



## Manifesto 2024 Meeting

Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023  
The Bellhouse: 7.00pm to 9pm

### Present:

James Miller, Melissa Aylott, Simon Jones, Helen Miller, Rob Cammidge, Jolene Hills, James Hills, Sydney, Simon Spooner, Jane Wilkes, Lee Clark, Emma Dodson, Lee Houghton, Tris Bembridge and Jon Humphrys

### Apologies for absence

Lara Lawson, Bianca Eleanor, Brian Ayling, Dee Curtis, Terry Fane, Gail Robertson, Connor Bines, Kayleigh Burgess, Lizzie Smith and Sian Evans-Jack

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## Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were agreed and signed by the Chairperson.

## Leader welcome

Welcome from James to explain the process of the meeting, getting everyone's views on all points, and we are open to all to say their thoughts and feelings. We are an open forum.

All are welcome to contact James Miller after the meeting if they wish for more information, and a cup of tea to discuss in more detail.

Jon explained the party voting system and undivided democracy.

## Leader update

James has written an article about Southend Pier that has been published in the Oracle Magazine, which goes out to 15,000 homes across Southend. He has also written an article about Southend Hospital that is due to be published in the Leigh on Sea News.

Lee Clark is officially the party's Head of Fundraising.

Melissa Aylott is officially the party's Head of Campaigns

## Local Elections 2024

### Candidate selections

James confirmed there will be a separate Election 2024 Campaign Meeting that will run throughout the year. All are welcome.

As an addendum to the meeting, Tris Bembridge has been selected to stand as our new Chalkwell candidate.

Those that have confirmed their candidacy are:

- James Miller (Leigh)
- Jon Humphrys (Victoria)
- Melissa Aylott (Thorpe)
- Jolene Hills (St Luke's)
- Lee Clark (Kursaal)
- Simon Jones (Prittlewell)
- Sim Spooner (Eastwood Park)
- Dean Eckett-Harris (Southchurch)
- Dee Curtis (Milton)

- Jane Wilkes (West Leigh)
- Tris Bembridge
- Sian Evans-Jack (Blenheim Park)

## Manifesto 2024 Debate

Do you support a cashless society?

### Comments:

The use of cash is dwindling and there are clear indicators that eventually we could see a cashless society. The disadvantages are that the government has full control of our money where they are able to justify reasons why a person may not have access to it. There are also many people that are unable to pay by card. The advantages are that it is convenient for a growing number of the population and it may become unavoidable for business to retain both avenues of payments.

The vote on this came in at 14 against a cashless society and 1 for. The consensus throughout the discussion was that the option should remain to pay with cash and card together.

The subsequent motion was put forward:

Do you support the use of cash and card as a means of payment?

### Voting:

- Jon – 53
- Tris – 100
- Simon – 75
- Melissa – 75
- Lee – 100
- James H – 75
- Lee – 100
- Jane – 60
- Rob -100
- Helen – 80
- Simon – 80
- Jolene – 100
- Sydney – 100
- James M – 100

### Result

100% of members voted to support this policy  
81% was the mean average for support for this policy

### **Conclusion**

100% of members supported the motion to retain cash alongside card as a means of payment, and it will therefore it will be adopted in our Manifesto 2024.

## Do you support the council's re-wilding policy?

### **Comments**

The council's re-wilding policy seeks reduces the number of times the grass is cut to once per year. It is thought that this will help with climate change.

There are issues of safety along pathways and roads where the overgrown grass and wild flowers force walkers and drivers into potentially dangerous areas. It was not wholly agreed that allowing grass to grow longer will do too much for climate change and more evidence in this area was sought. The saving was £100K, which some felt would have cost jobs. If these jobs were retained, they may have given more support to the action. There were questions about the effect on dogs. There were opposing views in regard to how rewilding affected the look of Southend with Surrey identified as looking particular poor as an example. The suggestion was to pro-actively plant wild seeds so the result will more likely help with the environment and look better and get local businesses and schools involved in the planting.

### **Vote**

- Simon Jones – 50
- Melissa – 75
- Lee Houghton– 1
- James -30
- Emma –
- Lee – 80
- Jane – 75
- Rob – 50
- Hellen – 50
- Sim – 50
- Jolene – 50
- Sydney– 45
- James M – 49
- Jon - 58

- Tris – 100

### **Result**

66% of members supported the policy, which means it did not have the unanimous support required for it to make the Manifesto 2024.

The strength of the vote was only 54% (mean average) indicating that most members did not feel particularly strongly about the support despite those voting in favour of it.

An amended question was put forward:

Do you support a re-wilding policy that pro-actively includes planting wild flower seeds?

- Jon – 78
- Tris – 100
- James M – 100
- Simon – 100
- Melissa – 100
- Lee – 100 Grass 0 flowers
- James H – 75
- Emma – 100
- Lee – 100
- Jolene – 75
- Sim – 100
- Sydney - 100
- Jane – 100

### **Result**

93% of members supported this motion, therefore, it has not passed this time around.

The strength of the vote was 81%, indicating it was a popular policy. This is will raised on the agenda in the future to look to see how this policy can be further developed to take into account those that felt cut grass was preferable to re-wilding.

Discussion on Bellways development that requires 85,000 truck movements throughout Southend

This development has already been approved by the Development Control Committee, which puts legal restraints as to what the council can do to revoke the permission. There has been no motion put forward to do so, but the discussion turned to what can be done in the future to prevent anything like this happening again.

This development presents several separate issues including the decision to build on flood plains, which is the reason for the soil to be driven in, and the environmental factors that 85,000 truck movements will have on Southend roads and air quality.

The motion was raised:

Do you support the prevention of building on flood plains?

*This was unanimously supported and will go into the manifesto.*

Do you support the requirement of any contracts for developers to include a clause to include: 'if you break, pay for it'?

*This was unanimously supported and will go into the manifesto.*

A scored vote was not taken for both motions.

Discussion on council assets being sold with developers failing to deliver

With Southend suffering the consequences of developers failing to deliver, such as the Kursaal, Marine Plaza, Southend United new stadium, old Odean building, old Fisherman's Wharf area, etc, we discussed what needs to be any new contract to ensure this no longer happens

Motions put forward include:

- Requiring a set percentage of the work completed within a time period
- Requirement of the work to start immediately e.g. within one quarter
- A minimum fund requirement the developer would have to meet
- No planning to be granted until the above is secured
- Undergo a progress review and if any of these are not met then the contract will stipulate they must relinquish control of the lease.

These will be put onto the agenda for the next meeting.

## AOB

Nothing to report.

## Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> July from 7pm to 9pm. Venue TBC.

## Addendum

An Executive Committee Meeting has been held and constitutional changes have been agreed. The minutes will be published for all members. The Executive Committee is legally required. The purpose of the meeting covers financial and constitutional matters. Those on the committee are: James Miller (Leader of the Party); Jonathan Humphrys (Nominations Officer); Connor Bines (Treasurer); Melissa Aylott (Campaigns Officer); Simon Jones and Dee Curtis.