

Nancy Platts

Campaigning for a fair future for all

the
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Summer 2009

South Downs to receive National Park status



The announcement by Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, that the South Downs is set to become a National Park has been enthusiastically endorsed by Nancy Platts, Labour's Parliamentary candidate for Brighton Pavilion.

The decision by the minister has been warmly welcomed by the South Downs Campaign, a network of 160 organisations including national and regional environmental organisations.

The Downs was originally recommended for national park status sixty years ago and this decision means that the land within the new boundary will have the highest level of protection under the planning system. Nancy Platts says, "It means that the countryside of the South Downs will be protected forever for the enjoyment of future generations."

All local council areas covered by the National Park will be represented on the new South Downs National Park Authority set up to oversee the Park and the Authority, and will work to promote the interests of the Park for all. It is proposed that the Authority will be set up by April next year and fully operational a year later.

The new national park will cover an area of 627 miles stretching from Winchester to Eastbourne. The boundaries have actually been extended from the original Park boundary as recommended by the inspector's original report. To the delight of local campaigners the Western Weald, Lewes and Ditchling will also be included in the Park boundaries.

It is regrettable that Conservative MPs Nigel Waterson and Nick Herbert, and Tory controlled West Sussex County Council have opposed the decision.

“The Government's decision has placed the interest of the many over the narrow sectional interests of landowners and reactionary Tory councils”

Nancy Platts, Labour Party Brighton Pavilion Parliamentary candidate

“On behalf of the South Downs Campaign I would like to thank you for your help with our campaign, particularly with regards to distributing our campaign postcard to households in Brighton. The announcement last Tuesday was a landmark decision and at long last saw the South Downs getting the recognition and status it deserves”

South Downs Campaign letter to Nancy Platts from Chris Todd

“The announcement from Hilary Benn will enable us to pass on to future generations the beautiful countryside of the South Downs with safeguarded National Park status”

David Lepper MP

 **Labour**

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Tories threaten free bus passes

Nancy Platts is very disappointed that the Tories in Brighton and Hove City Council tried to cut the use of free bus passes for the disabled and over 60's. The Tories attempted to introduce a later start time of 9.30am. Labour Councillors successfully blocked the move, stating that those using the pass should be able to get into town early to avoid the crowds, or be able to get an early GP or hospital appointment.

Earlier this year Nancy Platts defended the rights of older people's freedom to travel through the pages of The Argus. In the face of opposition from a local Tory MP, she says, "How miserable of Tim Loughton, Conservative MP for East Worthing and Shoreham to denounce older people for travelling for the sake of it. After a lifetime of hard work, free travel for older people is well deserved."

Nancy Platts Q&A

Local Journalist Marian Cleary asks Nancy Platts why she wants to be the next MP for Brighton Pavilion

Why did you go into politics?

I want to represent the local community and bring politics back to the people. I think many people do not believe that Westminster politics is relevant to their lives and I want to play my part in changing that.

For many years I have been a professional campaigner, mainly in the voluntary sector. I even met my partner Steve whilst campaigning within the trade union movement for a publicly owned railway. Now I want to use this passion to bring change to the House of Commons. What happens there is important and I know I can represent people effectively. I've already been active in the constituency and this will continue.

Why Labour?

I grew up under the Thatcher Government. Greed and individualism prevailed. Some prospered but many people lost their jobs and their homes – the Tories just left them to struggle. Labour offered a new vision, 'for the many and not for the few'.

How do you view the Government's response to the recession?

The contrast with the Conservative party is clear. Labour has continued to invest in the economy, public services and provided help for families and people on modest and middle incomes. The Government is also funding a major expansion of apprenticeships.

We cannot afford for young people to leave school and be faced with a prolonged period of unemployment, as occurred in the 1980s – the costs to society are too great. I am pleased that the Government has decided to guarantee training or employment for every young person under the age of 25, unemployed for a year.

What's your personal passion?

Without question, tackling disadvantage and creating a fairer and more equal society. Whether it is better public transport with access for people with disabilities, cheaper fares for those on low incomes, a living wage, affordable childcare so parents can go back to work, or tackling energy providers and others who make huge profits at the expense of ordinary people – these are all things on which I have campaigned in my professional life and will continue to do so if elected to Parliament.

There are Government policies where my views differ, but I still passionately believe in the Labour Party as the vehicle for progressive social change in this country.

However going into Parliament will not stop me from standing up for what I believe in and on the issues that you tell me are important to you.

What would you do differently if you were in charge?

I think older people should receive greater priority. With the public finances suffering from the recession I believe we should reconsider how we plan to spend our money. I would like to see substantial investment in care for older people; this could be funded by abandoning Trident and ID cards.

I would also like to see more investment in renewable energies so that the Government can deliver the reduced carbon emissions reductions which it wrote into the world leading Climate Change Act.

Vision for Brighton

Well it is a great city and I enjoy living here. But we need more social and affordable housing so that people born and brought up in Brighton can afford to stay here. I also want better public transport, continuous cycle lanes and more spaces for young people.



Cash boost for Brighton cyclists

Thousands of school children in Brighton and Hove will benefit from the opportunity to take part in Bikeability training after councils received more than £90,000 in funding. Brighton and Hove Council will receive Government funding to train 364 children in essential road safety skills and greater awareness of the dangers of the road.

The national training scheme is part of a package of £140m being spent nationally to develop skills for up to half a million children.



Sure Start Centres under threat

Labour is on target to fulfil its pledge to open 3,500 Sure Start children's centres by 2010. Sure Start brings together childcare, healthcare and other services under one roof for both parents and children.

If the Tories get in, they could be under threat. The Tories want to cut £200m in funding from the existing budget. When Nancy Platts was Head of Policy at Daycare Trust, the national childcare campaign, she campaigned for a children's centre in every community. She says, "families in Brighton tell me they want more Sure Start centres, not less; the cuts proposed by David Cameron are equivalent to closing one in five children's centres, meaning your local Sure Start could close."

There are already children's centres in Elm Grove, Hollingbury and Patcham, Hollingdean and Tarner. Further Government investment will bring the total to 19 across Brighton and Hove, including plans for a new Sure Start in Preston Park.

Stamping out graffiti

Following her success in the Hanover and Elm Grove area, Nancy has been keeping a sharp eye out for graffiti vandals in Brighton Pavilion. Nancy has been working with the Graffiti Officer at Brighton and Hove City Council and Sussex Police to stamp out graffiti in Crown Gardens in the St. Peters and North Laine area. Once the graffiti was cleaned up, Nancy organised a residents meeting to bring everyone together and we're now working on a plan to wipe out this graffiti, once and for all.

Nancy says, "As you can see from these photographs, this twitten was covered in graffiti and as well as being unsightly, residents told me they were fearful of going out at night. No-one should be made to feel unsafe in their own neighbourhood, so I've been working with the local Police Community Support Officer and the Council to clean up the street. The graffiti vandals can expect tough action when we catch them."

"We had lived opposite garages that were covered in graffiti for some time; it really made the area look uncared-for. I contacted Brighton Council a couple of times but they said nothing could be done as it was private property. When Nancy Platts knocked at my door and explained she was trying to get the whole area cleaned up, we finally got some action."

Debbie Campbell, Newark Place, Hanover

"I live in a twitten in the city centre that was targeted by graffiti vandals; all our houses, garden gates, walls, even windows and doors were covered in it. We had rubbish tipped all over the street and then to cap it all, some young lads thought it would be really funny to hide at night and then jump out at women walking home alone. Nancy Platts was quick to respond. She organised a resident's meeting with the local Police and Council Officer. She soon got the area cleaned up and is now working to get the lighting improved for us."

Chloe Lankshear, Crown Gardens, St Peters and North Laine



Extra money for parks and playgrounds

Money from the Government's National Play strategy budget will fund improvements to 22 parks in Brighton and Hove. The funding aims to make play areas used by 8 to 13 year olds more adventurous.

This year will see improvements to 11 play areas, including Dyke Road Park, Preston Park, Queens Park and William Clarke Park.

Bringing politics to the people

David Lepper MP reflects on his time in Parliament since the historic Labour victory in 1997

Over 10 years ago, as the first ever Labour MP for our area where low pay is a real problem, I was pleased to be on the Parliamentary committee dealing with Labour's National Minimum Wage (NMW) laws. Each day Conservative MPs tried to block our plans to help working people.

This April Labour marked the 10th anniversary of the NMW by increasing fines for its non-payment. We also increased full and part-time worker's statutory holiday entitlement – and gave parents with a child under 16 the right to request flexible working.

When the General Election comes I retire from Parliament, but I'm proud a Labour government brought in these policies and has done so much to transform Brighton through:

- record investment in the NHS – our new children's hospital, breast screening centre, improvements in

local cancer, kidney and heart services, and reductions in hospital waiting times

- investment in schools, Sure Start and children's centres
- tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, with the police working with residents' Local Action Teams in our neighbourhoods

And the Labour government takes the international lead in tackling poverty in developing countries and in setting challenging emissions reduction targets with the Climate Change Act – the first of its kind in the world.

I've been directly involved in shaping Labour's laws to:

- give the city's 25,000 leaseholders new rights
- repeal Section 28, introduce civil partnerships and tackle discrimination and harassment based on gender and sexual orientation
- protect precious wildlife sites and give greater access to the countryside
- back local traders with Business Improvement Districts like that in our city centre

Of course, there is still more for Labour to do and, having campaigned with Nancy Platts, I know that when

I retire she will be an excellent MP for Brighton Pavilion. She lives in Brighton. She knows the problems and the strengths of our area. Nancy Platts will be a strong champion for us all in Parliament.



FREE SWIMMING!

Labour's commitment to free swimming means that from April 2009 everyone over the age of 60 will be able to swim for free at the King Alfred, Prince Regent and St Lukes pools.

Brighton and Hove City Council will receive a share of a £10m fund to spend on modernising or improving local swimming pools.

Seagulls staying up

Celebrating the Seagull's victory with friends and fellow supporters. All the best for next season!

Commenting on the development of the new stadium at Falmer, Martin Perry, chief executive of Brighton and Hove Albion, says:

"Labour has been steadfast and unwavering in its support from day one."



Ed Miliband & Alan Johnson

As part of Nancy's campaign to take politics directly to the community she has in the last year brought several senior Government Ministers to Brighton.

Nancy says, "I believe that politics has become too far removed from the lives of many ordinary people. Wherever possible I want to give people and organisations the opportunity to directly question Ministers. This is one way of seeking to hold Government Ministers to account and also helps keeps them in touch with what people on the ground are saying."

Nancy invited Climate Change Minister, Ed Miliband to Brighton in February and he addressed an audience of 200 people. Among the organisations represented were Environmental Protection UK, Friends of the Earth, the South Downs Campaign, Transition Towns, Bricycles, Brighton Co-operative Housing and a number of trade unions.

In her introduction Nancy welcomed the Government's ambitious targets to reduce carbon emissions set out in the Climate Change Act and overseen by a committee of independent experts. But she called on Ed Miliband to abandon plans to expand Heathrow Airport. Instead she called for a substantial expansion of the rail network, and faster progress towards the creation of millions more energy efficient homes to help eradicate fuel poverty.



Nancy also organised and chaired a similar event with Alan Johnson, the previous Secretary of State for Health. The event was attended by over 130 people and around 40 healthcare organisations were represented.

Alan Johnson spoke and took questions on a range of healthcare issues. We heard contributions about birth, breastfeeding, commissioning services, drug and alcohol use, stroke services, assisted dying, the role of NICE and funding of new drugs, direct payments, predicting the type of healthcare workforce needed for the future (relating to a surplus of physiotherapists) and the prevention of tuberculosis.

Nancy says, "Whilst there is always more to do I welcome the sustained levels of investment that have brought waiting lists down from 2 years to 18 weeks. We must remain vigilant to the threat of a Tory Government placing in jeopardy the progress that has been made"



Nancy says:

- We should always be seeking progressive change
- We should always be asking for transparency and accountability
- We should always be asking Labour Governments to deliver more

It is only by constantly challenging that we will succeed in creating lasting change.

FARESHARE

Delivering food to the sick and homeless

Recently Nancy volunteered with the 'Fareshare' team delivering food for the day to organisations across Brighton that work with homeless and vulnerable people.

Each year tonnes of surplus food goes directly into landfill. Projects like Fareshare have found an ethical alternative by arranging for over 280 tonnes of food to be distributed to people that might otherwise go without.

The day Nancy was at Fareshare they delivered to about ten of over 40 projects in Brighton including Sussex Beacon and the West Pier Project as well as projects working with young, homeless people such as Stopover and the Clock Tower Sanctuary.



With many of the projects hidden from view, Fareshare are helping an almost invisible population of 11,000 homeless, sick and vulnerable people across Brighton every day – they are also doing it on a shoe-string budget, relying mainly on volunteers.

For every £1 spent, Fareshare delivers £8-£10 worth of food, which is excellent value for money.

If you want to help Fareshare by volunteering, fundraising or making a donation then you can get

in touch by calling 01273 671 111 or emailing info@faresharebrightonandhove.org.uk

Government push for 'green' cars

Hundreds of jobs could be created in Sussex as a result of the Government's announcement to prioritise the development of green cars. Ministers will be talking with electricity suppliers to develop a national network of roadside powerpoints where vehicles can recharge batteries.

The team at Elektromotive, based in the Sussex Innovation Centre on the University of Sussex complex, have become a leading name in the field of electric car infrastructure and will bid for work that becomes available as a result of this initiative.



Nancy Platts at the Brighton Festival

One of the best things about living in Brighton is the annual Brighton Festival. As in previous years, the festival opened with the brilliant Childrens Parade. Here is Nancy with Mr Water Butt and Ms Water Bottle!



Tories attack National Minimum Wage

A group of Tory MPs are attacking the National Minimum Wage through the Employment Opportunities Bill which has been tabled by senior Conservative Christopher Chope.

The 'Bill', backed by another ten Conservative MPs, includes provisions for:

- allow employees to opt-out of the minimum wage
- grant the 'right to work' under the Declaration of Human Rights by allowing workers to be paid less than the minimum wage

A Labour Party campaign has developed to stop the Tory Bill that will totally undermine the minimum wage and drive millions of workers back into poverty pay.

Nancy Platts wants to hear **your** views

Q1: Which issue would you most like the Labour government to act on?

Q2: Which local issue would you most like Nancy Platts to act on?

Q3: If there were to be a general election tomorrow, who would you vote for?

- Conservative Labour Lib Dem Green Other Don't know

Q4: How certain are you to vote Labour? (0= will not vote; 5 = will definitely vote)

- 0 1 2 3 4 5

Q5: Would you prefer a Labour or Conservative Government?

- Labour Conservative

I am backing the Nancy Platts campaign to be the next MP for Brighton Pavilion

I can help the Nancy Platts campaign by delivering leaflets

I would like to vote by post, please send details.

I would like to join the Labour Party; please send details

If you do not want the Labour Party to contact you, please write to us at 179 Preston Road, Brighton BN1 6AG

Thank you for completing the survey. Please return this form to: Nancy Platts, Brighton Pavilion Labour Party, FREEPOST BR901, Brighton BN1 4ZZ

Name

Address

Postcode

Email

Voting Green will mean a Tory MP for Brighton



At the last general election, the Green Party trailed in third place – nearly 6,000 votes behind Labour. A vote for the Green Party makes it more likely you will get a Tory MP – and a Conservative government.