

UK local elections: Workers explain why they voted Socialist Equality Party

Our reporters
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Campaign teams spoke to some of those who voted or intended to vote for Socialist Equality Party candidates, Stephen Woodbridge in Bretton North ward, Peterborough, and Danny Dickinson in the St Helens Town Centre ward.

In Peterborough, single mum Denise said, “I am voting for the SEP. I got your leaflet through the door. It said a lot of the things that I have been thinking for some time now about the banks, and war and giving people decent jobs.

“I’ve never voted before because I think that Labour, the Tories and the Liberals are all the same. It is about time that ordinary people had a party of their own. There is plenty of money around. They can find enough when it is needed for wars and for the bankers, but not for us.

“I am worried about my daughter Jade’s future. The world is getting worse instead of better. The rich are never satisfied and want to make us slaves. Well, they better think again. People won’t put up with it. It is good you were in the election. To show people they can do something to change things.”

John, a factory worker, said he was voting for the SEP and was encouraging all his family and friends to the same: “I came across the SEP when the leaflet came through the door. It gave me much hope for the future for myself, my children and for everybody in the working class.

“I don’t think everybody is suffering, only those at the bottom, those you have got to protect. I don’t see how that makes any sense in any civilized society. Whatever problems we have got financially working people didn’t create them. The people in power did.

“It’s a whole ethos change that we have got to

consider. Huge power is in the hands of people who aren’t interested in the people they are taking the money from. Everything has swung their way.

“I think of the Labour Party back 50 years ago, and it is not the Labour Party I see now. I don’t think it is representative of the working classes any longer. I won’t pretend I didn’t vote for Tony Blair, but by the time that I had seen what he had done, I realised that wasn’t the way forward. The way forward is the control of everything, not for the benefit of the few, but the benefit of the majority of people. The answer is to go back to Marxism.

“You have to have control of all those things that are important financially to run any society, and until we have got that control the working class are always going to be put down. I’ve realised that now. It’s taken me a long time, but I’m absolutely convinced. Obviously, a political uprising is better than an uprising physically. When people are pushed too far they are going to want to do something about it.”

Andy, a health worker, said, “The cuts are absolutely appalling. The rich are not affected. The rich just take everything, worldwide. The majority of the people in Spain, Portugal and Greece are very poor, but there are rich people that are very, very happy. The United States is a prime example of that.

“I think the trade unions are run by overpaid, bloated people who don’t care. They are not run by the actual workers any more. People have got into powerful positions. They rip everything off. They have their union credit cards they use to spend on expensive meals and travel in flashy cars. You never see them working any more. I am a member of the PCS union. I don’t think a lot of Mark Serwotka.

“Personally, breaking from the union and forming rank and file committees is something I would like. The

unions have got such a bad name. Since the 1980s, a whole generation—in fact two generations—have grown up thinking unions are scum because there is no fight and no protest by them.”

Michael Ward has been out of work after suffering major injuries. His daughter Kylie suffered brain damage at birth. He explained, “Tony Blair and Labour took us into a war we shouldn’t have been involved in. They lied about the weapons of mass destruction. Then they got us into a complete mess with the economy and into a recession. But the Conservatives have made it worse. They have taken money off us to pay the debts of the bankers. With all this privatisation going on, people are losing their jobs again. They say they want to get people back to work but there isn’t any work. Now, we are hearing about people having to go to food banks and sleeping in the woods around here.”

Ian from St Helens has been a regular attendee at the SEP’s weekly election meeting. He said, “I have just got so fed up with the mainstream parties. They’ve got nothing to offer. They are all the same. It’s time for a change. Danny seems a smashing bloke. He’s passionate in what he says.”

Sheru from St Helens explained, “Danny definitely supports the working class. He looks at the issues that Conservative, Labour and many other parties seem to ignore, which are affecting all of us.

“I am unemployed right now. I was a student for two years. I had to drop out because I was ill for seven months. I tried to go back but they didn’t let me. I have to pay back all my student loans for two years.

“There should definitely be a redistribution of wealth. It’s ridiculous how people are struggling with two and sometimes three jobs just to get by. And they are scared of losing these jobs. At the same time, you have other people getting others to work for them. And they are living in mansions with 20 bedrooms and 20 cars. What is the point of that?

“During a recession, isn’t everyone supposed to get together and help out? But those on the Rich List are getting richer, while everyone else is struggling. It is definitely heading towards a scary future where you can’t protest anything and there is an elite who are getting richer and more powerful all the time. The question is what are people going to do about it?”

Rose Lamb, a 26-year-old former health worker, voted for Danny Dickinson. She explained, “I voted for something different. The others are all about themselves. They can’t be trusted. Hopefully, you will get in and do something for the working class. I watched you out nearly every day and liked the commitment of your group.”

Jack, a council worker, wanted to vote SEP but lives in another ward. He said, “I am disappointed I couldn’t vote for your party today. In the general election you would get such a lot of support. Labour will get in again. It was going downhill before Blair, but he and Brown finished it off. I totally agree with building a new party for the working class.”



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