

News story: South West Water fined for Devon sewage spill

South West Water has been ordered to pay £86,000 in fines and costs for discharging sewage into Dawlish Water over a bank holiday weekend. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

On 28 August 2015 an automatic alarm was triggered in Brook Street after a blockage in a pipe caused sewage to leak into nearby Dawlish Water, a stream that runs through the centre of the town.

The alarm sounded at 8.15am, but the water company didn't dispatch an emergency crew to deal with the problem until 11.40am. Instead of going to Brook Street, it went to Brook House in another part of Dawlish and reported nothing was wrong. It wasn't until a second team arrived, some 6 hours after the alarm sounded, that the discharge was discovered and steps were finally taken to stop the pollution.

The problem was caused by a brick which had somehow entered and blocked the sewer causing it to overflow.



This combined sewage overflow pipe was blocked and discharged into Dawlish Water

Dawlish beach was busy with holidaymakers at the time of the incident. Bathers were advised by an official from Teignbridge District Council to stay

out of the sea and wash their hands . The Environment Agency declared an 'abnormal situation' and the bathing water was closed for more than 24 hours.

Levels of E.coli bacteria in Dawlish Water increased significantly as a result of the discharge, from 990 per 100ml upstream of the sewer pipe to 4,800,000 at the point of discharge. Further downstream in the walled section by the viaduct the level had reduced to 70,000, however children had been seen playing in the water in this area. Dilution in the sea meant there were safe levels of E.coli in the town's bathing water.

South West Water said it had tried to get a team to Dawlish as soon as possible, but their response time was increased because a crew was unavailable having attended sewer flooding of a property elsewhere overnight. A second crew was unable to attend due to technical problems with their vehicle.

Nigel Thomas-Childs, for the Environment Agency, said:

Water companies must respond promptly to emergencies to minimise any pollution or harm to the environment. This discharge occurred over an August bank holiday when Dawlish was particularly busy. South West Water lost valuable time and took too long to find the blockage and deal with the overflow to the brook.

Appearing before Exeter Crown Court, South West Water Ltd was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £6,202 costs after pleading guilty to discharging polluting material into Dawlish Brook, an offence under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

[Jeremy Corbyn speech to launch Labour's Local Election campaign](#)

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, will today launch Labour's Local Election campaign and say:

Thank

you for that introduction Bethany and for all that you do in mobilising our student members in Nottinghamshire.

Labour

depends on all its members to deliver our message of investment and social justice in every community across Britain.

Over

a quarter of a million more people joined Labour over the past eighteen months

they saw Labour has broken with the failed politics of the past and that they could be part of a new project for real change: bold, confident and, yes, angry too.

Because

who wouldn't be angry?

When

they see people lying on trolleys in hospital corridors?

When

they see more and more people homeless on the streets?

When

they hear about a high street chain trying to pay young people in leftover food?

When

huge numbers of Sure Start centres have closed under the Tories?

Or

when class sizes are rising – as the Tories divert funds to grammar schools for a privileged few?

And

when social care for the elderly and disabled is in crisis – while the super-rich and big business get tax giveaways worth £73 billion?

How can you not be angry and demand major change when

life expectancy projections have fallen in Britain for pensioners? We are a rich country, the sixth richest in the world. We are not at war, there is no epidemic sweeping our land.

But,

whether the Conservative Party chair can face the facts or not, life expectancy has actually fallen – by a year for 65-year-old women and 6 months for 65-year-old men – since 2013.

The

truth is that the Tories are running our country down.

Home

ownership, opportunities for our children, wages and conditions at work, the NHS, care for our elderly, and now, life expectancy: they're all going backwards, run down by a Conservative government that looks after those at the

top and manages decline for the rest of us.

Britain

is a wealthy country but you wouldn't know it from the way people are held back in their everyday lives – from making a home for themselves and their families, building a career, pursuing their interests and ambitions.

Local

councils have made a huge difference to people's lives – providing libraries and leisure centres, schools, building houses, making sure the elderly have the support they need.

But

since 2010 councils have seen their funding cut by 40%.

Over

ninety percent of councils are putting up council tax this year to try to compensate for the huge cuts in the grant they get from government.

Meanwhile

police budgets are cut, social care budgets are cut, schools budgets are cut, Sure Start centres are closed, libraries are closed, houses aren't built.

Whole

communities are being held back and jobs, services and hope destroyed. But it doesn't have to be like this.

Labour

is standing up for you. In Westminster and in every community across the country.

Labour

councils are making a difference across the country. Stepping up where the Government fails to act.

Faced

with the growing housing crisis, Birmingham Council is delivering 30% of all new homes in the city. And Lancashire County Council has formed a joint venture to buy 800 affordable homes for sale and social rent.

Faced

with the crisis in social care 15 Labour councils have signed up to the Ethical

Care Charter for minimum standards of safety, quality and dignity of care and improve pay and training for care workers. I signed it myself last week in Blyth.

Faced

with so many people struggling to make ends meet Liverpool council is setting

up a not-for-profit energy company – “the Liverpool LECCy” – to sell gas and electricity at a lower cost, building on what’s been done down the road in Nottingham with Robin Hood Energy. And just west of here in Derbyshire the Labour Council’s Welfare Rights Service has helped local people claim £18 million in benefits they otherwise would have lost.

Faced

with the Government’s failure to invest in our economy the ‘Nottinghamshire Economic Development Capital Fund’ has lent £3.5 million to help more than 30 businesses secure good jobs in Nottinghamshire. And in Northumberland, the council-owned Arch property business generates jobs and homes, as well as a return of nearly £5m a year that supports council services like schools, roads and social care. I was really pleased to visit their Blyth Workspace site last week which offer huge opportunities.

Faced

with an epidemic of low pay 89 Labour councils have delivered the real Living Wage for council employees and contractors to ensure better wages for local people. I’m particularly proud that my own borough led the way on that.

These

are just a few examples of how Labour councils are standing up for you and why you need Labour to be in power in towns, counties and city regions as well as Westminster.

The

Conservatives justify tax cuts for the richest and big business by saying they will lead to an increase in investment. But in fact investment has fallen, leaving us with antiquated infrastructure and uncompetitive industries.

The

future of our country cannot be left to the free market and the whims of the wealthy.

That

is why Labour will set up a national investment bank and regional development banks – including our ‘Bank of the North’ – to help unlock £500 billion to fund major capital projects and finance growth.

Our

plan will use public investment to build up new investment by the private sector. It means creating hundreds of thousands of good quality jobs in manufacturing and in green and other cutting-edge industries of the future.

As

every successful business knows, there’s nothing reckless about borrowing to invest quite the opposite.

Investment

in infrastructure, skills, broadband and high speed rail generates growth and tax revenues. It more than pays for itself. This is just what the Welsh Government is doing with the launch of the Welsh Development Bank, which draws on 20 years of Labour experience in power.

At this crucial time we need to look to the future and ask ourselves what sort of country we want Britain to be.

Theresa May's Government is trying to use Brexit to turn Britain into a low-wage tax haven for big business.

We are offering a real alternative that reflects the priorities of the majority of our people to rebuild and transform Britain so that no one and no community is left behind.

Instead of a country run for the rich, we want to see one in which all of us can lead richer lives.

A Labour Government will end the rip-off on the railways and bring them into public ownership.

Labour will overturn the Government's ban on council-owned bus companies as part of a plan to put the public back into buses.

We'll stop the corporate tax cuts and make sure the tax dodgers pay their fair share.

We'll invest in our children's education and skills for our workers.

We'll give six million people a pay rise by introducing a real living wage of at least £10 an hour.

We'll reinstate nurses' bursaries and give more people the chance to train to be nurses, so that the sick get the care they need.

We'll

invest in housing, building the homes our country needs, creating thousands of good construction jobs and apprenticeships and allowing councils to borrow to build council housing.

Together

we can create a Britain where each of us can lead richer lives investing in a better Britain, creating educational opportunity for all, guaranteeing the health and social care services you need, providing safer neighbourhoods and building homes people can afford.

In

the coming weeks of this campaign Labour will be setting out more of our policies to show how Labour will stand up for you.

This

election is your chance to send a message to the Tories: that you won't accept our NHS in crisis, your children's future betrayed, a deepening housing crisis, damaging cuts to the police and insecure jobs that don't make ends meet.

It

doesn't have to be like this. Things can and they will change.

So

use your vote for Labour on 4th May.

Ends

[It's time the Government started giving mental health services the money they need – Barbara Keeley](#)

Barbara Keeley MP,

Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, commenting on the NHS report on Out of Area

Placements In Mental Health Services for February, said:

"These statistics show yet another rise in the number of mental health patients

being treated hundreds of miles away from their homes due to lack of beds in their local area. These are some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and the fact that some are having to go over 180 miles from where they live just to get a bed creates extra pressures on them and their

families.

“Last week’s NHS Five Year Forward View report says that some areas of the NHS

have: ‘...been living off bail-outs arbitrarily taken from other parts of the country or from services such as mental health’. Using mental health budgets to plug financial black holes elsewhere is leading to issues like these

out of area placements.

“The Tory government has talked a lot about parity of esteem between physical and mental health but the reality is simply not matching the rhetoric. It’s time the Government ended the warm words and started giving mental health services the money they need.”

UK-Italian earthquake collaboration gets a Royal audience

A seismologist from the British Geological Survey (BGS) and another from the National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology in Italy (INGV) met with Prince Charles in Amatrice today. The scientists were among the international team that updated him on the on-going collaboration and reconstruction efforts since the earthquake struck in August last year.

A new ten-year strategy to improve Scotland’s mental health

Today I want to talk about something which I know will be of huge personal importance to many readers – mental health.