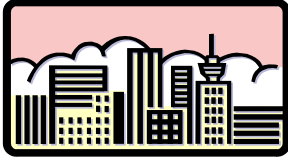




## Can we learn from Ipswich?



I took part in a webinar on October 19th through Membersnet called “Train To Win – Refounding Our Local Parties” I found ‘The Ipswich Story’ very inspirational so I am summarising the presentation here. You may also have taken part and I would welcome your comments particularly if you can suggest how we may implement some of their ideas in our Branch. (Contact me for the PowerPoint slides) Labour lost Ipswich Council in 2004 and although they regained seats in 2008 and 2010 they lost the Parliamentary seat in 2010. Membership declined and meetings and campaign sessions were attended by the same old faces.

After 2010 a move was made to rebuild the Party. Their main objectives were to:

- Get more members involved
- Make new members welcome
- Regular communication
- Monthly social events
- Hold regular campaign sessions

**This is how they changed** after the 2 Branches were abolished to create a CLP:

- They wanted all member political meetings with planned political discussion and speakers to introduce subjects and ideas. They have sessions with a panel based on a ‘Question time’ format and there is time to make resolutions if necessary.
- At the AGM members self nominate for positions in advance and there is a role for TU affiliates.
- An executive committee meets bi-monthly and receives reports from functional officers and makes sure they do their jobs!
- A Political Education Officer works with the Secretary and Chair, arranges speakers for meetings and promotes meetings to members and nearby CLPs.

- Open meeting are arranged and advertised in the Press
- The social committee organises regular social events and fundraisers such as a Burns Night, Italian evenings, Bowling and a Christmas Party – They raised over £3,000 this year.

### **How successful was this reformed Party?**

Attendances at meetings are up and the social events have made for a more ‘cohesive’ Party and provide funds for campaigning and we were told that the more ‘campaign focused’ Party is now winning elections. In 2011 they won 12 out of 16 seats with 5 Labour gains. When campaigning they had been very selective about where resources were used and which wards they targeted. In Ipswich voter ID was focused on seats where there was a LibDem Councillor or a ‘defensive’ Labour seat. Little was done in safe Tory seats. They exceeded their target for gaining seats.

### **The campaign used simple political messages**

but was ready to react to opportunities where they arose. They used simple risographed 2 colour leaflets and repeated the same message Borough wide using a “Local Voice” newspaper (Print Creator) They used voter ID sessions twice a week rising to daily in the last 2 months in their target wards up to the local elections last May. All members were ‘phoned at the start of the campaign and sent a weekly e-bulletin. It was more difficult to involve members who were not on email. There was always a social angle to all campaign sessions.

There is never a ‘one size fits all’ solution to effective campaigning and Ipswich has a tradition of Labour councillors which we have not had for many years in Stortford but we could learn from this story. The ‘New Party Structures’ leaflet on Membersnet also outlines the experiences of Chippenham CLP and North Norfolk CLP.

**Ipswich won a prize at the Labour Party Conference this year.**

**Linda Mitchell Campaign Coordinator**



## Events and Dates for the Diary

### 100 Club Draw

#### October:

217 L Adams

169 B Wall

3 K Henderson

The 100 club raises funds for fighting elections. Winning numbers are drawn at each CLP meeting. To join ring Linda Harvey on 01279 410435.

## Dates for the Diary

- The next Branch Meeting will be held on Wednesday November 9th at 8.00pm at Age Concern, Apton Centre, 22a Apton Road, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 3SN
- The next CLP Meeting will be held on Monday November 21st at 8.00 pm at the Drill Hall, Ware. There will be a speaker. All members are welcome.

## Your Newsletter, Your Say

Not getting your views heard? Ring a Branch officer or email the Secretary on [labstort@gmail.com](mailto:labstort@gmail.com) The deadline for items for the next newsletter is: Monday December 5th

If you want to place an item on the OGM Agenda please ring the Chair or email labstort by Monday December 5th

## Local Labour Party Contacts:

Darren Neesam (Chair) 01279 758995

Stephen Cronie (Vice Chair)

Peter Mitchell (Secretary) 01279 654190

Madge Tillbrook (Membership Secretary) 01279 655628

John Battersby (Treasurer) 01279 305256

Linda Mitchell (Campaign Coordinator) 01279 654190

Peter Hartley (Youth Officer)

### Constituency Delegates:

J Battersby, P Hartley, L Mitchell, LTillbrook, S Tripp, P Tripp, D Willé, A Young

### District Delegates:

J Battersby, L Mitchell, P Mitchell, D Willé

### County Delegates:

D Mitchell, P Tripp

### Auditors:

S Purton, D Willé

