



# Hastings & St Leonards News

Above: PETER CHOWNEY, Labour Party Parliamentary Candidate for Hastings & Rye



Shadow Housing Minister Sarah Jones (right) with Peter Chowney and site crew at Winchester House



“I love this part of the country, I'd welcome the opportunity to represent you as the next MP for Hastings & Rye.”

## Peter Chowney

I've tried to cover as many topics as possible in this document, but if there's something that you'd like to ask, or tell me what you'd like me to do in Parliament, please contact me.

Also, if you'd like to help with my campaign to become the Labour MP for Hastings & Rye, or you would like to display a poster, get in touch.

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## FISHING POLICIES



## Catchers in Hastings & Rye

Local fishermen have been let down too often. A new 'landing obligation' is a disaster for small boats and could mean they're prevented from putting to sea for more than a couple of days a month.

Added to that, local fishers feel betrayed by the government, who've been prepared to trade off any benefits Brexit might have brought our fishermen in favour of other industries in an EU trade deal.

But the real problem remains the way the quota is allocated by the UK government. Although the under-ten metre fleet makes up 95% of the total UK fisheries fleet, it gets less than 4% of the total quota. Labour will put an end to that unfair distribution, and give a significantly larger allocation to the under-ten metre fleet. And that will benefit our local fisheries, helping them to continue their 1,000 year tradition of sustainable fishing.

## Yes, we can have affordable homes

I was very pleased to welcome Sarah Jones MP, the Shadow Housing Minister, on her recent visit to Hastings. We took her to Winchester House in St Leonards, which is an abandoned former school being refurbished into 26 social rented flats for local people.

The work is being undertaken by Optivo Housing Association but is funded jointly by Hastings Council and Optivo through the Coastal Space project.

This project has already brought several empty, abandoned properties in St Leonards back into use as social housing. Properties already completed include a former nursing home on the junction of Carisbrooke Road and

Stockleigh Road, which had been empty for several years. Schemes such as Coastal Space can provide new affordable rented homes to prevent local people being displaced. We need more money invested in social housing for those who need it and to preserve local communities.

Our 'broken housing market', as the government calls it, needs to be fixed. But unlike the Labour Party, they don't have the policies or the will to do it.

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Promoted by Eileen Masters on behalf of Peter Chowney both at Hastings & Rye Constituency Labour Party, 84 Bohemia Road, St Leonards on Sea, TN37 6RN Printed by Adams of Rye Ltd at 8 High Street, Rye, TN31 7JH



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# About Peter Chowney



In the June 2017 general election, I contested the Hastings & Rye constituency for Labour, reducing Amber Rudd's majority to just 346 votes. I've now

been selected to stand as Labour's candidate for Hastings & Rye at the next general election.

My background is working class – I was educated at a state grammar school and was the first person in my family to go to university, to study microbiology. I worked in scientific research for a time, then worked for government departments, the Audit Commission, and for urban and rural councils.

I moved to Hastings over 20 years ago, and was first elected to Hastings Council in 2000, becoming Leader of the Council in 2015. I live with my partner, Jo, in St Leonards.

Hastings & Rye is a beautiful, creative and fascinating area to live, but it has its problems. With a Labour government, for the many not the few, we can solve those problems together.

In this newsletter, I've addressed what I believe to be some of the main issues facing the people of our constituency. There are many more, so watch out for future newsletters!



## 2nd May elections in Rother

Peter Chowney (second from right) with Labour Party candidates for the Rother Council elections on 2 May.

### Help us to elect:

Bob Ball, Nick Warren, Jonathan Lee, James Cakebread, Beverley Coupar, Cheryl Creaser and Elaine Lee

### A few words on Brexit...

With the government floundering on a knife-edge, it's impossible to predict what will happen as I write this.

Whatever the outcome, I promise to fight for the best option for tourism, fisheries, farming, scientific research, academic programmes and all the other sectors that are important to Hastings & Rye in our relationship with the EU, whatever the outcome of this catastrophic, ill-judged and tortured process.

### UNFAIR WELFARE



## No way to treat the poor

The early rollout of Universal Credit (UC) in Hastings two years ago has been a disaster for those unfortunate enough to need to claim benefits. The Hastings Foodbank immediately saw an 80% increase in demand for its services. It's still the government's intention to transfer all claimants under 60 to UC, meaning the number on Universal Credit will almost treble.

The experience of individual claimants is that UC gives you 20–30% less money, making it hard to survive. The five-week built-in delay at the start of the claim, as well as the cruel and unnecessary benefits sanctions, have left people destitute, and have led to big increases in homelessness.

In Hastings, the Labour-run council has helped a little by retaining a full council tax reduction scheme, so those on out-of-work benefits pay

no council tax. Sadly, that doesn't apply to those claimants living in Rother District.

Next year, it's likely that Hastings Labour-run Borough Council will be the only council in the country that relieves its poorest residents from the extra burden of having to pay council tax.

Universal Credit has been universally discredited. Labour is committed to scrapping it. It needs to be replaced with a universal benefits system that focuses on helping and encouraging people into work, treating them with respect and dignity, and giving them enough to live on without depending on food banks.

**“Universal Credit is not about providing help for those in need. It's about punishing people for being poor.”**





## NHS at risk

The proposed closure of routine ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgery at the Conquest Hospital is a blow for local people. With services being relocated to Eastbourne, it will be much harder for local parents especially, as many families in Hastings don't have access to a car. For Rye and the eastern parts of the constituency, it will mean a trip to Ashford as the nearest ENT hospital.

With the proposed closure of the GP walk-in services at Hastings Station Plaza and stroke services already relocated from the Conquest to Eastbourne, how much further will these local cuts go?

While specialist centres of expertise in different clinical disciplines can be beneficial, it can't be at the expense of closures elsewhere. We need to defend our national health services in Hastings & Rye, and make sure that additional resources for the NHS promised by Labour will protect services here in Hastings & Rye.



## Build it in Hastings & Rye

'Made in Britain' was once a proud boast. Since the 1980s, manufacturing in the UK has declined dramatically. Now only 2% of manufactured products worldwide are made here.

In Hastings & Rye, we do have a significant manufacturing sector. Our larger manufacturing employers include Marshall Tufflex, who make extruded plastic cable trunking; BD foods, who supply prepared meals; and Focus SB, who have recently won a major contract to export electrical fittings to China. We also have a thriving, specialist manufacturing sector for optical and photonic equipment, from Photek in St Leonards to Kingsview Optical in Rye. Indeed, there are parts made in Hastings in the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, and on Mars in the Curiosity probe.

But we need better government policies to encourage manufacturing in the UK. This means making sure the billions of pounds in government contracts that are currently let to overseas manufacturers are used to pay for manufacturing jobs here in the UK, and right here in Hastings & Rye.

We need to ensure that local people receive the training they need to take advantage of this, and that small manufacturers are given the incentives to take on apprentices and grow their businesses. Nationally we need to stop depending on the financial sector. We must build an economy that provides good quality, well-paid jobs for all, not for an already wealthy elite.



## One world: save it!

Last October, international experts on Climate Change gave us a stark warning: we have 12 years to limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5%. If not, the consequences will be catastrophic. This is the most important issue facing the UK, and all of the world's governments.

Locally, we can make changes, starting with our own behaviour. Hastings Council is making a major commitment to make the area carbon neutral by 2030, but we need the commitment of the County Council and other agencies to achieve that.

Nationally, Labour is committed to creating a £250 billion fund to move our economy onto a low-carbon, sustainable footing, generating 60% of our power from renewable resources within 12 years, and investing in better standards of energy conservation in industry, transport and homes. We must tackle climate change now, before it's too late.





# Academies fail Hastings & Rye

Academies have not worked well for local school students. In Hastings, all except one of the non-religious schools are now academies. But educational performance remains poor. Three out of four secondary

**“These failed academies need to be brought back under council control and given the funding they need.”**

schools in Hastings – all academies – were rated below average for GCSE results last year.

In Rye, most of the schools are still local authority maintained, but both the

academies received ‘Inadequate’ Ofsted ratings at their last inspection. Rye Studio School, launched as a ‘flagship’ academy by Secretary of State Michael Gove, failed completely and closed last November. This

privatisation of our schools by turning them into academies has failed.

These failed academies need to be brought back under council control and given the funding they need to address the poor educational performance and skills shortages we have in large parts of our constituency. Labour is committed to putting our children before money-making schemes by profit-driven companies.



**Above:** Rye Studio School closed after five years.

**Main photo:** NASUWT members outside Ark Academy Helenswood in May 2018, striking over increased workload and failure of the academy to abide with the Pay Review body recommendations.

Image courtesy of www.premiermodular.co.uk



# Tory cuts fuel crime wave

Huge cuts to police funding over the last eight years have led to big reductions in front line policing. In Hastings, every ward used to have its own dedicated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) on regular patrol, with two PCSOs in some wards. Now only a handful of PCSOs remain, deployed only in response to specific incidents. Outside Hastings the police simply don't have the resources to investigate 'rural' crimes such as flytipping by criminal gangs and thefts of farm machinery, with only one rural crime officer for the whole of Sussex.

Much of the government's recently announced £970m for police forces will be swallowed up by increased pension costs, and is unlikely to result in more police officers on the beat. Labour is committed to restoring police funding to 2010 levels, before Tory austerity cuts reduced policing to such inadequate levels. If we want our police to do their job properly, they need to be funded properly.

For Amber Rudd it was a flagship policy promise, but it's now highly unlikely that HS1 Javelin trains will be coming to Rye. The next 'control period' for Network Rail investment (2019–24) includes no mention of it, and the basic works at Ashford International have been scrapped because of technical problems. Views on the likely benefits, particularly in Rye, were mixed, but it was hailed by our local MP as the big project to revitalise our local economy.

However there are other ways to improve the appalling rail and road infrastructure throughout the constituency. We need better walking and cycling infrastructure too. Labour will develop integrated transport infrastructure, rather than isolated one-off projects.

Police cuts mean rural crime isn't investigated, and there's no commitment to protect better quality British-farmed meat and vegetables from poor quality foreign imports, such as chlorinated chickens and hormone-fed beef from the USA. Whatever happens over Brexit, Labour is committed to protecting UK farm standards, and making sure cheap, poorer quality imports don't damage our local farming industry.