreak of mad cow disease. When the election was called there was little doubt about the outcome, as Blair was the dominant political figure and Tory Leader William Hague had failed to register as a credible alternative – wearing a baseball cap to the Notting Hill carnival and claiming a hard drinking past did not ring true; ironically, when he became Foreign Secretary years later, the gravitas missing in 2001 returned.

Blair had created such a dominant hold on the national mood that the election following Labour's landslide in 1997 saw a net loss of six seats. Tactical voting saw gains in seats not won in the previous election. These were Dorset South and Yns Mons (Anglesey) for the political anoraks.

In Havering the story was different – to no one's great surprise, Andrew Rosindell won Romford back for the Conservatives with a comfortable majority (almost 6,000) and a large swing. Havering Fabian chair Keith Darvill was narrowly defeated (1,241 votes) in Upminster, while John Cryer retained Hornchurch with a comfortable if reduced majority of 1,482. The most unexpected gain in Essex in 1997 was reversed – defeated

candidate Christine Butler (Castle Point) had been a speaker at Havering Fabians.

The Council elections in Havering on 2002 would be contested on new boundaries, with 54 seats rather than 63, split equally across the 3 parliamentary constituencies. The new boundaries were contentious – in a particularly strange decision Elm Park was split in three with one polling District added to St Andrews and Hacton, while the two western districts remained in Elm Park with polling Districts from Airfield and South Hornchurch added. The Havering tradition of reeving wards but leaving the name unchanged remained – As advised earlier in the series this makes comparison with earlier years something that must be taken with care.

The new boundaries meant there were 6 rather than 9 seats on Harold Hill and to win the Borough Labour would have to win all these, and probably Elm Park, South Hornchurch, Rainham, Hylands, Brooklands, Mawneys, Harold Wood and hope for an unexpected gain elsewhere. In a good year – 1971 perhaps – this would not have happened. So a year into Blair's second term, unlikely. To add to the uncertainty, as an experiment the election would be all postal vote. This would increase the turnout from the low of 34.3% in 1998 to 45%.

The result was not a good one – Labour ended with just 9 seats and 24.9% of the vote. Both Harold Hill seats – Gooshays and Heaton – returned Labour Councillors but with much reduced majorities – the Independent Workers Party, which included former Labour members made a significant dent in the Labour vote on the Hill reflecting a changing electorate. Fabian Chair Keith Darvill was elected to Havering Council for the first time for Heaton Ward alongside Denis Flynn and Wilf Mills – Conservative Keith

Wells was only 266 behind. In Gooshays, Bill Harrison, Yve Cornell and Jeff Stafford were 490 clear of the Conservative candidate in fourth place. Elsewhere Labour Leader Ray Harris was re-elected in Elm Park, alongside Graham Carr and Jan Davis. The Conservatives were a strong second, 296 behind.

Former Labour Mayor Brian Eagling was 99 votes behind in Harold Wood, no other Labour candidate got as close. Nigel Mayer was the sole Liberal elected in Brooklands, with 119 votes covering the top six candidates. Former Liberal councillor for Rainham Barry Odd was elected for the Conservatives in Hylands.

The Conservative vote rose to 37.7% % from 28.7%. For the first time in the Borough's history Labour were third behind "other" candidates – essentially the residents in different forms. This was in part due to the remarkable vote achieved in Cranham and Upminster where all six resident candidates polled over 4,000. Current Village Ward Councillor in Barking and Dagenham Councillor (and Labour Candidate for Romford in 2005) Margaret Mullane (who has written for the newsletter) was beaten in Mawneys (where the "s" reflected the change from the 1998 boundaries).

The Tories were just short of a majority which meant by elections would be crucial as majority control was at stake. There were two separate by-elections in Rainham and both were won by Labour – Harry Webb and Tony Ellis both winning back the seats they had lost, taking the Labour Group to 11 by 2006.

Labour had an experienced group, but with minimal support needed from the residents to reach a majority, the Conservatives were back in effective control. Michael White took over as Leader of the Council, as the Rosindell

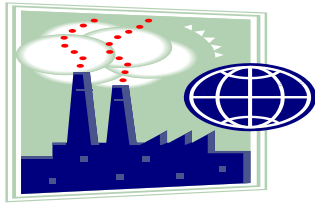
effect began to see a shift in influence from the established Conservative leadership to the next generation.

The postal vote experiment was not repeated. The turnout was much higher than 1998, but more or less in line with elections prior to that. (and lower than the 45.9% achieved in 1994). There were concerns from some that postal voting is easier to manipulate. There was no evidence of this, although experience elsewhere in the Country suggested problems did exist. Early voting was tried elsewhere, and enabled people who would have voted anyway to vote over several days, at greater expense. Turnout remained almost unchanged. The subsequent Rainham by- elections suggested grounds for optimism, (two Labour gains) but. Labour were now on the edge in Havering. Council representation was as low on the Council as it had been since 1968. John Cryer remained MP for Hornchurch, but would be vulnerable to likely swing away from the Government in 2005 or 2006. The GLA seat was almost unwinnable, and in the Council Seats Labour had won, majorities were vulnerable on the Hill for the first time in the Borough's history.

2002 Result

Party	Councillors	% vote
Labour	9	24.9
Conservative	26	37.7
Resident /other	18	32.1
Liberal/SDP	1	5.3
Total Turnout 45.0.%	54	100.0

Next in the series - 2006. What could go wrong?



Future Meetings

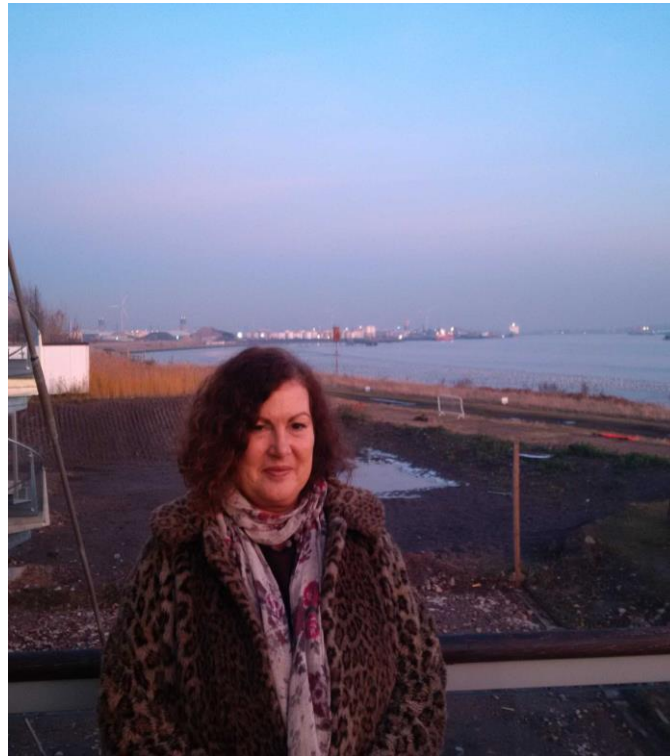
On 23rd January we welcome another new visitor, Councillor Jas Athwal, Labour Leader of Redbridge Council. When Labour took control of Redbridge Council in 2014, Councillor Athwal became the first Sikh to lead a Council in Britain. With the Council elections now 20 months away, this is an ideal opportunity to hear how Redbridge Labour took control and what's happened since. The venue will be Hornchurch Library, with a 7.30pm start.



Jas Athwal with London Mayor Sadiq Khan

In February we are still to confirm the speaker, will be the usual venue – Fairkytes 7.30 pm start, followed by the speaker followed by refreshments. Friday 17th February 2017 is the date, hope to see you there.

In March (date and venue to be confirmed), we welcome back an old friend; GLA Member Leonie Cooper, who was the Labour candidate for Hornchurch in the 1992 General Election, will be the speaker. Leonie has been fighting the good fight in opposition on Wandsworth Council, and was elected to the GLA in May 2016 for Merton and Wandsworth.



Leonie Cooper AM

We have not settled on a speaker for April, although so suggestions welcome – we have many invitations out.

For May, we again cover Local Government, with the Labour Opposition Leader on Medway Council Vince Maple being the speaker – venue to be finalise, but date Wednesday 24th May is confirmed. Vince has been Leader of the Labour Group since 2007.



Vince Maple

Prior to focusing on local government service, Vince was a trade union officer for the GMB union, previously working as a civil servant in the Department of Work & Pensions and the Home Office. He had served as Labour spokesperson on the council's children's services and finance committees and has been deputy leader of the group for the last year.

Vince was former Labour MP Jonathan Shaw's election agent in the 2005 and 2010 general elections and was recently elected to the South East Region Board of the Labour Party.

Vince has lived in Chatham for most of life, and is currently Councilor for Chatham Central ward, which he has represented since 2007.



If you go to the Bekash in Romford mention you are a Havering Fabian and get 10% discount off your food bill.

Next Edition

On 1st May 2017, it will be 20 years on from the election of the Blair Government. We hope to feature articles marking the anniversary, covering a range of local personalities including Havering Fabian Chair Keith Darvill, covering the lead up, the day, the day after (if you can remember it). Your input would be welcome.



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

Chair Councillor Keith Darvill

Secretary David Marshall

Contact

David Marshall

Membership Secretary

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Hornchurch RM12 4AS
01708 441189
david.c.marshall@talk21.com

Vice Chair Sam Gould

Treasurer Dave Baldock

Committee Members

Cecile Duerinckx

Ed Glasson

Sanchia Alasia

Mike Flynn

Ian Carnochan

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.

Next Edition

May 2017 marks 20 years since the election of the Blair government and we will be featuring articles from those who have memories of the day – feel free to contribute! We hope to feature articles marking the anniversary, covering a range of local personalities including Havering Fabian Chair Keith Darvill, covering the lead up, the day, the day after (if you can remember it). Your memories would be welcome.

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 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.



This is the 29th edition of the newsletter. Previous editions are available, please get on touch if you want a copy; all are available via e-mail.

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