

News from South West (CG) Co-operative Party

the co-operative party

Edition 4

COMING EVENTS

Saturday, 17th and Sunday, 18th January

South West Co-operative Party Weekend School at Brunel Manor, Torquay.

Places still available - Come for Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning if you cannot stay for the weekend. Ring Saxon for details.

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Tuesday, 27th January

Holocaust Memorial Day
Exeter Guildhall – local schools will present their interpretation of “Stand up against Hatred”
Evening debate at County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter.

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FairTrade Fortnight

Monday, 23rd February – Sunday, 6th March
Look out for Co-op Group's special FairTrade producer guest from Colombia.

Exeter & Devon Branch

Monday, 23rd February
7.00 pm – Branch Annual General Meeting
7.30 pm - FairTrade open meeting and reception – all welcome
AT Exeter Labour Party HQ,
26B Clifton Hill, Exeter.

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Euro and County Elections

Polling Day – Thursday, 4th June

We are very sorry to report the death of Christine Dore, Vice-Chair of the South West Party Council on the 10th December. She was a dedicated co-operator and community activist, notably as chair of the Somerset Coast PCT and in her home town of Dunster. She will be very sadly missed by her family and friends, and all who knew her.

Ed Balls in Exeter

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Schools and Families, Labour/Coop's most senior MP, as guest of honour at the South West Labour's dinner in Exeter. He emphasized the importance of Co-operative principles in developing Labour's policies for the future, and was able to meet. He met young people at a water sports centre in the city and was on local TV at the crack of dawn.

FairTrade in Focus

FairTrade activists from all over the South West met in Exeter on 4th October, sponsored by The SW Co-op Party council and Exeter & Devon Branch. They heard the news that Devon has become a FairTrade County and from schools who were joining the FairTrade family. South West Water is also supporting FairTrade through the enthusiasm of staff members. There is a new FairTrade logo and plans are in hand for next year's FairTrade fortnight.

The Co-operative Party stands for:

Enterprise

A sustainable economy and society

Empowerment

a culture of citizenship

Accountability

socially responsible business

News from the SW Party Council

Weekend School - This is being sponsored by the Party Council and leaflets have been sent to all members. Those attending will hear from Ben Bradshaw, not only Minister of State for Health but the south West's Regional Minister, and Linda Gilroy, Plymouth and Labour/Co-operative M.P. It will also be a chance to meet the Party's new General Secretary, Michael Stephenson. Most important will be the discussion about the Party's manifesto and the chance to exchange ideas with colleagues from all over the South West.

The Council is offering **four bursaries** to give members the opportunity to take part - so if you have not been before or find the cost too hard to meet why not apply.

Support to Co-op Party Parliamentary Candidates – The Party council has given grants of £100 to Labour Parties who have adopted as candidates Co-op Party members. So far Truro & Falmouth (Charlotte MacKenzie), Camborne & Redruth (Jude Robinson), Taunton Deane (Martin Jevon), and Andy Merryfield (Wells). Taunton Deane have used their grant to buy a colour printer.

Next Year's Subscriptions – The Party Council has agreed to set the local rate for unwaged members for 2009 at £10 to encourage membership when times are difficult. The national rate remains £15 - it helps if you can pay by direct debit.

News from the Branches:

Somerset: - The new branch for Somerset members was launched on the 18th October with Andrew North, Co-operative Group, Richard Tomlinson, chair of the Party's conference Arrangements Committee, Andrew Govier, Somerset County Labour Group, and Saxon Spence, as the speakers. PPCs Andy Merryfield and Martin Jevon, also took part. Ian Grady has taken on the role of branch secretary. The branch plans to meet in Taunton at least twice a year.

Exeter & Devon – The branch held a very interesting meeting on the 6th October with Bill Jordan, a longstanding Co-op Party member, as the main speaker. He has become the first chair of Devon County Council's new Senior Council set up to represent the views and interest of over 50's. He urged eligible members to get involved as campaigns would be evidence based not copying the attention grabbing tactics of the Pensioners Action Group.

Stop Press

The guest at the branch's FairTrade reception on 23rd February is hoped to be an olive oil producer from Palestine.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

We have very important county elections in Somerset and Cornwall in either May or June. It is uncertain whether there will be Devon County Council elections because of the current review of local government in Exeter. The Party Council is drawing up a panel of Labour/Co-operative candidates at its November meeting. Please send in a form if you are considering standing as a candidate. It is a great opportunity to publicise Co-operative Party values, and we can also give financial support.

Plans for a S W Co-op Party Website

We have agreed to set up a website for the Co-operative Party in our area of the South West. Ian and Saxon have met with a local designer who is working to produce a site where we can advertise our activities and share ideas and activities. We hope to go live in the spring and would welcome your ideas and contributions.

South West Co-operative Party Council:

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