

ARUNDEL, WALBERTON & BARNHAM LABOUR PARTY

Chair Michael Ward
Sec. Will Ashton
Treasurer, Deborah See

November 2024

TRANSPORT CIRCULAR and REPORTING ON A YEAR OF SUCCESSES

New dates for your diary:

The next meeting of the branch will be held at

The VICTORIA INSTITUTE Tuesday 11th February 2025 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.

VOLUNTARY HELP NEEDED

Town and villages local planning campaign

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.

Arundel station train shed

We opposed the application by developers to build on the former builders merchants yard at Arundel station and suggested significant improvements. The planning application was refused and the developers have appealed to the Secretary of State over the Change Of Use Of Former Engine Shed required to enable the Development of 6 Residential Units a further Block Of 6 Units and one Block Of 15 Units together with Associated Parking, Landscaping and Bin Storage.

We want the former train shed, a listed building retained for community use. Our appeal must be lodged by 19th December. If you can help with this appeal please contact me at once.

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.

Local Transport Campaign

Developing an integrated local transport network.
Campaigning for cycle lanes, pavements and maintaining our footpath network.
Lobbying for better bus and train services.
Pothole monitoring.

The campaign has aroused some interest and we have been asked to submit our ideas for local and regional services to the Government South East regional transport inquiry. We anticipate that we will ask Arundel Town Council about their spin-off group attempting to increase active travel and to seek areas of cooperation.

ARUNDEL & SOUTH DOWNS CLP meetings –

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

Guest Speaker
Angela Smith
Labour Cabinet Minister
Leader of the House of Lords

Angela will be speaking at 11.30 am. After her speech and questions, there will be a sandwich lunch

Please let Sinead know whether you will be attending, so that we get the numbers right for catering.

Sinead Abric sinead.abric@hotmail.com

There will be a collection to cover the costs of the refreshments

MORE NEW DATES

ARUNDEL AND COURTWICK CAMPAIGNING

Saturday morning 30th November Meet: Green Lane Close, Arundel BN18 9HG 11am

Saturday morning 14th December Meet: 30 Maltravers Street, Arundel BN18 9BU 11am

We are campaigning for the County Council elections on the first of May 2025. Currently the south east regional office is vetting candidates and we expect to be able to start our selection procedure from 12th December.

We hope to produce a leaflet over the Christmas period and hope that you will have some time to distribute it.

WORTHING WEST CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTY

Canvass NATIONAL CAMPAIGN DAY Small Business Saturday Canvassing

Saturday 7th December Meet: Field Place Parade, Worthing BN11 6BS, UK 10.00 to 11.30am

Co-op Food - Worthing - Field Place Parade, Goring On Sea, Worthing, UK
Meet at Outside Co-Op on The Strand RSVP Ring Peggy on 07583 336 227

TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Aldingbourne Parish Council

Next meeting: Tuesday 3rd December at 7.00pm Aldingbourne Community Centre, Olivers Meadow, Westergate PO20 3YA

Arundel Town Council

Next meeting: Thursday 19th December 2024 6.30pm
The Town Hall, Maltravers Street, Arundel, BN18 9AP

Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council

Next meeting: Tuesday 3rd December 2024 7.30pm
Barnham Community Hall, Murrell's Field, Yapton Road, Barnham, PO22 0AY

Lyminster and Crossbush Parish Council

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

Slindon Parish Council

Next meeting: Monday 9th December 2024
Coronation Hall, Reynolds Lane, BN18 0QT, 6.30 p.m

Walberton Parish Council

Next meeting: Tuesday 10th December 7:15pm
The Pavilion, The Street, Walberton BN18 0PJ

Arun District Council

Next full council meeting: Wednesday 8th January 2025 6pm
Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF

West Sussex County Council

Next full council meeting: Friday 13th Dec 10.30am
County Hall, West Street, Chichester PO19 1RQ

Arundel traffic: time for a new consensus

Since 2000 detailed and ambitious plans for a dual carriageway A27 bypass curving round Arundel in a wide arc, have twice been drawn up by central government and twice turned down by Ministers at a late stage in the process.

In 2003 a scheme was rejected by the then Transport Secretary, Labour's Alastair Darling on the grounds that it would...*cut across water meadows, damaging an area of outstanding natural beauty...*(Hansard 09.07.2003). The Darling decision cancelled the Pink/Blue route which had been campaigned against in the 1990s by local residents including Binsted

On July 29 this year Rachel Reeves, Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that she was abandoning the Grey Route, the latest Arundel Bypass scheme proposed by National Highways in 2020, on cost grounds. Official estimates put the cost of the Grey Route as between *£320 million and £455 million*. The ratio of benefits to costs was poor.

On both occasions the decision to reject the plans came following sustained local opposition led by members of the Arundel, Walberton and Barnham Labour Party branch. In 2018, led by a branch member local residents and the South Downs National Park Authority successfully challenged the National Highways preferred route at Judicial Review. The Grey Route would have had a particularly damaging impact on the villages of Tortington, Binsted and Walberton. In these communities of ours, opposition was virtually unanimous.

There have always been some local supporters for a bypass. They argued that the existing A27 divides the older part of Arundel from 20th century development and that other towns and villages have to put up with the pollution brought by traffic diverted from the A27. They believed that a bypass further from the town – referred to as an 'off-line' bypass – would be the best solution.

But solution to what? What is the problem to which an Arundel Bypass is the answer?

The immediate issue is congestion in and around Arundel town itself and the queues and delays at the Crossbush Roundabout east of the town and the Ford Road roundabout to the west. There is however, another agenda. In 1946 Parliament declared that the A27 was a trunk road – part of the national system of routes for through traffic. The A27 formed part of the Folkestone to Honiton Trunk Road.

At present freight from Dover and the other Kent ports destined for the West of England is likely go via the M25, the M4, or the M3. If large parts of the A27 were upgraded to provide an improved freight route along the coast substantial volumes of traffic would be redirected to the new road.

As a long-standing opponents of the Grey Route and other off-line bypass proposals for Arundel branch members think it is time for all sides to accept that an expensive looping and damaging bypass will not happen. We also to accept that there are some real traffic issues in and around Arundel that must be resolved.

As local campaigners we have long advocated the 'Arundel Alternative' which is an 'on-line' single carriageway scheme close to the line of the existing 1970s bypass. The challenge now for us and other campaigners on whatever side of the historic Arundel Bypass debate, is to come together to work up the best possible version of the Arundel Alternative.

Michael Ward

Littlehampton Town Council have voted to support the Arundel Alternative.

Country bus services and what we have lost

West Sussex has seen a significant and steep decline in bus services since the 1980's with some areas experiencing large losses in rural areas.

From a low base, bus services in West Sussex grew significantly after the First World War with some former soldiers starting bus companies using their skills in motor engineering and driving acquired through their military service. The bus operators began to consolidate and some were bought out by railway companies from whom passengers had been taken with cheaper fares. The Road Traffic Act 1930 established commissioners who had the oversight of safety and regulation such as the setting of fares, routes and timetables.

In 1922 a merger of 14 unions formed the Transport and General Workers Union representing more than 300,000 bus workers and others. A dominant influence in the TGWU's formation and growth was Ernest Bevin, the union's first general secretary (1922–40). The union was a significant influence in developing a passenger bus network in West Sussex.

Buses passed through Barnham between Chichester and Littlehampton from before 1927 and between Slindon and Bognor Regis by 1934. Both services continued through 1965, though the former then ran only to Yapton. Chichester, Slindon, Bognor Regis, and Arundel were accessible by frequent bus services up to 1992.

The postwar Labour government nationalised public transport making compulsory purchase orders for bus companies. Nationalisation was incomplete when the Conservatives won the 1951 General Election and the process was halted. However by 1969 Labour had consolidated almost all bus companies into the National Bus Company and bus services were now in the hands of the state or run by municipal owned bus operators.



Arundel bus garage

A bus station built in the mid-1950s on the corner of River Road but was closed by 1979. Buses served most of our local villages and there were express services to Brighton, Guildford, Horsham, Portsmouth, Southampton and London.

The overall decline in service was the result of bus deregulation in West Sussex following the abolition of road service licensing. It began in 1980 with long-distance bus services and was extended to local bus services under the Transport Act 1985. This abolition removed the public

sector's role in fare-setting, routes and bus frequencies. These powers are now held by bus operators.

West Sussex has lost more than 28% of its local bus provision per head of population since 2011. Rural bus services have dropped by at least 52% since 2008. Weekday evening services where they exist, are often at less than one-third of the weekday morning peak frequency. Some reasons for this decline included rising costs, funding cuts and recruitment difficulties leading to falling passenger numbers. The introduction of passes for pensioners and the £2 fare cap began to reverse this trend and pressure from local authorities has begun to show small improvements in services. Compass, Stagecoach, Book-a-Bus and National Express together with the Five Villages Community Transport and Amberley and Slindon Community Bus now operate services to most of our area. There are, however few weekend and evening buses and none at all to Burpham. Where there are bus stops they are not always in the most convenient place and there is an opportunity for members to assist others on our parish councils who are seeking improvements. For example, of the Compass buses that serve Walberton, most are school services or contracted to provide free services to the supermarket.

Reintegration of services is a long way off with bus and rail connections uncoordinated but we welcome the extension of some existing services, especially locally with the 500 route which provides a model for local transport integration with existing bus and rail points and other hubs. There is however considerable room for improvement. The lack of accountability for public transport infrastructure is one reason why a campaign to promote the creation of a South East region or West Sussex and Sussex Coast Combined Transport Authority is needed. Younger people in the area who usually can't drive, don't use the community bus services feeling they are for old people only and some indeed are reserved for this age group. In this way Slindon is not accessible by bus from Walberton, Barnham, Fontwell or Chichester at convenient times. There is also the problem with the Book-a-Bus service not having been very well advertised. There are some communities which might be served well by it but there is insufficient information to allow potential passengers to feel confident in making a booking. Book-a-Bus can't solve all of our transport woes in a rural community when it is either under-used due to lack of information or overused at certain times or on certain routes.

The extension of the current fare cap is to be welcomed but we should plan to improve and increase bus travel so it becomes a stable element in our community infrastructure. It was a last minute effort by transport secretary Louise Haigh that got a £3 cap agreed but the increase of the cap is a serious blow to some passengers hurting many regular travellers particularly, those on benefits. It has proven to be the one budget measure to have caused widespread public disquiet. However campaigners for improved services do accept that the rise will increase revenues if passenger numbers remain steady, strengthening financial viability. The removal of the cap would have meant that some tickets would have risen 650 per cent to £15.

A Future Campaign.

Transport accounts for around one-quarter of global carbon dioxide emissions from energy which is why such a campaign is important. In the West Sussex where people travel often, transport is one of the largest components of our individual carbon footprint. Over short to medium distances, walking or cycling is nearly always the lowest carbon way to travel. The carbon footprint of cycling one kilometre is usually in the range of 16 to 50 grams carbon dioxide equivalent, depending on how efficiently we cycle and what we eat. Using a bike instead of a car for short trips reduces travel emissions by around 75%.

Public transport is usually our best option if we can't walk or cycle. Trains should be a particularly low emission ways to travel. Taking a train instead of a car for medium-length distances will reduce those emissions by around 80%. Incidentally, using a train such as HS2 instead of a domestic flight will reduce our emissions by around 86%.

Bus travel is very good at about 26g per passenger kilometre putting it in the range of some emissions when we cycle, but without the health benefits. The introduction of electric buses powered by energy from truly renewable sources beats almost everything.

It has been suggested that the branch should launch a car-free commuting and transport campaign. Members might monitor road and rail plans to ensure adequate pavements and cycle tracks. We could coordinate with the Ramblers Association to ensure footpaths are maintained and rights of way enforced. Organisations such as Sustrans could be called upon to assist with campaigns for cycle paths and the Arun Council Labour Group together with the transport unions to promote bus and rail passenger interests. The transfer of elements of bus regulation to our local council and pressure to create a regional authority may also be a focus for such a campaign.

If you wish to help establish such a campaign within the branch please contact me.

Acknowledgements: Branch members

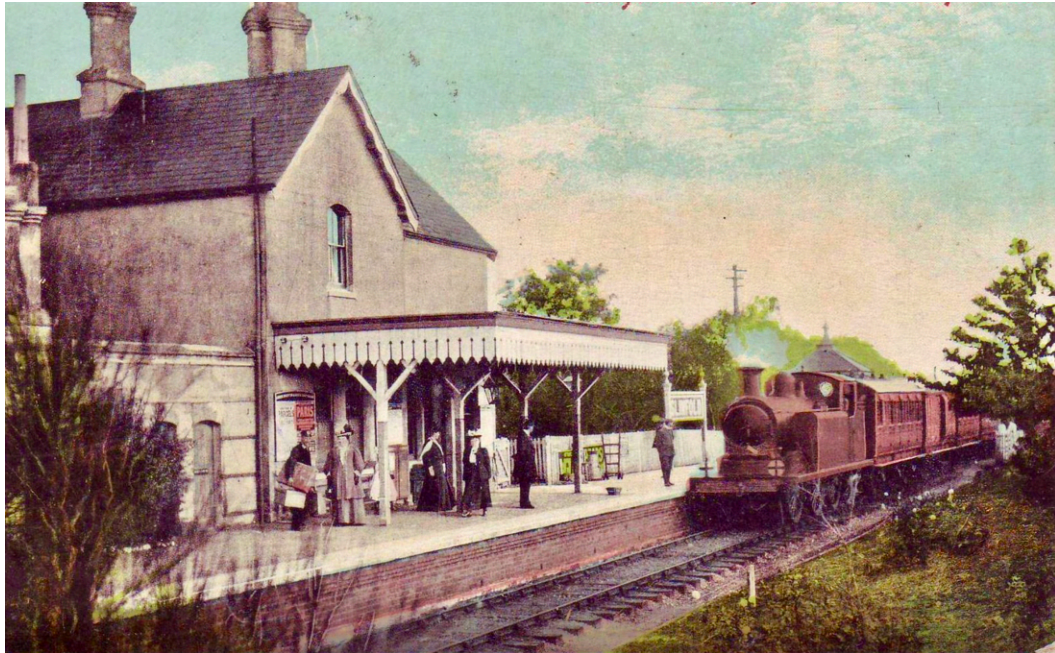
British History and many others.

Paul Stephenson who led the Bristol bus boycott passed away on the 4th November. Paul was a hero of the civil rights movement and his legacy continues to inspire us to take a stand against racism, injustice and oppression. The boycott arose from the refusal of the Bristol Omnibus Company to employ Black or Asian bus crews. The boycott drew national attention to racial discrimination in Britain and the campaign was supported by national politicians, with interventions being made by church groups and the High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago. It led to the passing of Labour's Race Relations Act 1965 which made discrimination unlawful in public places and the Race Relations Act 1968, which extended the provisions to employment and housing.

A direct train link from Barnham to Heathrow Airport

For half a century from the latter part of the 19th century, the towns and villages of West Sussex were served by railway services run by companies such as the Southern Railway and the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway. After the First World War competition from road transport for passengers and freight led to the closure of some services. The Midhurst line closed in 1925 and the Petworth branch ended passenger services in 1955 leaving large areas of the county without trains.

The Labour government's Transport Act 1947 provided for the nationalisation of the struggling Southern Railway in January 1948 and British Railways was created. Successive Tory governments disliked the costs of this operation and the adoption of the policy documents *The Reshaping of British Railways* (1963) and *The Development of the Major Railway Trunk Routes* (1965) set out a restructuring plan which when adopted led to major cuts our railways. The Cranleigh line connected Guildford with Horsham. It was closed in June 1965, four months short of its centenary of services.



Slinfold station

The demand for services has increased in a way that the Beeching reports failed to anticipate and some railway lines are being reinstated. The Association of Train Operating Companies looked at the feasibility of reopening the Cranleigh line to run half hourly passenger services between Horsham and Guildford but the project was abandoned in the 1990s. The trackbed remains largely intact and currently forms part of the Downs link footpath. It has been protected from development and other uses so that it remains available for future use as a railway route.

Increases in population and a demand for freight and passenger services has led to renewed interest in the scheme. The reopened line will link to the Arun Valley line with trains able to run from Bognor Regis through Barnham and Arundel continuing through Horsham and Guildford to Heathrow airport and Old Oak Common. The Labour government, committed to renationalising the railways is providing new funding for infrastructure improvements. By relaunching a campaign and gaining the support of Surrey and West Sussex councils the possibility of reinstating the link has become a real possibility.

The Heathrow Southern Railway is a proposed new railway using mainly an existing but abandoned route to link Heathrow Terminal 5 with Chertsey enabling direct trains to run from Guildford. The scheme was introduced in a government paper published in November 2019 and will stretch for 8 miles at an estimated capital cost of above £1.6 billion. The Labour mayor of London Sadiq Khan has given his backing to the scheme. Mr Khan said the rail link will “support a shift to sustainable travel and transform access to the airport”.

These two proposals will provide access to Heathrow airport and beyond for passengers and freight from our area. Currently this journey is difficult other than by road and opening of the links will lead to a substantial reduction in car journeys. Even if a half hourly direct service doesn't prove possible the inconvenience of changing trains at Guildford won't be a great difficulty. Because the service will link to the railway interchange at Old Oak Common and the high speed railway it will make the rest of the country northwards from London more accessible. The Labour Party understands that high-speed rail infrastructure is needed so that those who do not want to drive or fly long distances across the country can be accommodated. I hope you can support a campaign to improve transport in our area.

Bringing an abandoned pub into community use.



The Prince of Wales by the Woodgate level crossing has closed its doors for the last time. Arun Labour councillors have asked that we launch a campaign to buy the pub so that it can be used by our community. Help from Arun council may be available but a major fundraising effort will be needed. Please contact me if you're interested in taking part in the campaign.

Letters to the branch

(Names & addresses supplied and withheld by Secretary)

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

Winter fuel payments

Cancelling winter fuel payments to pensioners except for those on benefits will prove to be a cruel move. It is unlikely to be forgotten and the Daily Mail will be ready to remind us. Elderly people will die of cold this winter and the Chancellor will be blamed. Unite has a campaign to reverse this cut and I hope that all members will support it.



Agricultural Inheritance Tax

I am hugely disappointed about the upcoming changes to inheritance tax for farmers. I work in agriculture, the tax will never affect me personally but this is just a naive and badly thought out idea. The party could have done so much to win over farmers and then they

Resignation issues

I think I'll be leaving the party. This isn't going great is it?! Supporting Israel is the last straw for me after the sleaze.

(The branch takes the opinions of members seriously. The next branch meeting will discuss Gaza and the war. We hope that this member and all who are concerned will attend.)

introduce this. Their judgement is just so lacking. The policy is going to impact so many small and medium farmers who struggle to make ends meet as it is. Many will be forced to sell up and many new entrants will think twice. By all means go after the Dysons of this world but leave the genuine farmers be.

(From April 2026, inherited agricultural assets worth more than £1m, which were previously exempt will be liable to inheritance tax at 20%.)

From a student member

I enjoyed working and debating with the branch this year. Unfortunately I won't be able to attend the next meeting as I am still at university.

I am managing to do more with the university labour society this year. I am the newly appointed social secretary, did some volunteering on a local council campaign and hopefully starting to work with a local foodbank.



They need warm winter clothes especially for adults. Showerproof padded coats for men and women, joggers, sweatshirts, long sleeve t-shirts, beanie hats, scarves and gloves.

If you have winter clothes to donate, please contact Deborah See (email seeashton@btinternet.com) rather than Sanctuary in Chichester or Alison Hart. Deborah will liaise with Sanctuary and Alison about when clothes can be taken to the drop in.

Members will know that Sanctuary in Chichester began with a group of members and supporters from the branch called together by Roger Pask. Last year members supported the winter appeal with good quality clothing. One large and lucky family benefited from a gift of pantomime tickets at the Festival Theatre. Please continue this support.

Published and distributed by Will Ashton on behalf of the Arundel, Walberton and Barnham Labour Party branch both of Toro, Lake Lane, Barnham, W Sussex, PO 22 0JB