

ARUNDEL, WALBERTON AND BARNHAM LABOUR PARTY BRANCH

Chair Michael Ward

Sec. Will Ashton

Treasurer, Deborah See

Next meeting: Arundel Scout Room, Green Lane Close,

Tuesday 12th August 2025 7.30pm

With the horrific state the world is in it's timely that we should discuss Alwyn's resolution. Also on the agenda will be the current disaster in Gaza and the Labour government's proscription of Palestine Action.

With the reply to the West Sussex unitary authority due I will take your instructions on what to include.

There is plenty of parking opposite the Scout Hall and there is good access. I hope to see you there.

Michael Ward writes:

Stick with Labour

Some of our CLP have given up their Labour membership – members we know well, who have helped run this constituency party, and campaigned hard in elections.

They have left for various reasons, many of them linked to disappointment about the first year of the Labour government. I regret all the resignations. I hope that over time they will be back.

A few years ago, I went to speak to a CLP one Saturday morning. One of the people at the meeting was their parliamentary candidate – now a Labour minister. He said he had taken a phone call that day from someone threatening to resign – his answer was

You can't resign again before you rejoin.

In June last year, during the general election campaign, I went to talk at the funeral of a friend I had known for fifty years, who had died just before the election was called. I said that he would have rejoiced on election night. But by Monday morning he would have written a detailed note on how the Labour government could do better.

The Labour Party consists of determined, committed people, who believe deeply in their efforts to bring about a fairer society in this country and internationally. Labour Party members work voluntarily to run food banks and to teach refugees. They raise funds for all kinds of causes.

There will always be people in the Labour Party who believe that Labour governments should go further and faster. It wouldn't be the Labour Party without them. In 1937, Clement Attlee wrote that

In a party of the left there should always be room for differences of opinion and emphasis. (The Labour Party in Perspective, 1937)

In our impatience to see everything in the last Labour election manifesto enacted, we should begin by acknowledging what has been achieved in Labour's first year. A few examples:

- New investment in the NHS
- Starting to bring the railways back into public ownership
- Increasing the Minimum Wage
- Rebuilding relationships in Europe
- Continuing steadfast support for Ukraine

In the last year this CLP has debated Gaza, benefits policy, disability policy, and much more. That is the Labour Party doing its job – serious, well informed discussion of the issues. And that debate across the Party has influenced the government – look at how policy on Palestine has moved.

A Labour government – especially one with the dire economic inheritance of the previous fourteen years – will always have to set priorities. That means some commitments will be implemented faster than others. As Aneurin Bevan told the Labour conference in 1949,

The language of priorities is the religion of socialism. (Labour Party Conference, June 1949)

Over the last few months, lots of people, including friends and family members, have asked me why I stay in the Labour Party.

My answer is that Labour is certainly not perfect. But it remains the best organisation to fight for improved social, environmental and economic conditions in this country, and for international peace. Our ability to influence the Labour government, through serious, democratic, informed debate, is essential.

In 1932, Jennie Lee, who later married Aneurin Bevan, left the Labour Party to stay with the Independent Labour Party. Bevan thought she was making a mistake:

Pure but impotent. Yes, you will be pure alright. But remember, at the price of impotency. (Jennie Lee's autobiography)

Jennie Lee did return to the Labour Party. After Bevan's death she was Labour's first Minister for the Arts, and founded the Open University.

So I think we must keep a warm welcome for anyone who does resign and then returns. But I am sticking with Labour.

Arundel CLP deplores the current UK government's craven support for US direct bombing of Iran this weekend over Iran's so-called nuclear ambitions. Starmer states that the UK is not 'directly' involved but it is common knowledge that the UK does indeed offer logistical and other support to the US and Israel in the Middle East. Furthermore it is not the nuclear threat alone that motivates the US and Israel but rather a common objective to rid the region of Iranian influence but it is difficult to see how current US policy might achieve this

without escalating the whole affair. We therefore call upon our UK government to desist from any further support for the US and Israel versus Iran without delay.