

# ARUNDEL, WALBERTON & BARNHAM LABOUR PARTY

Chair Michael Ward  
Sec. Will Ashton  
Treasurer, Deborah See

October 2024

The Annual General Meeting of the branch will be held at

**BARNHAM COMMUNITY HALL**, Yapton Road, Barnham PO22 0AY  
Wednesday 30th October 2024 at 7.30pm.

At this important meeting we shall be taking decisions about the County Council elections and the future of the branch. If we make the right choices we have the potential to improve matters for many hundreds of residents. Arundel and Courtwick district is the best opportunity we have had for some time to elect a local councillor and increase the size of the county council labour group.

The branch officers to be elected shall be:

*chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer and women's officer (where established).*

*At least two of the officers shall be women.*

*This branch shall appoint two auditors and other functional officers as required.*

## **VOLUNTARY HELP NEEDED**

Arun planning applications

We have a small group monitoring local planning applications. Any medium or large proposals need to be scrutinised to ensure they comply with local Labour policy. Improvements will be suggested or objections made where appropriate. Our Labour councillors on the planning committee will be consulted. Help wanted in the Aldingbourne, and Lyminster areas.

Advice and assistance

There is a suggestion that we should run limited advice sessions in Arundel and our local villages. We shall ask a Labour councillor to help and we need members who are interested in assisting, advising and steering people seeking help in the direction of suitable professional advice.

## **ARUNDEL & SOUTH DOWNS CLP meetings –**

Sat 2 November; Arundel Museum, Mill Road, Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 9PA. 10am;  
Conference report; County Council; branch resolutions.

Sat 7 December; Pulborough Village Hall, Swan View, Lower Street, Pulborough · RH20;

AGM 10am

Election of officers, reports of Secretary and Chair.

2025 prospectus

Branch resolutions

## **ARUNDEL AND COURTWICK CAMPAIGNING**

Saturday morning 5th October Meet: 30 Maltravers Street, Arundel BN18 9BU 11am

Saturday 26th October Meet: Green Lane Close, Arundel BN18 9HG 11am

## **NEW DATES**

### **WORTHING WEST CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY**

#### **Campaign in the Heene by-election for Anthony Squires**

*Please ring Peggy on [07583 336 227](tel:07583336227) to say you will be there.*

Thursday 3rd October 4:00pm - 5:45pm

Meet: Outside The Pilates Company, 241 Tarring Road, BN11 4HW

Friday 4th October 4:00pm - 5:45pm

Meet: Blitzkrieg Chop, 193 Tarring Rd, Worthing BN11 4HN

Saturday 5th October 11:00am - 12:45pm

Meet: Outside St Matthew's Church, 103 Tarring Rd, Worthing BN11 4HB

Saturday 5th October 2:00pm - 3:45pm

Meet: Outside Karma Lounge, 171-173 Tarring Rd, Worthing BN11 4HH

There are 11 defences of Labour district council seats on Thursday. A good turnout to help candidates is essential.

#### **Get out the vote in Heene**

Polling Day Campaign Centre

Meet Scout Hut, Bruce Ave, Worthing BN11 5JN

Thursday 10th October 10am to 6pm

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## **TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

### **Aldingbourne Parish Council**

Next meeting: Tuesday 5th November at 7.00pm Aldingbourne Community Centre, Olivers Meadow, Westergate PO20 3YA

### **Arundel Town Council**

Next meeting: Thursday 10th October 2024 7pm  
The Town Hall, Maltravers Street, Arundel, BN18 9AP

### **Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council**

Next meeting: Tuesday 29th October 2024  
Barnham Community Hall, Murrell's Field, Yapton Road, Barnham, PO22 0AY

### **Lyminster and Crossbush Parish Council**

Next meeting: Thursday October 24th At 7.30pm  
The Beefeater, Crossbush Lane, Arundel, GB BN18 9PQ

## **Slindon Parish Council**

Next meeting: Monday October 14th 2024  
Coronation Hall, Reynolds Lane, BN18 0QT, 6.30 p.m

## **Walberton Parish Council**

Next meeting: Tuesday 22nd October 7:15pm  
The Pavilion, The Street, Walberton BN18 0P

## **Arun District Council**

Next full council meeting: Wednesday 6th November 6pm  
Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF

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## **NEW HOMES FOR SUSSEX**

Many local residents oppose plans for increased building of new homes in Sussex but a combination of stronger protection for the countryside and building homes in the existing seaside towns, would meet real housing need and renew rundown town centres.

There is a housing crisis. The government is putting pressure on Sussex councils for a dramatic increase in the number of new homes built. Rising homelessness is distorting the budgets of many councils. The price of owner-occupied homes and rent levels put decent housing beyond the reach of many family budgets. Adults in their twenties and thirties find themselves back living with their parents. Despite all this, the housing drive is unpopular with many local residents. Rightly, the landscapes of the South Downs National Park are protected against most development – but this only increases the pressure on adjoining areas. For many years the Sussex coastal plain – the flat, traditionally agricultural land between the sea and the Downs – has been squandered: developed piecemeal for hundreds of small estates with limited public transport, few services or shops. So what is to be done?

The Government says new homes can now be built on some Green Belt land. But Sussex has no Green Belt and there are no plans to permit large scale housebuilding in the National Park. Protection against over-development should be strengthened. Sussex councils should press government to:

- Extend the National Park - in particular to protect the few places where open country stretches down to the sea, as at Climping and Goring.
- Establish a 'buffer zone' around the National Park - a mile-wide strip of land around the park borders where development is permitted, but with tight controls over density, height and scale.

There is no good reason why housebuilding should be in sprawling low rise developments, remote from transport and services. Instead, building new homes should become the opportunity to renew our tired seaside town centres. Councils should use all their powers and resources to encourage more intensive use of urban, brown field land. Adur and Brighton have successfully done this and over many years have been building new homes and business premises in the Shoreham Harbour area. Our seaside towns are well-connected to the existing train and bus networks. Ensuring that more families can live in those centres would bring new demand, investment and jobs in retail and

leisure businesses. Car parks can be decked over. Existing shopping areas can be rebuilt as mixed-use residential, retail and employment areas.

Too often when homes have been built, promised new schools and health centres have not materialised. In encouraging housebuilding in existing towns, councils must ensure that new infrastructure is provided at the right time, not many years later. National government is planning a new wave of New Towns like those built after 1945. Alongside the New Towns, in the 1950s and 1960s, central and local government invested in helping existing towns – like Swindon, Northampton and Basingstoke – to grow. These Expanded Towns starting with ready-made mixed communities, were at least as successful as the New Towns that were built from scratch. These future New Towns will be planned and constructed by Development Corporations with the powers, capacity and resources to invest. Why not a Development Corporation for our South Coast seaside towns?

Michael Ward

## **HOUSING BENEFITS**

If we are able to start advice sessions next year it is likely that our volunteer advisors will be asked about housing matters and in particular, housing benefits. In order to help members of the local community find the most suitable professionals we will have to be familiar with the major changes our Labour government are going to make during the current session of parliament. Importantly the legislation allowing ‘no fault’ evictions will be repealed. However, the Labour white paper is not addressing the single biggest issue for private renters on benefits.

Buried in the latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) housing figures is a damning fact about the current state of private renting for those on benefits. It shows that so far our Labour government is doing nothing to address the housing crisis facing these people, thanks to the Local Housing Allowance. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) says we must do more.

Soaring private renting prices. The latest ONS figures on private rent inflation show that:

- Private rental prices continue to rise across the country, up by 8.4% across the UK between August 2023 and August 2024.
- Average rents increased to £1,327 (8.5%) in England, £752 (8.5%) in Wales and £969 (7.6%) in Scotland in the 12 months to August 2024.

While Local Housing Allowance rates were unfrozen and realigned to the cheapest 30% of local rents in the final Budget of the Conservative government in April 2024, these were based on rental figures from September 2023. Since then, on average rents have increased by £92 per month in Great Britain and by £174 in London.

Considering these private rent inflation figures, Rowntree is calling on the government to assess urgently Local Housing Allowance’s inadequacy and volatility. The current system of freezing and unfreezing LHA is driving hardship and uncertainty as support becomes untethered from the reality of rising rents until the government is forced to step in.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the rate used to calculate Housing Benefit (and the equivalent in Universal Credit) for private renters. Housing Benefit is designed to help people pay their rent if they’re on a low income or claiming benefits. In April 2024, LHA was increased to reflect the

cheapest 30% of local rents using rental figures from September 2023. Prior to that, LHA had been frozen for four years at September 2019 levels. Since September 2023, rent increases in the private rented sector mean that LHA is already lagging behind the actual cost of private rents and covering a smaller percentage of the available homes to rent for people on the lowest incomes.

As things stand LHA will remain frozen at the current level from 2025 unless the government makes an active choice to unfreeze it. The cycle of freezing and unfreezing LHA is detrimental to private renters and to government finances.

Private renters face an increasingly limited supply of affordable rental properties, especially in places with high housing demand like London or the South East. Because Local Housing Allowance (LHA) doesn't cover the majority of homes available to rent in these areas, tenants often find it difficult to find homes that are within their budget.

People who need to rent privately can be confronted with the choice between living in unsuitable homes away from where they need to be, or to make up a shortfall in rent that leaves them unable to buy other essential items. Added to this is the increase in private rents. Freezing LHA means that private renters need to make up for the shortfall in the support they receive and the higher rents they must pay, which is driving hardship.

Freezing LHA also leaves renters without any security. Not knowing whether the support they receive will reflect the rent they have to pay leaves renters to rely on Discretionary Housing Payments or the Household Support Fund, at a significant cost to local councils, or to go without other essentials to pay their rent.

Any increase to Local Housing Allowance that would bring it closer to the cheapest 30% of private rents has not been factored into the Treasury's spending plans. Freezing LHA leads to soaring numbers of people being made homeless and living in temporary accommodation leading to greater costs for councils until the government is inevitably forced to act when the gap between LHA rates and rents grows too large. Meanwhile, renters are forced to pick up that shortfall. The government must be open and transparent about its spending plans and should acknowledge that LHA will increase in line with the cheapest 30% of local private rents every year permanently.

To prevent private renters on low incomes experiencing further hardship and going without essentials, the government also needs to take broader urgent action on hardship. One quick and relatively low-cost action would be to implement a protected minimum floor beneath Universal Credit's standard allowance. This would limit the deepest hardship caused by debt deductions and the benefit cap, which often affects people facing expensive rents and reduces the amount of their Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. Local Housing Allowance must be unfrozen and fixed. Rachele Earwaker, senior economist at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation said of Local Housing Allowance

"The Budget is the perfect opportunity for the government to do the right thing and unfreeze LHA not just for 2025/26, but also to commit to the rate always aligning with rents so that explicit decisions don't need to be made each year."

The current system leaves millions of low-income private renters living in uncertainty about whether they will be able to afford to pay rent in the immediate future affecting their ability to plan, to put down roots and make a home where they live. Around 80% of low-income private renting households on Universal Credit or who receive Housing Benefit reported going without essentials like food and heating in the six months to May 2024. A commitment to tying LHA permanently to

the cheapest 30% of private rents would be a crucial first step to alleviating the hardship many in the private rental sector are experience.

Acknowledgment The Canary

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## **LEASEHOLD REFORM**

Leasehold Reform has been announced in the Labour programme for the current parliamentary session.

Our Labour Government has promised that over the next year draft legislation, the “Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill” will be introduced.

During the passage through parliament of the recently passed Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 Labour consistently argued that the Conservatives needed to go much further with leasehold reform. The plans for the new Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill include:

- Banning new leasehold flats and reinvigorating Commonhold tenure
- Regulating ground rents (but not necessarily abolishing them)
- Ending forfeiture – where leaseholders can lose their flats for debts as low as £350
- Implementing the Law Commission's recommendations on lease extensions, freehold purchases and Right to Manage.

There is no expectation that this bill will be passed in the next year. It is a highly complex piece of legislation that will take months to write and needs to be scrutinised carefully. It is realistic that leaseholders will be unable to benefit until 2026 at the earliest. It's great news for leaseholders generally. However for leaseholders wanting to extend their leases or purchase their freeholds now, this new reform is a mixed blessing. Many leaseholders have been waiting expectantly to benefit from the provisions of the existing Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 which was passed by the parliament but is not yet in force. The 2024 Act needs more work before it can be implemented. This includes setting the rates that are used to determine how much lease extensions will cost.

While the Labour Government are promising to implement this, the new Leasehold and Commonhold Bill could easily become a distraction. The government is unlikely to put much effort into the Conservative reform when they intend to introduce new legislation.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government say "The implementation of the remainder of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 will require a programme of secondary legislation. Any reforms to leasehold law are highly complex and the Government will take the time required to get those changes right."

The questions we will need to answer for clients given their current circumstances are:

- Will the reform make a lease extension cheaper?

If the lease is below 80 years or if the lessee has a ground rent above 0.1% of the value of the property, in most cases it will likely be cheaper under any new legislation.

- Could the reform make a lease extension more expensive?

If the lease is above 80 years or ground rent is low, the reforms could end up making a lease extension more expensive.

- Can the lessee wait for the reform to take effect?

Because the 2024 act is not in effect and now our Labour government have announced new legislation it is impossible to say whether action or delay would be preferable and reference to a professional will be essential.

Acknowledgment L Darlington

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WEST SUSSEX LABOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

### **'Get County Council Election Ready'**

Saturday 9th November 2024 at 10am

Newells Farm Barn, Newells Lane, West Ashling, Chichester PO18 8DD, UK

A day of preparing for the forthcoming County Council Election including doorstep and phone canvassing training, Dialogue, party policy review, labour county council manifesto, Education, families & children, Highways, A27, Arundel Alternative & potholes, Libraries, social care & health Planning, land, waste & housing, Leisure recreation & community, Fire services & policing, Business & consumers and food! We propose a £5-£10 donation for those who can afford it to cover the cost of food/solidarity donation for those who cannot contribute. Followed by a social gathering.

RSVP Clare Walsh [walsh.clare.louise@gmail.com](mailto:walsh.clare.louise@gmail.com)

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### **REMINDERS:**

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Sat 2 November; Arundel Museum Mill Road, Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 9PA.10am;  
Conference report; County Council; branch resolutions.

Sat 7 December; Pulborough Village Hall, Swan View, Lower Street, Pulborough · RH20 2BF.

AGM 10am  
Election of officers, reports of Secretary and Chair.  
2025 prospectus  
Branch resolutions

Will Ashton, branch secretary, [w\\_ashton.labour@btinternet.com](mailto:w_ashton.labour@btinternet.com)

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## **Letters to the branch**

### *Winter fuel payment*

I should point out that I voted Labour the General Election in July. I also voted for Michael Ward as a Councillor at the last local elections.

I listened to the speech by Rachel Reeves. The Labour delegates should really be ashamed for applauding the speech as they did.

The whole point about the winter fuel payment policy was that it represents the complete removal of a benefit which pensioners have become accustomed to, and one that is appreciated by millions of pensioners, many of whom just "make ends meet".

It is not about introducing a whole new benefit; that indeed would have been different.

This is the work of a shallow, mean-spirited Labour Chancellor for whom looking after the interests of the wealthy and well-connected will always come first.

Very best wishes

(Name & address supplied and withheld by Secretary)

### *Bedroom tax*

The lucky wealthy have grown richer by exploiting the poor and powerless and the Bedroom Tax is yet another way to reduce the welfare state. Whilst the government continues to cut, chipping away at our welfare benefits.

The rich don't need and don't want to pay for any of the welfare state, they just want to benefit from the rich prizes of opportunity as public services collapse and they pick up the cherries.

(There are a number of exemptions: If you or your partner are over the qualifying age for State Pension Credit you aren't affected. However under Universal Credit, you'll both need to be over State Pension Credit age to be exempt. If you're an approved foster carer you're allowed an extra bedroom.)

(Name & address supplied and withheld by Secretary)

### *Brexit complaint*

My replacement passport is a flimsy affair. It comes via a French company and was printed in China.

Is there any explanation why my liberty has been infringed; my freedom of movement between European countries has been restricted; my country divided by a pointless international border and in exchange we get this pitiful document?

(name and address withheld)



*Letters reflect the opinion of the writer only and are not necessarily the views of the branch.*

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**Book review:**

'This is the story I wanted to hear': *Lord Knight, Baron Knight of Weymouth (Jim Knight) reviews 'Unceasing War on Poverty'*



Beatrice and Sidney Webb | Image by: colaimages / Alamy Stock Photo

Compelling and comprehensive ..... Michael Ward has produced an illuminating study of Beatrice and Sidney Webb.

Their list of achievements is staggering. They co-founded the London School of Economics and the New Statesman; they shaped the Fabian Society in its formative decades. They coined the phrase “collective bargaining” in their authoritative book on trade unionism. He redesigned secondary education in London and wrote Clause IV of the Labour Party constitution; her minority report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws became a national campaign and formative thinking for the welfare state.

Tragically their reputation in later life was tarnished by their blind defence of Soviet Russia, despite the obvious human rights abuses by Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. Nevertheless they remain titans of 20th-century British politics and are the only married couple to be commemorated by having their ashes interred together in Westminster Abbey.

Michael Ward’s new book is extensive and sheds light on how Beatrice and Sidney operated as a couple. This is the story I wanted to hear.

Beatrice came close to marrying Joseph Chamberlain but feared being dominated by him. By contrast Sidney gave Beatrice the space to flourish individually. They wrote together and worked as a unit in driving forward their ideas, first in trying to influence both the Tory and Liberal governments and then devoting themselves to the Labour Party.

The Webbs understood the power of social networking. For many years they lived in Grosvenor Road, where Millbank Tower now stands. Seemingly every week they would serve very ordinary food to the movers and shakers of the day. Prime ministers, party leaders, politicians, intellectuals and ambassadors were regular guests. George Bernard Shaw, HG Wells, Virginia Woolf and Bertrand Russell were in and out of their set. Their network was maintained when they moved to Haselmere in later life, and the great and the good continued to enjoy their hospitality. In the words of Shaw their salon was the “social cultivation of the Socialist Party.”

The Webbs clearly understood the power of social networking. They also appeared to understand the importance of hard work. They knew that most frontline politicians don't have time for detail and that those that did the detailed work and built the evidence could then use it to drive policy change. Ward's book gives the impression that in this respect Sidney did more of the evidence-building and Beatrice more of the thinking.

They were clearly a very happily married couple. They decided against children. Beatrice wrote, “Are the books we have written worth the babies we might have had?”. Clearly the challenges of juggling public life and family life go back along way. But politically there is no doubt that they achieved so much more together than they could have on their own. I couldn't help but reflect on how they would have operated in today's politics. Whilst Sidney served as a cabinet minister he does not appear to have been a great Parliamentary performer. Perhaps Beatrice would have done better. Indeed they could have been something more a kin to Margaret and Leo Beckett, who in my lifetime showed me the power of a couple working as one in politics.

Ward's book has compelling sections where this story of Beatrice and Sidney comes alive. At other times it is more of a history of the early 20th century with all the characters of the time featuring and emerging, from Herbert Asquith and Arthur Balfour through to William Beveridge, John Maynard Keynes, Clement Attlee, Oswald Mosley and Winston Churchill. It is a comprehensive history .... I am truly grateful to the author for shining a light on the many facets of Beatrice and Sidney. They deserve more attention and I would recommend this to anyone interested in how progressive Labour politics emerged, and how the thinking behind the Attlee government was forged.

Unceasing War on Poverty: Beatrice & Sidney Webb and their World

By: Michael Ward

Publisher: The Conrad Press