

News from City of London Labour Party

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For the many, not the few

Spring 2021

London Mayor and London Assembly Elections – Thursday 6 May 2021

Are you registered to vote? If not go online <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

Worried about COVID, being unable to vote in person? – get a postal vote

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/About-us/postal-vote-application-form.pdf>

or ring the Guildhall on 0800 587 5537 and ask for Electoral Services

Standing up for London

The 6th May will be your chance to elect London's next government. You have three votes you can use for Labour: Sadiq Khan as Mayor, myself as your Assembly Member for City & East London and Labour candidates for London-wide Assembly seats. After Brexit and the Covid pandemic, rebuilding London will require a bold vision and strong leadership, which only Labour can offer. Labour's plans for building London back better include:

- a focus on jobs, by supporting businesses small and large, and helping all Londoners train for the future
- tackling air pollution, the climate emergency and promoting active travel, to build London back greener
- building record numbers of council homes and campaigning for rent controls, so we can fix the housing crisis
- tackling the root causes of crime and providing more opportunities for young people, to make London safer
- fighting back against Tory cuts to local government services, the Met and their underfunding of TfL.



Over the last term, I have worked with City residents to tackle the issues of Tube noise in the Barbican and pollution from bus idling in Mansell Street; to fight against unseemly developments like the "Tulip"; and to campaign against the plan to expand the City Girls School. I've also fought for more resources across London to fight hate crime, domestic violence and modern slavery, to make London a safer and better place to live.

Unmesh Desai AM – Labour's candidate for City and East London

Compass points to a loss of democracy.

Fred Rodgers reports: The Lord Lisvane's recent report into the governance of the City of London recommended that planning decisions be made by panels but not ones made up geographically, as such an arrangement "could become too cosy". However, in April, the governing Court of Common Council will be asked to approve four panels made up geographically – the north, south, east and west panels.

As a result, local Ward members would no longer be able to vote on applications affecting their Wards. Instead, planning applications in Portsoken would be decided by the west panel; in Cripplegate by the south panel; Aldersgate by the east panel; and Tower by the north panel.

So, north, south, east and west, if you are unhappy with this proposal then please sign this petition <https://www.change.org/p/the-corporation-of-the-city-of-london-reforming-the-planning-process-in-the-city-of-london>.

Crescent House Residents Still Freezing

William Pimlott CC reports: Years after the need for new windows was recognised, Golden Lane residents of Crescent House are still freezing without window replacements. I have been pressing the Corporation to expedite repairs to the windows on this block ever since I campaigned for election in 2017. In January 2019, I spoke at the Court of Common Council and suggested the renovation of the Mansion House should be paused so efforts could be focussed on this social housing block that has more than one resident and urgently needed repair (<https://www.cityam.com/city-corporation-criticised-pressing-ahead-mansion-house/>).

A planning application for the windows is scheduled for June 2021, and your local Labour representatives will continue to push for an accelerated implementation.



Curiosity corner – is the City of London (CoL) Corporation a local authority or a parish council?

Helen Fentimen CC explains: This is a question many residents ask. While it may not immediately seem important, there are some implications for the democratic workings of the Corporation.

Local Government legislation confers powers on CoL Corporation in its capacity as a local authority, police authority and port health authority. So for housing, planning, licensing, environmental health and highways the City is no different from any other London Borough from a legal perspective.

But in a Local Authority political parties are recognised and some rights come with that. Committee seats are allocated on the basis of the number elected Councillors from each political party. If this was applied to non-Ward Committees in the City Labour could expect to be represented on important committees such as Policy and Resources - the most powerful in the city. The more Labour CCs elected the stronger our voice.

It has even been suggested that because the Corporation doesn't pay elected members it should be treated as a parish Council. In law, the Corporation's status as a Parish Council was abolished in 1965.

Improving access to nature in the City Cluster and Aldgate

Fred Rodgers reports: Public consultation on City Corporation's draft Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-26 (BAP) will begin in May, prior to adoption in July. The BAP aims to reverse three failings identified in an independent City wide ecology report. Namely "improved greenspace connectivity; diversification of City habitats and strategic habitat management; and raising the profile of ecological issues and importance in the minds of the people who access and develop within the City".

The BAP also acknowledges "there is a clear deficiency in access to nature in the east of the City and particularly the City Cluster and Aldgate". Access to nature in the City is primarily provided by pocket parks and small open spaces, particularly churchyards, but access is often restricted to opening times and disabled access is often difficult or worse.

Even when open, these areas may not provide diverse habitats, not least because there is no monitoring of species. The BAP will address some shortcomings but will not necessarily provide the much needed – by residents, workers and visitors – access to nature in both the City Cluster and Aldgate without interventions.

City of London Labour Party will use the public consultation to impress on City Corporation the need to intervene in the provision of additional green space. 4C Hotel Group's Minories Estate development promises to enhance biodiversity with a public park. In the meantime, City Corporation could undertake a biodiversity enhancing makeover at the ornamental Jubilee Gardens. Hopefully, readers will suggest other suitable sites in response to the consultation.



**Jubilee Gardens:
makeover time**

Common Council – 23 March 2022 – why Labour is standing

Branch chair Paul O'Brien explains: We have stood Labour candidates for election to Common Council since 2009. Our first breakthrough came in 2014 with a by-election victory. But it was 2017 when voters elected five Labour councillors and really changed things in Guildhall. Since that date the overall number of Labour Councillors has increased to six (with a further by-election win). In next year's Common Council election we are looking to increase the number of Labour Councillors at Guildhall. Do you want to be one of the candidates standing on the Labour platform? If so, please contact Susanne Levin, branch secretary at susanne4labour@gmail.com

Labour first raised the Living Wage debate in our 2009 manifesto and this campaign resulted in the successful implementation of the living wage for City employees and contractors. Labour continues to focus on local issues that matter to residents and workers e.g. controlling unlicensed massage parlours in Portsoken, City of London Girls School extension and noise from tube line affecting Barbican residents. We have started discussion on ambitious climate action and we are pushing for improved delivery on City's housing target. City Corporation has to deliver the usual local authority functions e.g. schools, social services, bin collections and Labour brings a balanced view to an over represented business perspective.

Labour forces questions about politics in the City in the face of many claiming the City is 'above' politics - we disagree. We want to:

- focus on positive change
- give residents a louder voice
- ensure good governance, integrity and transparency

The more Labour Councillors elected the more change will be possible.

Introducing first candidates selected for 2022

Anne Corbett



Anne has been chosen to stand for election to the City of London Common Council in March 2022. She loves living in the City of London because we are a great community of good neighbours and interesting people. Anne wants to see an improvement in the ways in which the City of London talks to residents about the things that affect our lives such as climate change and air quality. She promises to work closely with residents on practical matters such as safety, cleaning, and repairs in residential blocks. As a lifelong Labour member, she is committed to fairness, equality and justice for all. If elected she will work with the Labour group in the City of London to listen to and act on residents' concerns and campaigns.

Helen Fentimen CC



Helen was elected in November 2019 and is standing for re-election in Aldersgate Ward in March 2022. She is interested in public services, specifically Housing, Health, Climate Action and Education. She is also committed to ensuring that the interests of residents are appropriately represented within the City of London. Helen has supported local campaigns including opposition to City of London Girls School proposals, Beech Street traffic changes and voted against the 150 Aldersgate Street development. Currently she is discussing future plans for Bastion House and the Museum of London site with community groups and local residents.

Natasha Lloyd-Owen CC



Natasha was elected as a Labour councillor in the ward of Castle Baynard following a by-election in October 2018. In the last 2 years she has been able to make a small but real difference: as a member of the Tackling Racism Taskforce (with recommendations made on policing, education, and culture), as the Lead Member for Young People (reviewing our youth services offer), getting the City to become a Ban the Box employer (removing barriers to employment for people with criminal convictions) and as an advocate for more urgent, radical action on climate (for example, seeking to properly address the issue of embodied carbon in construction). More needs to be done, particularly in the post-pandemic world. Natasha lives in Cripplegate.

Last Bastion of development mania?

Peter Kenyon reports: The Corporation of the City of London has formally abandoned its plans to create a 'perfect' music centre on the Museum of London site at the corner of Aldersgate and London Wall. This means the development plate that it assembled is available for alternative uses. A decision has already been taken to demolish the 17-storey Bastion House.

Any attempt to 'save' the building by seeking a listing would prove fruitless. Historic England granted a temporary safeguard from listing, which doesn't expire until 20 August 2024. Information about how its demolition could be achieved before the Museum of London has moved to Farringdon is being urgently sought. Structurally, Bastion House is an integral part of the Museum itself.

The Corporation's Property Investment Board is hell-bent on realising maximum commercial value for the site. But in today's post-pandemic world many observers are asking whether the demand for office space in the City will be sustained. Two major banks Lloyds and HSBC have already announced a reduction in London office space requirements of 20% and 40% respectively. On the other hand, the Corporation announced on 9 March that planning permission had already been granted for another two million square feet of office space since the beginning of 2021.

Labour councillors Natasha Lloyd-Owen, Helen Fentimen and William Pimlott have written asking whether its time to think about repurposing the city to cater for more live/work space rather than waiting (possibly in vain) for hundreds of thousands of commuters to return to their daily grind when COVID restrictions are lifted.

All the signs from the Guildhall point to demolition and possible blight of the whole site for years to come.



Credit: @JaneNorthcote [JaneSketching.com](https://www.janesketching.com)

Want to get involved? Join the Labour Party!

Help us work together to make the City of London a place for the many, not the few.

Go to: join.labour.org.uk or contact
Susanne Levin for more information:
susanne4labour@gmail.com



Get in touch with your local Labour councillors:

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Cripplegate: Mary Durcan - marydurcan@hotmail.com (07966 505643)
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Castle Baynard: Natasha Lloyd-Owen - natashalloydownen.city@gmail.com