

Fringe events I attended at Labour Party Conference

There were 400 fringe events organised and 150 stands.

I wanted to attend many that were programmed at the same time- difficult to choose.

Sunday 6.00pm

I attended the fringe – *Towards a Nuclear free world: Cancel trident replacement, Support the Nuclear Ban.*

The Conference took place less than a week after the UN's treaty to ban nuclear weapons opened for signature in New York. This was supported in the UN by more than 120 states but our Government has boycotted the process. Labour's 2017 election manifesto commits the party to 'lead multilateral efforts with international partners and the UN to create a nuclear-free world, demanding that we fulfil our obligations under the Nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty'. The UN treaty certainly falls within this remit.

I feel that this has never been more urgent.

Speakers included Fabian Hamilton (the Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament- a new position) Diane Abbott and Kate Hudson (Gen.Sec.CND)

8.00pm

I attended the *Association of labour councillors Annual reception*- hoping to chat with other labour Councillors and pick up a few tips. Emily Thornberry, John McDonnell, Anneliese Dodds all came to thank us all for the work we were doing and urged us to continue campaigning for a good result in the next local elections.

Monday 8.30am

Health & Care Forum debate. Speakers included Justin Madders-Shadow Minister for Health Most recognise need to pay more for this service as it is badly underfunded. The manifesto funded the changes needed. Staffing is a huge issue at all levels, in the NHS and in the Care Service. The pay cap must be ended. Discussion from the floor wanted to know priorities for resources and time it would take for changes to make a real impact.

4.00pm Policy seminar on Justice and Home Affairs- Diane Abbott

Great condemnation of the post code lottery re the Probation service. Family Courts were also criticised. Legal aid should be restored. The cuts are affecting the Court Staff. Concern over no joined up thinking for cases involving clients with Mental Health issues. The prison system needs overhauling. Prisons should be taken back in house and not left to private firms to supervise. The Private Sector should have no role in the deprivation of liberty. Immigration Centres should not be run as prisons. More prevention and early intervention needed.

5.30pm

Putting Low carbon at the heart of Northern economic growth. Speakers included Chi Onwurah (Shadow Minister for Industrial Strategy, Science and Innovation) Steve Rotherham (Mayor of Liverpool City Region) Amanda Lyne, Managing Director of Clemco Ltd

Really superb session. Electricity is being generated by wind and used to electrolyse water to make hydrogen gas. This is being stored in the old salt mines beneath Cheshire. 15 trucks are today powered by hydrogen and used to transport goods in this area. The Mersey will be used to convert tidal energy to electrical energy. Wind farms are producing 9.2 megawatts of energy. The blades are made in the Isle of Wight and East Yorkshire. The North Sea is shallow and has huge Capacity for wind turbines.

Very positive and optimistic session.

7.00pm *Labour Friends Of Palestine & The Middle East*- A reception and film showing life in Palestine. Very moving.

Tuesday 8.30 am

Carers and careers-a balancing act: How can we better support carers who work? Speakers included Julie Cooper MP.

Many Carers do not define themselves as Carers. Labour would push for greater flexibility in the work place and higher allowances. Carers provide £132bn of unpaid care. There must be an improved quality of life for the carers. Many find it difficult to return to work after a time out of the market, and their pensions are affected. Many are 'sandwich carers' looking after parents and grandchildren. Employers could use an insurance pool to pay for the greater flexibility. Changes cannot be left to employers' goodwill it must be enshrined in law, as is the maternity rights. Increase Union membership would support the carers and help them claim their rights. The tax system should be reviewed.

I had intended to then go to the fringe on *Despatches from the front line- how Labour councils are fighting Austerity*. But because the morning went so far over time, we waited outside the hall until we were let back in, frightened in case long queues prevented us from returning to our seats in time for the votes!

We never left the conference hall until 6.20pm and by that time; I was too exhausted to do anything except go for a meal and a glass of wine!

Wednesday 9.00am Policy Seminar on Housing, Local Government and Transport-John Healey

Great need for equality between north and south. London spend is huge cf to that in north. £6 spent on Southern rail for every £1 spent in north. Local Government is the glue that holds all strategies together. It is Local government that enacts the manifesto, providing every service. Devolution must happen to put more money locally. Manifesto will pledge to rebuild local government. Electrification of Great western rail routes and northern routes will happen. More freight should be transported on rail and off the roads. Better fully integrated bus services. Manifesto must be radical but credible, to give confidence that we can deliver. It was suggested we should pledge a build of 1million houses. Private rented houses must have longer tenancy agreements and private land lords should be monitored. There should be a huge build of Council houses. Big discussion on what 'affordable rent' means. Councils must be able to borrow money to build houses. First buy homes should also be included. < 1000 Social Houses built last year.

I did not go to the next policy seminar as I needed to be in the Hall early to claim my seat for the Leader's speech.

I made the most of my time. I learnt so much. Thank you for sending me.

Mary Temperton