

Campaign Briefing

Monday

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Why Labour needs First-Past-the-Post in Wales

Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Wales Peter Hain explains why he has proposed a radical change to the way we elect Welsh Assembly Members

As a result of the proposed reduction of UK Constituencies to 600, Wales will see its representation in Parliament cut by 25% from 40 to 30 seats by the time of the next general election. Labour opposed the Bill at every stage in Parliament because we don't believe Wales' voice should be reduced disproportionately and we will vote against the final recommendations. But the Tories will almost certainly force through the changes with the votes of the Liberal Democrats.

Because of the imposed reduction in the number of Welsh parliamentary constituencies, we have to deal with the inevitable consequences for the Assembly, given the constituencies are having the same boundaries.

When there was a reduction in the number of Scottish MPs in 2005, the decision was taken to decouple constituencies and give Westminster and Scottish Parliament seats different boundaries.

This is widely accepted as a disastrous decision. Some Scottish parliamentary seats are straddled across three or more UK parliamentary seats and vice-versa. This leads to confusion for voters, and organisational chaos for political parties.

Everyone is agreed on the need to avoid decoupling in Wales, and maintain the same boundaries for Assembly and Parliamentary

constituencies. The question is, what is the most straightforward and cost-effective way of doing this?

In May, the AV referendum was defeated by a massive two-thirds majority in Wales. For long-time AV supporters like myself, this was hugely disappointing. But it's important we understand why we lost and we accept the result. The referendum showed that Wales is not persuaded by the case for electoral reform: the result was a massive vote of confidence in the first-past-the-post system.

There is no mandate or legitimacy for any change to the Assembly voting system for anything other than first-past-the-post.

This is why we must change the Assembly electoral system to first-

past-the-post if the parliamentary boundary changes take effect.

First-past-the-post may not be perfect, but it will certainly be a massive improvement on the additional member system the Assembly has now.

It's true that Labour introduced this system when we were in government. It was the wrong system, and we should have changed it when we had the chance. And as a Wales Office Minister for much of that time, I take my share of responsibility for that.

So what I'm proposing now is a new, more straightforward, cost-effective and, I believe, fairer electoral system for the Welsh Assembly.

Today's key vote in Party Elections

We ask for your support today for a grassroots voice on the National Constitutional Committee (constituency section)

Vote for Mark James

Mark says "The NCC has a clear role in ensuring fairness in disciplinary matters referred to it. I believe that with nearly 30 years membership of the Party I have the experience to hear cases in an objective way which respects the rights of members whilst maintaining the integrity of our Constitution."

About Mark James

Length of Party Membership: 29 Years Age: 47

Councillor: London Borough of Greenwich since May 2010

Councillor: Kent County Council 1989 - 1997

Mandating is in order

Since the days of yore CLPs have mandated their Conference delegates on issues they feel are important.

This is a perfectly legitimate practice since obviously delegates are at Conference to represent their CLPs and not themselves. There is nothing in the rule book to prevent mandating and all Unions mandate. But of course regional party apparatchiks have found that it is more difficult to lead mandated delegates up the garden path.

It is therefore becoming quite common for officials to pop up at Regional briefing meetings and claim mandating is “against the rules”. They should be asked to produce the rule.

Today, Next Generation Labour holds its first meeting at Conference. Don't miss it.

To win again, Labour needs to understand the reasons we lost and offer an alternative. Ed Miliband was right to say we must learn why five million people stopped voting Labour during the 13 years we were in power. Four million of these did not go to the Tories as shown by their inability to form a majority government.

As younger Labour Party members, we believe the Party must move on from advocating economic neo-liberalism and triangulation. We must stand up for a generation let down by the Tories. They have sold off our generation by pricing us out of education, selling off our public services and leaving too many of us on the unemployment scrap-heap.

A Progressive Agenda to Defeat the Tories: 7:45pm. Monday 26th September at The Abbey, 85 Hanover Street.

Speakers:

Jon Trickett MP, Owen Jones, Sharon Holder, James Mills, Grainne Maguire, Christine Quigley, Tim Roache, Alice Perry and Cat Smith.

Sign up at www.nextgenerationlabour.org or follow on Twitter @NextGenLab

Harry's baptism of fire

Yesterday Harry Donaldson, the new chair of the Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC), presented his first report. Harry must have wondered what he had let himself in for as angry delegate after angry delegate peppered him with difficult questions. First up was Gary Heather of Islington North CLP who pointed out that his constituency had submitted an Emergency Resolution on the issue of *Refounding Labour*. When he had asked the CAC officials what had happened to his emergency he was told: “We will be deciding whether it is an emergency later in the week.” As Gary pointed out, this was somewhat bizarre since Conference was discussing *Refounding Labour* that very afternoon.

Gary was followed by several CLP delegates who were unhappy with the Conference procedure for handling *Refounding Labour*. They pointed out that despite a lengthy and detailed consultation process, Conference delegates had been inundated with long documents in the last few days which many had not even had time to read. To make matters worse, there was inadequate time allowed for debate and all the varied rule changes were to be squashed into one omnibus vote. Harry responded by saying that *Refounding Labour* was a vital issue for the Party and the Party had decided to take the matter very seriously and there had been a lengthy and detailed consultation process throughout all levels of the Party.

**Date for your Conference diary: 6pm Wednesday
Make sure you come to CLPD's assessment of
Conference meeting in the Green Room, 78 Duke
Street with Tony Benn and many other speakers.**

Hypocrites anonymous

Who said? “Why has a culture of greed and instant gratification, rootless hedonism and amoral violence taken hold in parts of society?”

Who claimed? “£7,000 for furniture for his house which included a Chinon armchair, a Manchu cabinet, a Loire table and a pair of elephant lamps. He voluntarily paid it all back in 2009.”

Answer: Michael Gove



“Labour should come out fighting on behalf of working people. We have everything to gain. A poll today shows 70% of the public would be prepared to vote Labour, but only 58% would even consider voting for the Tories.”
Jon Trickett MP speaking at the CLPD Rally yesterday morning.

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