

Peterborough residents respond to SEP election manifesto

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party has found a large number of people have read the election manifesto delivered to homes in the Bretton North ward of Peterborough in support of its candidate Stephen Woodbridge.

William, an unemployed machinist, explained how he had been affected by the economic crisis. “I was made redundant last year from my job that was paying £14 an hour”, he said. “Now all the jobs that are being offered to me are temporary agency ones paying half that sum. You have to apply for six jobs a week or have your benefits stopped. I have had my money stopped twice, once for two months.

“I got your leaflet through the door and it was like a breath of fresh air. I agree with nearly everything it says.

“You are right when you say that all the main parties are for the rich. I’d never really thought about what the unions were up to, but the way they have given into the government over people’s pensions makes me sick.

“People can’t go on living like this. Something has to be done before it all collapses. I hope your party wins and that it spreads much further. You seem to be the only people with something positive to say.”

Tim, who came to a public meeting as a result of reading the manifesto, said he had become a reader of the *World Socialist Web Site* and wanted to find out more about Leon Trotsky and his ideas.

He told us, “I want to know more about socialism and where you stand. It’s more how I feel on jobs and the austerity brought on by successive governments, not just this government but the last Labour government as well.

“Taxes are going up, income going down. This government is taking everything, ‘We’ve had the flesh

now we are going for the bones,’ they seem to be saying. They are taking as much as they can and that’s it.

“The situation in the National Health Service is getting worse. I worked in the NHS years ago and you had one housekeeper and two domestics for one ward of 23 beds. Now you’re lucky to get one domestic. This country is dying on its feet.

“It’s good the Socialist Equality Party gets out there to the masses and the grass roots, especially the young at the universities and colleges, and tells them you are not going to have a future unless you stop it now, because then you’ve got a building block from which the SEP can grow.”

Steven, a warehouse worker, said, “Where I work we haven’t had a wage rise for four years. This government is not working for the ordinary, honest hard working bloke. They are not aimed at the likes of us. They are aimed at the social elite who have money in their pocket already and seem to be making more money.

“I’ve got friends who are nurses and they are not happy. None of the people they work with are happy. It seems to be one thing after another, crying with frustration. It’s been caused by lack of investment. This Public Private Initiative at Peterborough City Hospital seems to have been a stupid waste of time and money. They are losing money hand over fist from the way it was set up. That money isn’t going into where it should do, into health.”

On the jobs crisis and the three main parties, Steven said, “I was talking to a friend of mine who runs a small company who was looking for help. One job and he’s had 300 answers and he’s only had the advert in for a week. He’s overwhelmed by it all—people with high quality trades. It is not good out there.

“I’ve got no problem with people setting up a business and earning money. It’s how some people set up businesses and earn money. There’s too much skullduggery going on, too much underhanded nastiness to make money for themselves.

“All these parties represent business and people with money. A quarter of a million pound gets you premier access to the prime minister. I haven’t got a quarter of a million pounds, have you? Maybe we should have a whip-round, but they wouldn’t listen to what I’d say anyway. We are heading toward an American-style system where those with the most money will get in. That’s the last thing I want to see.”

On the SEP’s policies, Steven added, “I feel that socialism is the solution, an equal share, a job for everyone. I was anti going into Iraq and also Afghanistan. It only served big business. I’m all for everyone sticking together—stand as one and you can bloody-well change everything.”

Jean, who purchased *In Defense of Leon Trotsky*, by David North, and *The Historical & International Foundations of the Socialist Equality Party (Britain)*, explained why she supports the SEP campaign:

“I want to learn more about how to help the workers. Older people are forced to work longer, younger people haven’t got jobs, wages are not going up but everything else is. People cannot live like that much longer. Something has got to be done to help working people.

“We always thought that the Labour Party was for the workers, but evidently they don’t seem to be anymore.”

Jean pointed to the Vote SEP poster in her window. The Labour Party had been round canvassing. “I told the Labour Party candidate I wasn’t voting for them”, she said. I was voting for the Socialist Equality Party. They said they weren’t New Labour, they were Old Labour, like that was something good!”

She described the impact of the SEP election campaign: “Things I never knew before I’m learning about now. It’s opened my eyes; I’d never heard of this party before. Now I know about it, I shall learn about it.”



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