

We won't pander to the will of this Tory government to chip away at hard won progress on equality – Champion

Today Labour has tabled a targeted amendment to the Article 50 Bill (the European Union [Notification of Withdrawal] Bill).

The amendment seeks to ensure Parliament is able to hold the Government to account throughout the Brexit negotiations on the impact of decisions on women and those with protected characteristics.

Sarah Champion, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Women and Equalities said:

"Labour has a long record of championing and protecting equal rights and we will hold the government to account using the Equality Act brought in by the last Labour government.

"Whilst we respect the will of the British people, we won't pander to the will of this Tory government to chip away at hard won progress on equality."

Theresa May's industrial strategy is little more than window-dressing for continued managed decline under the Tories – Onwurah

Responding to the Fabian Society's report "At the crossroads: the future of British retail", Chi Onwurah, Labour's Shadow Business Minister said:

"This is further evidence that Theresa May's industrial strategy is little more than window-dressing for continued managed decline under the Tories. Last week's Green Paper had almost nothing to say about retail, and this report underlines the failure of this Government to respond to urgent challenges such as automation and low productivity.

"It's clear that this Government's tactic of cherry-picking favoured sectors for backroom deals is leaving the vast majority of British workers out in the cold. Labour's industrial strategy will take a whole-economy approach to build a high-wage, high-growth Britain that genuinely works for everyone."

Green Party calls on all councils to welcome refugees after 'national disgrace' of asylum seekers' housing revealed



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The Green Party has branded the poor housing and lack of support for refugees in the UK a “national disgrace” and called on every council in the country to step up and take in refugees.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, made the call after it was revealed some asylum seekers were living in “rat infested” conditions [1].

Bartley said:

“That we would house those fleeing conflict and persecution in rat infested conditions is nothing short of a national disgrace.

“How low can Britain go? This country has a proud history of being a safe haven where those who have been abused, traumatised and suffered violations of their basic human rights can find protection and support. That heritage is being betrayed by this Government.

“We need to see every single local authority welcoming refugees and it is unacceptable that while some councils have taken in hundreds of asylum seekers others, like in the Prime Minister’s own constituency, have taken none at all.

“We are all citizens of the world and we all have a responsibility to provide sanctuary for those fleeing persecution. With the barbaric policies coming from Trump’s America this week the UK should be showing the world how we can and must do better.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38799694>

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Friends of Wighton Lunchtime Recital

From Sheena Wellington :



Wednesday 1st February, 1.15pm (admission free) –
Lunchtime Recital at the Wighton Heritage Centre.

For their first Lunchtime Recital of 2017 Friends of Wighton are delighted to welcome Just3Folk!

Just 3Folk (J3F) got together when they helped to start up a folk club called Sunday Sessions in Monifieth. The group: Liz Crawford, Maggie Douglas and Anne Hamilton share a common love of folk music and have been on an exciting musical journey over the past two years.

The group has taken part in many Folk sessions in Tayside, Angus, and Fife, and are regular performers at Sunday Sessions in Monifieth. They are bowled over by the friendliness of all the singers and musicians they have met in the different venues and love learning new songs and music from these talented performers.

The highlight of 2016 was when they went on tour in Donegal, enjoying 5 gigs in 5 nights. On one memorable occasion J3F found themselves performing to a bus load of American and Swedish tourists in Leo's Tavern, the home of Enya and Clannad .

J3F have developed a varied repertoire of traditional and contemporary folk music, arranging the songs in three part harmony, and performing them accompanied by guitar, banjo and occasionally ukulele.

Liz, Maggie and Anne have been incredibly busy in musical pursuits since retiring from full time employment. Anne, as well as teaching classical guitar in Broughty Ferry, runs a very popular folk singing group and co-runs a unique string group for Dundee U3A. Liz leads the very successful Dee Ukes, a Ukulele band who play in many different locations throughout Dundee and further afield. And Maggie is busy developing her ukulele and guitar

skills.

J3F are keen to perform wherever and whenever possible and thoroughly enjoy every minute of their musical experience. They plan to do another tour this summer on the West Coast of Scotland. They are delighted to be playing at the Wighton Centre lunchtime concert.

How are the EU and Turkish border fences and walls going?

Last year I drew attention to the big work programme highlighted on the EU website to strengthen Turkey's borders as part of its Visa Liberalisation programme with the EU. The officials wrote that they needed "ditch excavation, lighting, wire entanglement, trellis fence, road maintenance and construction and modular wall construction" along the extended Turkish border with Syria and Iraq. It would be good to have an update on how far they have got with their 900 km Syria/Turkey wall.

I raise it again because many in the EU are hostile to Mrs Trump's proposal to extend the already substantial USA/Mexico wall. I wonder why they apply different standards to this wall than to the ones the EU is helping finance and design closer to home. I invite proponents of the EU to tell us why they think these two walls are different, and why they support the Turkish one which is part of the EU/Turkey Agreement.

The EU approved border controls including ones along EU borders can incorporate watch towers, constant camera surveillance and plenty of "guards" to deal with any problems at crossing points. The 10th action point in the 72 point "Visa Liberalisation Roadmap" is to ensure sufficient well trained guards and surveillance equipment at crossing points. The 33rd point in the 72 point "Visa Liberalisation roadmap" agreed with Turkey by the EU is to "ensure effective expulsion of illegally residing 3rd country nationals."

If it is moral to oppose border walls and barriers in Mexico, surely it is similarly necessary to oppose them in Europe and Middle East?