

Community

Notes in the Margin

The battle for control of Broxtowe's key marginal constituency is under way. Our 'Notes in the Margin' column will provide a space for airing the views of the candidates and the electorate, but will try to steer clear of national party political propaganda.

What do you think? Will your vote at the general election be based on national politics in central government, or will it involve other factors? The real opinions of Broxtowe's voters are sought – and not by the doorstep canvassers!

The Beeston Express puts its cards on the table...

Our editorial policy

NOW that the Prime Minister has finally popped in to see the Queen and officially announced the date of the next General Election, the battle here in Broxtowe, a key marginal, will intensify.

As *The Beeston Express* is already getting caught up in the cross-fire, we will put our cards on the table, and state the policies by which we will operate in the run-up to the election.

The *Beeston Express* is NOT a "Labour mouthpiece" or a "Labour propaganda newsheet." This rumour perpetuates even though we state time after time that the paper – fundamentally a community newsheet – has NO political allegiance.

The misconception has apparently arisen from the fact that many of the paper's letter-writers are clearly Labour-party supporters with a lot of time for their own MP, to the point that they sing his praises.

Local supporters of any of the other political parties appear not to be as prolific in their letter-writing, and what we haven't received, we cannot publish.

The Letters page at *The Beeston Express* is for our readers to air their opinions about whatever pleases or displeases them, or even just to pass general comment. It might be a cliché, but the page is a public voice for the people of Beeston and environs.

'Letters' policy

Our policy, given at the top of page 4, states that we will cut letters that are too long. It does *not* say that we will check them for authenticity or factual accuracy: we must be able to trust our letter writers' integrity. And we're not libel lawyers either; we try to keep an eye open for anything considered to be too close to the litigation mark, but on the whole, we include most of what we receive.

That is the existing Letters page policy. For Letters relating to the general election and the Broxtowe candidates, there will be a couple of extra criteria:

Quantity

We intend to print all of the letters we're sent, unless they are clearly libellous, thus quashing once and for all any allegations that we are selective as to whose letters we print.

By printing the entire content of each letter, we cannot be accused of unjust copy editing, *but usual sub-editing rules will still apply.*

Quality

Beeston is, on the whole, a civilised township. It would be nice to think that the battle commencing could be conducted on civilised terms. Pointless jibes about the other candidates, mud-slinging, tit-for-tat backchat – leave it out. Let's conduct the campaign in Broxtowe with decency and courtesy – at least with regard to the Letters page at *The Beeston Express*.

Letters continued from page 4...

Local Labour?

DEAR EDITOR: In his recent email Newsletters, our Labour MP has tried to suggest that the Broxtowe Conservative Association President, James Tyler, is not 'local' because he now lives and works in London. James is in his mid-30s, Stapleford born and bred, where his parents still live, and was educated at Bramcote Park Comprehensive School; what's not 'local' about that?

James is the classic 'local boy made good' who wants to see the end of this Labour Government, which has wrecked our economy and squandered the legacy left to them by Ken Clarke. And, he is prepared 'to put his money where his mouth is', by making donations to Broxtowe to help counter balance the £100,000+ per year that our MP receives from us, the tax payers, which he uses to promote himself in the constituency, by employing Labour councillors to deal with issues on his behalf for which he can then claim the credit.

Mr Palmer certainly doesn't need to spend his tax-payer funded allowances on his parliamentary business because 99.1 percent of the time he does exactly what the whips tell him to do. In the 12 months he has managed to speak in just 12 debates and asked five written questions, yet he has an 82 per cent voting record, one of the highest of any MP.

Our Labour MP is certainly not 'local', he had no connection with Broxtowe or Notts at the time of his selection; he was living in Switzerland. Having moved into the constituency, he then moved out again! His literature suggests he lives in Attenborough but that's the Labour HQ; he now lives in Mapperley Park.

The job of our MP is to represent Broxtowe in parliament; the truth is that

Broxtowe has not had a voice in parliament since 1997, but we will have one when Anna Soubry is elected. That's what James Tyler and the rest of us are fighting for and what Broxtowe deserves.

*Bob Lilley
Chairman, Broxtowe
Conservatives*

Keeping the record straight

DEAR EDITOR: In his regular e-mail to Broxtowe residents, Nick Palmer has made several criticisms of the Liberal Democrats. As David Watts' agent, I asked for the right of reply because they seriously misrepresented our position. This request was denied and indeed was itself misrepresented by Nick Palmer as a request to have access to his readership list. It wasn't, and it would have been easy for him to allow our reply without revealing the list. Of course, Nick Palmer has the right to control what goes into his emails, and I suppose it is natural at election time to deny your opponents access to a fair hearing.

Nick Palmer is really exercised by criticisms of his claim to put constituents above party, a voice of independent thinking at Westminster. A look at his voting record tells a different story.

TheyWorkForYou.com records the votes of all MPs. Since 1997, out of a total of 2907 votes, Nick Palmer has voted on 27 occasions against the Government, less than once in every 100. (Contrast with the figures for Alan Simpson, well known Labour rebel: 331 out of 2580, a rate of above 12 times per 100 votes). "Hardly ever rebels against their party in this Parliament" is the website's judgement on Nick Palmer. On the key issues, he has voted for the war in Iraq, against an inquiry into that war, for ID cards, for the

replacement of Trident, for tuition fees, for harsh anti-terrorism laws and supported the abolition of the 10p band on income tax. This is a record of fact.

This shows that the only way to secure support for Liberal Democrat principles is to vote for David Watts. Although it is disappointing that some ex-LibDem members or ex-councillors seem oblivious to this point, it is pleasing to report that several ex-Labour councillors share our view and are supporting David Watts' campaign.

*Cllr Brian Taylor
LibDem Agent for Broxtowe*

Curb deviations from the truth

DEAR EDITOR: It is unfortunate that you are allowing your otherwise good publication to turn into a Labour propaganda paper. The MP's team of letter writers submit factually inaccurate letters which you publish without any check for truthfulness. Some of those letters verge on the libellous.

The Conservative Party candidate, Anna Soubry, was selected at a meeting open to anyone in Broxtowe to attend, Conservative party member or not, unlike either of the Labour or Lib Dem candidates who were both chosen behind closed doors.

Anna was a local candidate who, after two initial rounds, faced two men in the final and won on the first ballot by an overwhelming majority – I know because I was there! To suggest otherwise is not true and offensive.

I had thought better of our Labour MP who claims to be "honest and positive"; he had no connection with the area before his selection, was actually living in Switzerland when selected by his party, moved out of Broxtowe in 2006 and now

lives in Mapperley Park! As the General Election looms ever nearer and he sees the prospect of defeat looming, Dr Palmer scrapes the last dregs of his political barrel.

*Cllr Eric Kerry
Long Lane, Attenborough*

Speaking for the opposition

DEAR EDITOR: Thank you for your coverage of Nick Palmer's election campaign launch (Mar 26, p2).

I was happy to have attended, since it was a public meeting. Many attended, since we are politically attuned and we, the people, are very concerned about who is now best placed to represent us in Broxtowe.

It is a hard choice. I think it was a friendly meeting and no back stabbing, nor nastiness, was present. A pleasure to attend. And there was a good mix of people there. I felt comfortable and free to speak, and it was a nice environment.

In the very recent past, I have been unbelievably highly and deeply critical of Nick Palmer and of Labour policy but, in fairness, he has always taken my views seriously on board, and listened and tolerated me for however outspoken I have been. I believe I stated this at the outset when I spoke up for him. I am really pleased I now did this, and I think Nick deserves another chance to retain this constituency. He is highly supportive, and treats people as individuals and with understanding.

Many of us are voting for Nick the candidate, rather than for any party label. And I know there will be more to follow who agree with me.

*Adele Brunton,
Denison Street, Beeston*

Look for the two 'missing' biographies in the next issue.