

# Harborough Labour

Welcome to the Harborough Constituency Labour Party!

I joined the Labour Party in 2015, after David Cameron's Conservative Party gained an overall majority in Parliament, following 5 years of being in coalition with the Lib Dems. At that time, having seen the damage the coalition had already done to our public services, through drastic cuts and selling off national assets to the private sector in order to implement their austerity agenda, I decided that I could either sit at home and complain about the state of the country, or I could try and do something about it.

When the Labour Party held a leadership election in 2015, I signed up as a registered supporter so that I could participate in it. The day after the result of the leadership election, I decided to become a full member.

Sometime afterwards, I received an email with the details of the next local meeting, and decided to go along. There were a number of new members at that meeting, and I won't lie, I think that most of us found it somewhat baffling! This was my first time as a 'political activist' (despite being over 50!), and I didn't really know anything about the way the party worked.

I persisted in attending as many meetings as I could, and it was good to know that there were so many local people, in a Conservative constituency, who shared my values. Since then, I've tried to join in with the local campaigning wherever possible.

In the past, I've told myself that I didn't have time to contribute more to the party, being in full time employment, and having family commitments, but in a moment of weakness, I agreed to become the Membership Secretary. This is partly because I have seen others in the local party devote much of their time and energy to keep it functioning, and I am grateful to them for their efforts, and thought it only fair to pay them back.

This document is an attempt to pass on the information that I would have found useful when I joined, and I hope that you also find it useful. It's also an opportunity for me to urge you to get involved in the local party, so that you can help make change happen.

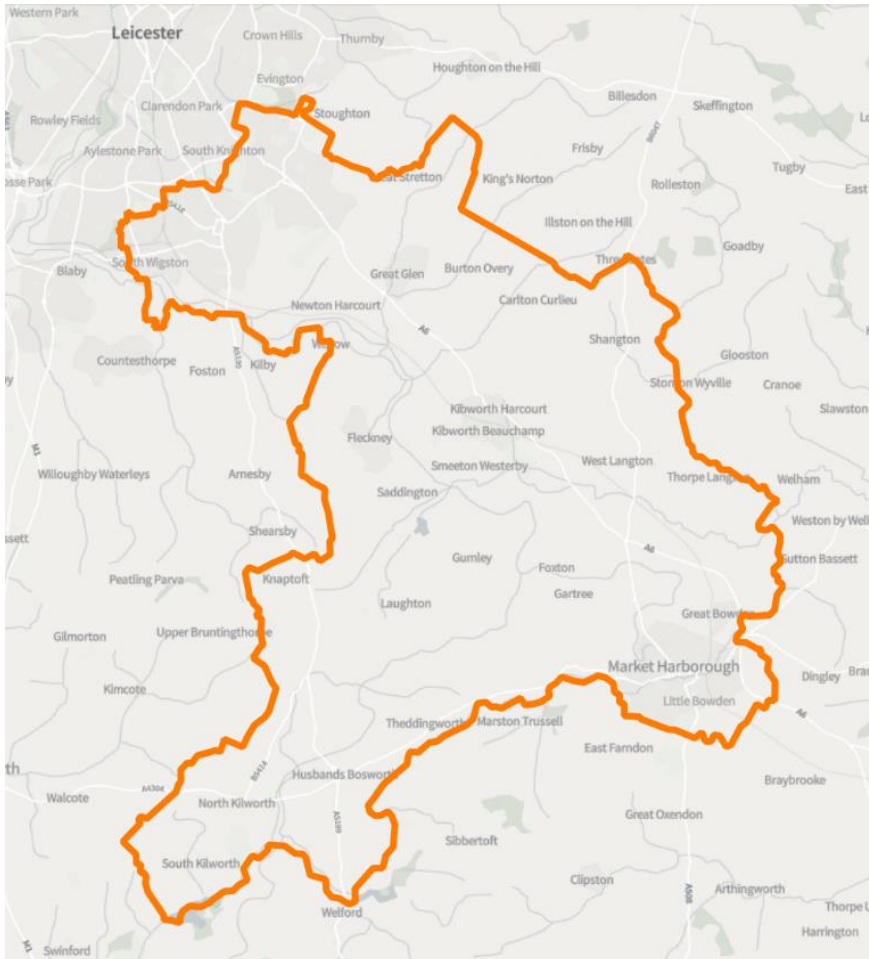
Best regards,

Jon Knight  
*Membership Secretary*

Email: [clp.membership@harboroughlabour.org.uk](mailto:clp.membership@harboroughlabour.org.uk)

## Harborough Constituency

Harborough is the name of the parliamentary constituency which stretches between South Wigston, Wigston Magna and Oadby at its north, and Market Harborough, Husbands Bosworth and South Kilworth in the south.



From the Labour Party perspective, it contains the following:

- Harborough Constituency Labour Party
- Market Harborough Branch Labour Party
- Oadby & Wigston Branch Labour Party

As a Party Member, you will be a member of both the Constituency Party (CLP) and one Branch Party (BLP). You will be able to attend meetings for both the CLP and your BLP.

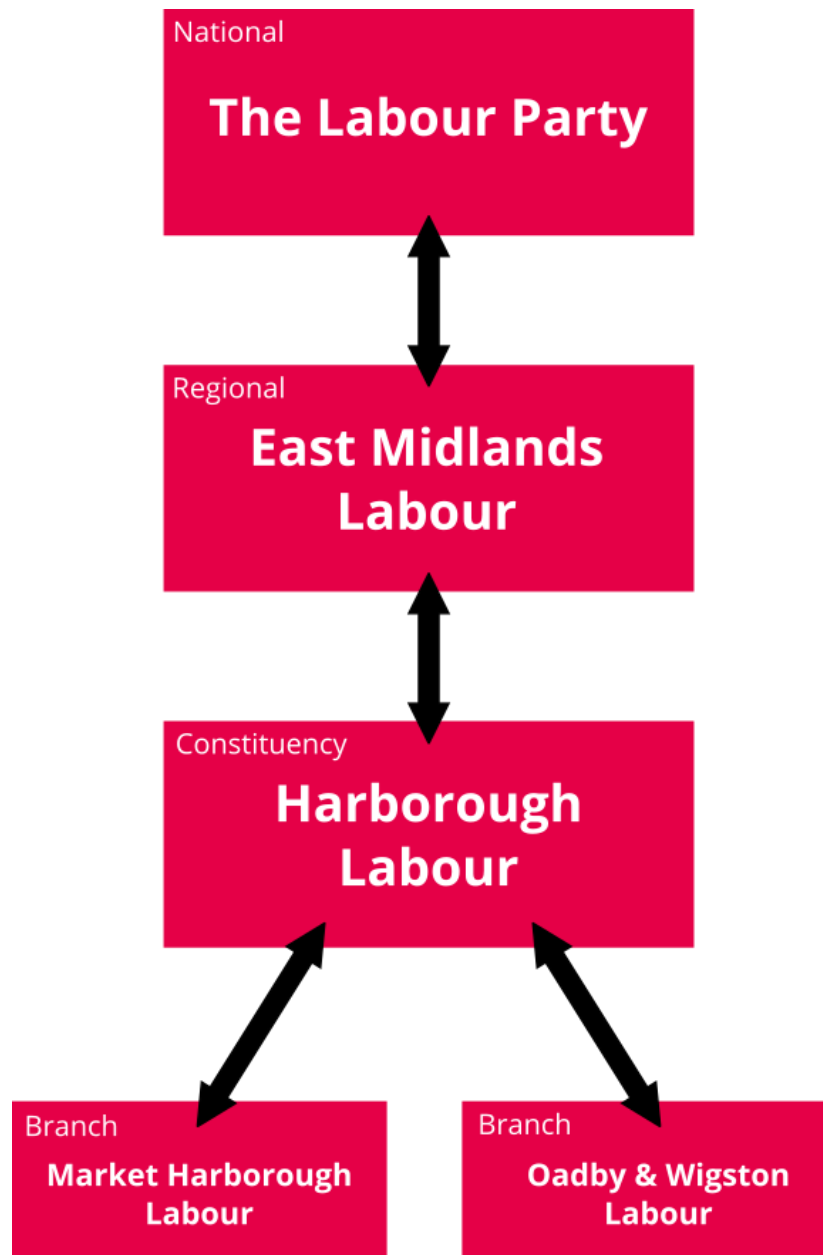
You can view constituency boundaries, and also local Council Wards on the Ordnance Survey website: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/>

There are around 80,000 voters registered in the constituency.

Our current MP is the Conservative Neil O'Brien. You can find a full history of voting in Harborough on [Wikipedia](#).

## Party Structure

As mentioned above, Labour Party is split into different levels. Here's an overview of the hierarchy:



The East Midlands regional office has full-time staff, who are often the first point of contact for members of the CLP Executive when we need advice or clarification of the Party rules.

## Harborough CLP Contact Details

You can view the current role holders for the CLP and the BLPs on the Harborough CLP website at: <https://www.harboroughlabour.org.uk/team/>

The current list is shown below.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Chair	Anne Pridmore	<a href="mailto:clp.chair@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.chair@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
Vice Chair	Chris O'Donovan	<a href="mailto:clp.vice.chair@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.vice.chair@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
Secretary	Helen Morrison	<a href="mailto:clp.secretary@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.secretary@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
Membership Secretary	Jon Knight	<a href="mailto:clp.membership@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.membership@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
Treasurer	Christine Reeves	<a href="mailto:clp.treasurer@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.treasurer@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
Campaign Coordinator	Helen Beynon	<a href="mailto:clp.campaigns@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.campaigns@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
Women's Officer	Debbie Hansen	<a href="mailto:clp.womens.officer@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.womens.officer@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
Disability Officer	Anne Pridmore	<a href="mailto:clp.disability.officer@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.disability.officer@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
BAME Officer	Shamsher Chohan	<a href="mailto:clp.bame.officer@harboroughlabour.org.uk">clp.bame.officer@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>
Tote Officer	Jean Smith	<a href="mailto:tote@harboroughlabour.org.uk">tote@harboroughlabour.org.uk</a>

## Meetings

We usually have Constituency and Branch meetings every 2 months, staggered throughout the year so that both don't occur in the same month. The location of the Constituency meetings is usually alternated between Market Harborough and Oadby. The primary locations of the meetings are:

Roman Way Community Centre  
36 Roman Way  
Market Harborough  
LE16 7PQ

and

Beauchamp College  
Ridgeway  
Oadby  
Leicester  
LE2 5TP

You will be notified of any changes to these locations in the email you receive containing the agenda of the upcoming meeting. The email will also contain the minutes of the previous meeting.

Meetings will normally consist of reports from the various role holders within the CLP/BLP, followed by discussion of motions that have been submitted by members prior to the meeting. There is often discussion of what local and national issues the Party wants to campaign on, and any other matters that the members want to discuss.

These are friendly meetings, and the etiquette of the meeting is that we are respectful when someone else is talking, and don't interrupt. We usually indicate the desire to speak by raising our hand, and waiting for the Chair to invite us to speak. This may seem a bit formal, but it prevents the meeting descending into chaos! Inevitably sometimes we discuss divisive issues, but we ensure that the debate is civil and respectful.

When there are motions to be debated, there is often a time limit, and so sometimes we will insist that a person who wants to make a comment, either supporting or opposing the motion, will only speak once, so that all who want to speak get an opportunity to do so.

## The Tote

Harborough Constituency holds a members' tote to raise funds for campaigning. Details, including how to sign up, are on the website at <https://www.harboroughlabour.org.uk/tote/>.

## Jargon Busting

One of the difficult things when starting anything new is to understand the acronyms and terminology used, and the Labour Party is no exception! Here is a list of terms that you may find helpful when attending meetings or interpreting other Party communications.

<b>Affiliates, Affiliated Organisations</b>	Groups, such as unions or socialist societies that have paid a fee to be a part of the Labour Party.
<b>Agenda and Minutes</b>	The agenda is a list of what we plan to discuss during our meetings, and minutes are a record of what is discussed.
<b>Agent</b>	The agent is a legal necessity during election campaigns and is responsible for checking that the finance and literature during campaigns are all legal.
<b>AGM</b>	Annual General Meeting – is the annual meeting where reports for the year are discussed and elections for new officers are held.
<b>AMM</b>	All Members’ Meeting is another term for the Constituency meetings, as all members are entitled to attend them.
<b>Branch, BLP</b>	The smallest level of organisation in the Party. They hold regular meetings. In the Harborough CLP there are currently 2 branches – Market Harborough and Oadby & Wigston.
<b>CAC</b>	The Conference Arrangements Committee organise and run the Annual Conference.
<b>Canvassing</b>	This is when we go out campaigning, to meet local people, discuss local issues with them, inform them of Labour’s policies, and give them information about their Labour candidate.
<b>CLP</b>	Constituency Labour Party – your local party made up of branches that cover the same area that an MP covers.
<b>Conference</b>	The annual meeting of activists from local Labour Parties and affiliated organisations. These happen at both the National and Regional level, and there are also conferences for special interest groups.
<b>Constituency</b>	The area covered by a Member of Parliament.

<b>Co-operative Party (Co-Op)</b>	The Co-operative Party is the sister party of the Labour Party.
<b>Delegate</b>	Someone who is selected to represent you on another body, such as your CLP's delegate to conference.
<b>Door knocking</b>	Canvassing a local area, usually during election campaigns, to knock on resident's doors, ask them their voting intentions, and remind them of the benefits of supporting their local Labour candidate!
<b>EC, Exec</b>	Executive Committee consisting of up to 10 members who are elected annually by either branch members, or GC delegates. The CLP and the BLPs will both have their respective Executive Committees, made up of elected members.
<b>GC</b>	General Committee – a delegate body that covers the whole CLP
<b>GOTV</b>	Get Out The Vote. At times of election (council or general), this is the process of identifying local Labour voters, and encouraging them to cast their vote.
<b>Labour Group (sometimes just called 'the Group')</b>	The group of Labour councillors on the council.
<b>LCF</b>	Local Campaigns Forums are committees set up to plan and organise local elections – both council and general elections.
<b>NEC</b>	National Executive Committee. The members of this provide the strategic direction for the Party as a whole, and is made up of MPs, MEPs, councillors, trade union representatives, Socialist Societies, CLP members, and representatives from Young Labour and BAME Labour.
<b>NPF</b>	National Policy Forum. This body, manages the consultation process that leads to the policies that make up the Labour Manifesto.
<b>Outcards</b>	During door knocking canvassing, if the resident isn't in, these are the cards that are put through their letterbox, to give them details of their local candidate.
<b>Panel</b>	This is the list of people who have been interviewed and considered suitable to stand for the local council.

<b>PLP</b>	Parliamentary Labour Party. The Labour MPs currently elected to the House of Commons.
<b>PPC</b>	Prospective Parliamentary Candidate - the person selected by their CLP to fight the general election.
<b>Selection</b>	This is the process that the Labour Party goes through to select a candidate in a particular election.
<b>Socialist Societies</b>	There are a number of societies that work with the Labour Party to further particular causes. Examples are the Fabian Society, LGBT Labour or Socialist Health Association.
<b>Tote</b>	An ongoing fundraiser for local Constituency Party campaigning.
<b>Ward</b>	A local government area for election to the borough or district council – each councillor represents a ward.
<b>Whip</b>	The officer of the Labour Group or Parliamentary Labour Party, who ensures councillors or MPs vote in line with the policy agreed by members.



## Getting Involved

The first step that you can take is to activate your Labour Party accounts on My Labour and Membersnet on the internet (see the Useful Links section at the end of the document):

- My Labour has articles about campaigning, news, and shows you upcoming events.
- Membersnet gives you access to campaigning and training resources.

The next step is going to a CLP or BLP meeting, where you can meet with your fellow members.

After that, there are numerous ways to get involved with your local party.

- **Street Stalls** – We try to hold these in Market Harborough, Oadby and Wigston, to speak to local people about their issues, and make them aware of our local and national campaigns.
- **Door Knocking** – We canvass in local Council Elections, and General Elections. The thought of speaking to strangers about Labour Party policy can be daunting, but everyone who has gone out and done it has generally found the experience very positive and empowering, so I'd urge you to give it a go.
- **Leafleting** – Door knocking too much to start off with? Give leafleting a go. This is generally organised in small batches around your local area, and everyone benefits from a bit of extra exercise!
- **Social Media** – Don't want to do something IRL (In Real Life)? Follow the Harborough Labour twitter account [@HarboroughLP](#) and retweet it to get our voice heard more widely. Also, you could follow our local MP [@NeilDotO'Brien](#), and comment on his posts when you disagree with his views. All Labour Party members should, of course, treat other users of social media with respect, and you can see the Party's guidelines at <https://labour.org.uk/members/my-welfare/my-rights-and-responsibilities/coc-social-media/>.
- **Experience in media, copyrighting or WordPress?** – We need people who are interested in helping maintain our website, and also help produce local campaigning material.
- **Fundraising** – Campaigning requires funding. Why not offer to organise a local fundraising event?
- **Not interested in getting involved?** – That's fine. Just by being a member of the Party you are sending a message to the world that We Are Many. If you feel comfortable talking to some of your friends and family about the aims of the Labour Party, and our manifesto, spread the word, and possibly encourage them to join too.

## Useful Links

### Websites:

- <https://www.harboroughlabour.org.uk/> - Harborough CLP website
- <https://labour.org.uk/> - the national Labour Party website
- <https://www.eastmidslabour.org.uk/> - the East Midlands Labour website
- <https://my.labour.org.uk/> - My Labour portal
- <https://members.labour.org.uk/> - the Membersnet website
- <https://labour.org.uk/members/my-welfare/my-rights-and-responsibilities/> - information for Party Members, including links to the rule book and codes of conduct
- <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/> OS Maps showing constituency and ward boundaries
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harborough\\_\(UK\\_Parliament\\_constituency\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harborough_(UK_Parliament_constituency)) – history of parliamentary election results in Harborough
- <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/> - a website that allows you to submit Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, and search past requests submitted by others
- <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/> - voting records for all UK MPs (including Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Welsh Assembly), and listings of debates in the House of Commons
- <https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-by-post> - you can register for a postal vote, so that you can vote if you are away from home, or if you find it difficult to get to your voting station

### Twitter:

- [@HarboroughLP](#) – Harborough Labour
- [@UKLabour](#) – Labour Party
- [@EastMidsLabour](#) – East Midlands Region

### Facebook:

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/140527436000140/> - Harborough CLP members closed group
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1504694836519818/> - Oadby & Wigston BLP members closed group
- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1710330049081513/> - Market Harborough BLP members closed group

## Credits

Many thanks to Kate Knight (no relation!), the Membership Secretary at Hove and Portslade CLP for generously sending me her Welcome document to use as a starting point for this one.