

# hAROLD

Newsletter of Hastings & Rye Liberal Democrats: 2022 No. 3

## ALL OUT FOR MAY 5th

We are now a week away from May 5<sup>th</sup> and the Hastings Borough elections. Over the past month many of you have been out leafleting the town and our target wards are all complete on the first round, where postal voters letters have also been delivered. We are now ready for the second leaflet, introducing the candidates; we have much less time to get those out, so all offers of help are welcome. Weekend deliveries are being coordinated by Stewart on 07968 845426.

### **CANVASSING**

On Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> evening we have a mass canvassing session in Maze Hill. To make the most of the canvassing we do on Thursday and in the rest of the run-up to next week's election we should try to use the mobile canvassing app miniVAN Touch to capture the data we collect. Martin has arranged for core workers to be set up as users on the system and they should receive an email from Connect with login details [you might want to keep an eye on your Junk folder as Connect emails sometimes get caught in spam filters]. In the meantime could you download the MiniVAN app onto your phone. If you'd like to join us contact Martin on 07836 662216. Hannah Perkins from ALDC will provide training in the use of the MiniVAN app. Download the App at

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/minivan-touch/id352087547>

If you can't put in the legwork, there are other ways to help - telephone canvassing would be a possibility and DONATIONS are always welcome, particularly as two years of Covid have seriously hit our fund-raising.

## **POLLING DAY**

Finally, on May 5th we want to at least be at all of the polling stations in our target wards - that is six, from 7.00am to 10.00pm ideally, so even if you can only give an hour or two it will fill some of those spaces. Again, contact Martin.

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the Conservative government, PartyGate has not gone away, but we don't want the disaffected to just stay at home, we want them to come out and vote for our candidates. Last year, it was widely said that the Liberal Democrat team were the kind of people who could run the Borough; those same candidates are largely still in place, so let's go out and get them elected!



## **HBC Election, 5 May 2022: Liberal Democrat Candidates**

### **Ashdown; Nick Perry**

Nick has visible in the town's politics for over a decade, having been the Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate at the four general elections between 2010-19. He also stood for Hastings Borough Council a number of times during that period. Whilst he had thought he had retired from local politics he has been motivated to return by the actions of the Conservative government and those of the incumbent Conservative councillor in Ashdown. Nick hopes that Ashdown residents who no longer feel comfortable voting Conservative will be prepared to vote Liberal Democrat on 5 May.

### **Baird: Emlyn Jones**

'I am a retired GP who has lived and worked within the Borough for 40 years. I have always been attracted towards socially responsible politics. My campaign priorities include tackling deprivation and the lack of good quality social housing; as well as dealing with pollution, particularly along main roads where there are also schools. Within the Council I want to see more transparency and participatory decision-making. Using my experience, I want to help statutory agencies work more closely together for our most disadvantaged citizens. My leisure interests include archery, walking, music and reading.'

### **Braybrooke: Veronica Chessell**

'As a director of a small business in Hastings with my husband, who grew up here, I am interested to improve transport links to and within the town; to promote cultural events, venues and the seaside location – these are huge assets to the local economy, with potential to increase employment opportunities. As a mum with a

young family, I am grateful for our incredible green spaces and am committed to protecting and extending them, as well as wildlife resources. Thinking of the world future generations will inherit is important to me, and I support schemes that will protect our environment.'

**Castle: Jonathon Stoodley**

Jonathon qualified as a barrister, working for the UK government before becoming an official of the European Commission in Brussels where he lived for 30 years. Upon returning to the UK in 2017 he moved to St Leonards and became politically active. Having worked to support individuals and businesses in the EU, Jonathon would like to see a council more responsive to local residents' interests, offering better value for money, and more supportive of those in need. He is Deputy Chair of the local Lib Dems and Treasurer of the local branch of the European Movement.

**Central St. Leonards: Stephen Milton**

Stephen has two daughters and has lived in St Leonards for more than 30 years. He is managing director of a local company which implements business IT projects and provides services for the construction industry. Stephen is a Humanist and enjoys walking, playing table tennis and keeping track of the latest scientific developments. He wants to see the Council supporting the town's economic base – particularly small and start-up businesses – as a means of transforming it into one of the top places to live and work on the South East coast of England.

**Conquest: Robert Wakeford**

Robert has lived in Conquest for a number of years but his working life has been in London, so he has been trying to adapt to life after the pandemic just as everyone else has had to do! He is married with two young children. He wishes to see better technology infrastructure for the Borough; greater public participation in Council decision-making; and higher, greener standards in Planning.

**Gensing: Susan Stoodley**

Susan was born and brought up in Kent and settled in St Leonards in 2015 where she now runs a small business. Susan believes that social and affordable housing should be high on the Council's agenda, and with increasing pressure on Council finances, it is essential to manage spending efficiently. Neglected areas of the Borough should be prioritised for funding and development, and green spaces should be safeguarded. As the Borough copes with the return to a new normal after the pandemic, it is even more important the Council focuses on targeting funding for projects that will benefit the whole community.

**Maze Hill: Terry Keen**

Terry has lived in the borough most of his life and has always been involved in its cultural life, as a Morris Dancer and musician. A former civil servant, he currently works in the retail industry. Terry, who joined the Liberal Democrats from the Conservative Party in 2019, will stand against the local Conservative Leader due to the actions of the government and the Prime Minister. He hopes that all Maze Hill

residents who are no longer comfortable voting Conservative will vote Liberal Democrat on 5 May. If elected, he will hold the Council to account on Planning, protecting and utilising green spaces, and ensuring that Council Tax is spent wisely.

### **St Helens: Bob Lloyd**

Bob has lived in St Helens Ward for nearly 15 years and is a self-employed property manager. His daughters attended both Blacklands and Helenswood Schools, where his wife taught, and he served as a governor for eight years. Bob's priorities are the building of more social housing, as well as more and safer cycling provision. Other important local issues are: the redevelopment of Pilot Field, better Planning decisions, making Alexandra Park safe, and tackling speeding on a number of local roads. He is the local co-ordinator for the European Movement.

### **Silverhill: Lee Grant**

Lee began his career as a mental health professional and worked as a cognitive behavioural therapist and a service manager for the NHS in primary and secondary care. He founded and is now clinical director for Efficacy providing independent cognitive behavioural therapy to individuals and groups. Lee is a lecturer practitioner at Kings College London and provides post-graduate training to mental health professionals. Lee wants to bring a focus on wellbeing and joined-up policy making to our Council.

### **West St. Leonards: Stewart Rayment**

Stewart runs a small trade mark practice, which was helping Hastings businesses long before he brought his family here a decade ago. He sees Labour's hostility to residents in planning matters as highly suspicious and applauds local residents in their recent success over the plans for the flood plain. A Liberal Democrat Council would run things differently: Stewart believes the planning system should be a natural extension of the democratic process. As the former chair of a local government Education Committee, Stewart says Conservative Ministers have handled schools & colleges badly in the pandemic. There will almost certainly be a knock-on effect mental health-wise which East Sussex's already-stretched Social Services will be left to deal with. Conservative councillors need to be replaced.

## **LIB DEM PINT**

The LIB DEM PINT takes place, as usual on the last Friday of the month – 29<sup>th</sup> April being our next outing. As we're in the run-up to the May elections we're sticking in Hastings for the moment and our next visit will be to the BO PEEP, 29 Grosvenor Crescent, St. Leonards, TN38 0AA at 8.00pm though some of us may be a little



later if canvassing in Maze Hill where Terry Keen is our candidate, aiming to oust the leader of the Tory group on the Borough Council. Last month we started just up the road in the Marina Fountain then moved to the Bo Peep when the disco got going. We look forward to you joining us canvassing or for a pint - better still - both!

## **OFFSHORE PROCESSING OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN RWANDA – STATEMENT FROM LD4SoS**

The Conservative Government plans to send asylum seekers to have their claims processed in Rwanda. Liberal Democrats have campaigned for years, often with colleagues in other parties and alongside NGOs, for a fair, efficient and less harmful asylum system.

We are disgusted by this Government's inhumane treatment of people whose right to seek sanctuary in this country had been accepted even by its own stringent rules. It is not and never has been illegal to claim asylum. Under the Refugee Convention individuals with a well-founded fear of persecution have the right to go to other countries claim asylum – and that right is not conditional on how the person arrives in the country

The real issues are the lack of safe and legal routes for asylum seekers to enter this country – forcing them to put their lives at risk through dangerous channel crossing, and poor decision making. Rather than introducing this cruel policy the Government should be focusing on creating safe and legal routes for people to get there and reforming decision-making.

It is unbelievable that the Home Secretary, herself an immigrant, could introduce the idea of offshoring asylum seekers (possibly women as well men) to have their legitimate claims determined in Rwanda without any substantive interview first! This is a nightmare scenario reminiscent of a deluded game of snakes and ladders where you climb the ladder to arrive in the U.K. only to land on a snake which sends you to a country in Africa which has a poor human rights record where you will have to stay even if your claim for asylum is upheld. If the claim fails, we understand there will be no right of appeal – in the UK 40% of the cases initially turned down are upheld at appeal. The experience from Australia suggests that as well-being inhumane and dangerous (there was widespread abuse in the offshore centres used) it was also very costly.

The detention for immigration purposes i.e., detaining people without trial in prison like conditions has been condemned by the United Nations (UNHCR), HM Inspectorate, cross-party Parliamentary Groups, and a growing number of MPs of all parties. The UNHCR advocates the replacement of immigration detention by a more efficient, faster, and better resourced and more cost-effective system of assessment of claims and decision making in the community.

Apart from being cruel, expensive, discriminatory, and unjust this policy is not going to deter a single genuine asylum seeker from trying to reach our unwelcoming shores.

These 'unwelcome' migrants include people who already have family members resettled here but who are not quite closely related enough (e.g., spouse, child, dependent parent with proof of dependency). They could be young men from Syria

not considered vulnerable enough for a resettlement scheme but at risk of conscription to be forced to kill their fellow countrymen (including many civilians). They could be lawyers, professional women and others fleeing for their lives from the Taliban in Afghanistan. They might also be Rwandans with every reason to avoid returning to an unstable country.

Our country is not overrun by asylum seekers. The relatively prosperous countries of Western Europe receive far more applications than we do, and it is common knowledge that the vast majority of refugees settle in neighbouring countries hence Syrians stay in Jordan and Lebanon.

As Liberal Democrats campaigning for justice, compassion, and efficiency in our asylum system we demand that this current agreement with Rwanda is abandoned, and future proposals removed from the Government's legislative programme. The tens of thousands of UK residents who are opening up their homes to welcome Ukrainian refugees must also be appalled at the double standards of a government, which seems to welcome some who seek safety here and force others to endure months and sometimes years of insecurity.

It is now time that all MPs examined their consciences and values and hold the Government to account. Parliament should resist populist policies designed to appease certain parts of the electorate legislate for sound and humane policies which we can all admire.

### **Meanwhile... Homes for Ukraine**

Almost 100 Ukrainian refugees are known to have already arrived in East Sussex through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The data we receive from the Government is imperfect but this is how we believe our current guests and hosts are distributed:

#### **Arrivals    Host households**

Eastbourne	6	3
Hastings	3	1
Lewes	23	13
Rother	18	6
Wealden	44	19
Total	94	42

The number of arrivals will continue to climb steadily. We believe at least 1077 Ukrainians have already been matched with 446 households across the county.

#### **Total expected arrivals    Total matched households**

Eastbourne	121	55
Hastings	89	45



**Hastings Liberal Democrats**

**SUPPORT**

**UKRAINE**