

Deanery Conference: Deanery of St. John the Evangelist, Salford

GENERAL ELECTION INFORMATION 2019

The Deanery parishes of Saint John the Evangelist are within the following constituencies:

**Worsley and Eccles South
Salford and Eccles North
Blackley and Broughton**

We, the priests of the Deanery, have collectively written to the candidates within the constituencies who will be canvassing for votes during the upcoming General Election (Thursday 12th December 2019). We have asked the candidates to respond to a series of 14 questions which we feel are important to Catholics, which would help you to make a more informed choice on Election Day. Unfortunately only two candidates responded, their answers are recorded below, included is a statement from the Bishops Conference of England and Wales.

Prayer Before An Election

Lord God, as the election approaches, we seek to better understand the issues and concerns that confront our city/country, and how the Gospel compels us to respond as faithful citizens in our community.

We ask for eyes that are free from blindness so that we might see each other as brothers and sisters, one and equal in dignity, especially those who are victims of abuse and violence, deceit and poverty.

We ask for ears that will hear the cries of children unborn and those abandoned, Men and women oppressed because of race or creed, religion or gender.

We ask for minds and hearts that are open to hearing the voice of leaders who will bring us closer to your Kingdom.

We pray for discernment so that we may choose leaders who hear your Word, live your love, and keep in the ways of your truth as they follow in the steps of Jesus and his Apostles and guide us to your Kingdom of justice and peace.

We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Rebecca Long-Bailey:

Labour Parliamentary candidate for Salford and Eccles

1. What policies do your party have to ensure that the need for food banks will disappear over the next parliament?

Poverty has become endemic, the glue that binds our society together has come unstuck and, in the words of the United Nations, the UK's social safety net 'has been deliberately removed and replaced with a harsh and uncaring ethos'.

Foodbanks should have no place in a modern caring and civilised society and there are a number of measures that must be taken to ensure that those in our community enjoy the quality of life they deserve:

- Labour will scrap Universal Credit. We will immediately stop moving people onto it and design an alternative system that treats people with dignity and respect. Our ambition in designing this system will be to end poverty by guaranteeing a minimum standard of living
- We will end the five-week wait by introducing an interim payment based on half an estimated monthly entitlement. We will immediately suspend the Tories' vicious sanction regime and ensure that employment support is positive not punitive.
- We will stop 300,000 children from being in poverty by scrapping the benefit cap and the two child limit, so ending the immoral and outrageous 'rape clause'. We will pay childcare costs up front so that parents aren't forced to turn down work or get into debt to pay for childcare.
- Labour will protect women in abusive relationships by splitting payments and paying the child element to the primary carer.
- We will make it easier for people to manage their living costs by introducing fortnightly payments and paying the housing element directly to landlords.
- We will stop housing costs running away from benefits by scrapping the bedroom tax and increasing the Local Housing Allowance.
- We will stop the dehumanising Work Capability and PIP Assessments, which repeatedly and falsely find ill or disabled people fit to work, and make sure all assessments are done in-house.
- We will also increase Employment and Support Allowance by £30 per week for those in the work-related activity group; Raise the basic rate of support for children with disabilities to the level of Child Tax Credits and ensure that severely disabled people without a formal carer receive extra support to enable them to meet the extra costs they inevitably face.

- We will support those who look after others, increasing the Carer's Allowance to the level of the Jobseeker's Allowance
- We will also eradicate in-work poverty in our first term by tackling the structural causes of poverty and inequality, such as low pay and high living costs, while raising the floor provided by our social safety net.
- On housing, we will build at an annual rate of at least 150,000 council and social homes, with 100,000 of these built by councils for social rent in the biggest council housebuilding programme in more than a generation.
- Labour will also stop runaway rents by capping them with inflation, and give cities powers to cap rents further.
- We will give renters the security they need to make their rented housing a home, with new open-ended tenancies to stop unfair, 'no fault' evictions. We will make sure every property is up to scratch with new minimum standards, enforced through nationwide licensing and tougher sanctions for landlords who flout the rules. We will fund new renters' unions in every part of the country - to allow renters to organise and defend their rights.
- We will cap the total amount that can be paid in overdraft fees or interest on a loan.
- We will rapidly introduce a Real Living Wage of at least £10 per hour for all workers aged 16 and over, and use savings to public finances to help small businesses manage the extra cost.

2. What will your party do to promote cleaner energy so that climate change can be reversed?

Whether we are ready or not, we stand on the brink of unstoppable change and if action is not taken now, we will not reverse the climate crisis. Tackling the destruction of our planet is a question of justice - for the communities at home and abroad who are most affected by it and for our children who will bear the consequences if we don't. Social justice will define Labour's approach.

Labour will kick-start a Green Industrial Revolution (a Green New Deal) that will create one million jobs in the UK to transform our industry, energy, transport, agriculture and our buildings, while restoring nature.

Just as the original Industrial Revolution brought industry, jobs and pride to our towns, Labour's world-leading Green Industrial Revolution will rebuild them, with more rewarding, well-paid jobs, lower energy bills and whole new industries to revive parts of our country that have been neglected for too long.

We have the most radical, credible and detailed plan of any political party in the world but on energy specifically we know that energy use in buildings

accounts for 56% of the UK's total emissions, making it the single most polluting sector.

We will develop the recommendations of our '30 by 2030' report (a report to the Labour party by a team of industry experts and academics - available on the party website) to put the UK on track for a net-zero-carbon energy system within the 2030s - and go faster if credible pathways can be found.

We will build:

- 7,000 new offshore wind turbines
- 2,000 new onshore wind turbines
- Enough solar panels to cover 22,000 football pitches.
- New nuclear power needed for energy security.

We will trial and expand tidal energy and invest to reduce the costs of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen production.

We will upgrade almost all of the UK's 27 million homes to the highest energy-efficiency standards, reducing the average household energy bill by £417 per household per year by 2030 and eliminating fuel poverty.

We will introduce a zero-carbon homes standard for all new homes.

As part of heat decarbonisation, we will roll out technologies like heat pumps, solar hot water and hydrogen, and invest in district heat networks using waste heat.

To balance the grid, we will expand power storage and invest in grid enhancements and interconnectors.

We will expand distributed and community energy, and immediately and permanently ban fracking.

We will support energy workers through transition and guarantee them retraining and a new, unionised job on equivalent terms and conditions.

We will introduce a windfall tax on oil companies, so that the companies that knowingly damaged our climate will help cover the costs. We will provide a strategy to safeguard the people, jobs and skills that depend on the offshore oil and gas industry.

2. What are your party's policies regarding cuts in our education system which have led to schools having to shorten their teaching week as well as fund raise for essentials?

Sadly our schools have faced years of budget cuts, leaving headteachers forced to beg parents for money for basic equipment. Despite promising to reverse their own cuts, the Tories latest funding announcement leaves 83% of schools still facing cuts next year.

Labour will make sure schools are properly resourced with increased long term funding, while introducing a fairer funding formula that leaves no child worse off. We will invest to upgrade schools that have fallen into disrepair.

Labour's funding settlement will ensure pupils are taught by a qualified teacher, that every school is open for a full five days a week, and maximum class sizes of 30 for all primary school children. We will also fund more non-contact time for teachers to prepare and plan.

On early years, we will reverse cuts to Sure Start and create a new service, Sure Start Plus, with enough centres to provide a genuinely universal service, available in all communities, focused on the under-2s.

Labour will radically reform early years provision, with a two-term vision to make high-quality early years education available for every child. We will also extend paid maternity leave to 12 months.

Within five years, all 2, 3 and 4-year-olds will be entitled to 30 hours of free preschool education per week and access to additional hours at affordable, subsidised rates staggered with incomes. Labour will also work to extend childcare provision for 1-year-olds and to ensure that childcare provision accommodates the working patterns of all parents.

We will improve child development by transitioning to a qualified, graduate led workforce. We value the experience of current early years workers, and will offer free training to the workforce to attain these qualifications on the job.

4. Do you value the role that the Catholic community plays in providing education in Catholic schools?

Yes, very much so.

I am Catholic and I have no doubt that my Catholic education instilled the moral values in me to care and look after the people around me, as we all should. It was a vital part of my spiritual and moral journey growing up and that is why I now send my child to a catholic school so that he can also have that spiritual support and guidance from our community as he grows up.

5. The care of the elderly and all those in need of extra support is an essential part of Catholic ethos, how does your party propose to provide comprehensive social care provision?

Sadly, social care funding cuts have left 1.5 million older people without the care they need.

Almost £8 billion has been lost from social care budgets since 2010. This is having a profound impact on unpaid carers in this country, with 2.6 million.

A Labour government will build a comprehensive National Care Service for England.

We will provide free personal care, beginning with investments to ensure that older people have their personal care needs met, with the ambition to extend this provision to all working-age adults.

We will ensure no one ever again needs to face catastrophic care costs of more than £100,000 for the care they need in old age, which we will underscore with a lifetime cap on personal contributions to care costs.

We will also invest in other social care packages to reverse the damage done by Conservative cuts and provide additional care packages to support both older people and working-age adults living independently in their own homes. Our investments in social care services will enable us to more than double the number of people receiving publicly funded care packages, improve the standard of care provided to them and remove the distinction between health and care needs.

The provision of additional care packages also means we can support autistic people and people with learning disabilities to move out from inappropriate inpatient hospital settings and provide support in their own homes. Our National Care Service will work in partnership with the NHS, ensuring care is delivered for people, not for profit. Contracts for providing care will not be awarded to organisations that do not pay their fair share of taxes and do not meet our high standards of quality care. Our focus will be on the ethical delivery of care that ensures growing public sector provision and providers who meet standards of transparency, compliance and profit capping.

Nearly one and a half million people work in the care sector, but there are over 100,000 vacancies. Labour will invest to end the social care crisis, end 15-minute care visits and provide care workers with paid travel time, access to training and an option to choose regular hours. We will increase the Carer's Allowance for unpaid full-time carers.

6. As a candidate do you have a personal faith or spirituality? And if so how does it help you in your daily life?

Yes I am a Catholic. I have no doubt that most politicians, whether I agree with them or not, become involved in politics because they have a personal vision of how society should be.

For fear of sounding cheesy, (you won't hear this in my political interviews...) my Catholic faith has taught me that the only society we should be striving for is one based on love. A society that cares for everyone, where compassion is built into our culture, to help those who suffer, be patient with those who don't agree with us, forgive those who have wronged us even if it's the

most difficult thing to do and essentially to treat others as we would treat ourselves, equally and fairly.

The teachings I have based my life around drive the work I do every day and the policies I help to create as a politician.

Of course there are difficult days, when I see the way people suffer in my community every day, and sometimes I wonder if we will ever get any where near the society I am seeking to create.

But in those dark times, when I wonder if I am making the right decisions, my faith is often the only thing that keeps me going. In those quiet moments before sleep every night, I always I pray for help and strength in doing the right thing, making the right decisions and making my time worthy of helping those around me as I truly want to.

7. Due to University fees, fewer school leavers are choosing to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend University; what proposals does your party have to encourage young people to engage in further education?

No matter what back ground you come from everyone should have the right to a high quality education to realise their ambitions. Sadly however, under the Tories, adult education has undergone 10 years of managed decline. England already faces a shortage of people with higher-level technical qualifications, and demand for these skills will only grow as we create new green jobs.

Labour will create a cradle to grave National Education Service so that everyone can reach their potential no matter what age they are.

We will abolish tuition fees and bring back maintenance grants. We will fundamentally rethink the assessment of research and teaching quality, and develop a new funding formula for higher education that:

- Ensures all public HE institutions have adequate funding for teaching and research.
- Widens access to higher education and reverses the decline of part-time learning.
- Ends the casualisation of staff.

Labour will make lifelong learning a reality, giving everyone a free lifelong entitlement to:

- Training up to Level 3.
- Six years training at Levels 4-6, with maintenance grants for disadvantaged learners.

We will introduce additional entitlements for workers in industries that are significantly affected by industrial transition.

We will make sure training delivers the right skills by giving employers a role in co-design and co-production of qualifications.

We will restore funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses and restore and expand the Union Learning Fund, giving workers the right to accrue paid time off for education and training.

Labour will reform existing careers advice, working towards an integrated information, advice and guidance system that covers the entire National Education Service.

8. People increasingly feel unsafe on the streets of our constituency, how would you propose to counter this?

A Labour government will invest in policing to prevent crime and make our communities safer, and we will enforce the laws protecting police and other emergency workers from violent assault.

We will rebuild the whole police workforce, recruiting more police officers, police community support officers and police staff.

We will re-establish neighbourhood policing and recruit 2,000 more frontline officers than have been planned for by the Conservatives.

We will work with police forces to invest in a modern workforce to tackle the rise in violent crime and cybercrime under the Tories. To deliver these priorities, Labour will work with police and crime commissioners to reform police funding and share new resources fairly, and to ensure that local needs are met.

9. Would your party introduce policies to protect women in the workplace against discrimination on grounds of pregnancy?

Labour will give working people a voice at the Cabinet table by establishing a Ministry for Employment Rights which will enforce maternity rights at work as well as other employment rights and protections. We will ban the dismissal of pregnant women without prior approval of the inspectorate.

Labour will also create a new Department for Women and Equalities, with a full-time Secretary of State, responsible for ensuring all our policies and laws are equality-impact assessed in order to deliver a fairer society for women and all under-represented groups. We will establish a modernised National Women's Commission as an independent advisory body to contribute to a Labour government.

Labour will also revolutionise parents' rights by increasing paid maternity leave from nine to 12 months, doubling paternity leave to four weeks and extending pregnancy protection.

10. Do you support the bringing the UK's law on abortion into line with the law in most EU states by lowering the gestational time-limit for abortion?

Whilst I would never contemplate abortion I have tried to understand the agonising decisions many feel forced to make and what support they would need. For example: the woman with a medical condition who is told she and her unborn child may die if she goes through with the pregnancy or the 15 year old scared to tell anyone and seek guidance.

My main concerns are about the lack of support, guidance and the lengths many may feel forced to go to. Gone are the days of back street abortion clinics and now I fear that many may look to the internet to procure dangerous and unregulated products, without the advice and support they may desperately need, putting themselves in danger and making a life altering decision without counselling or knowledge of the real emotional implications it will have. That is why I think that we do need to have a discussion about what a comprehensive, safe, properly regulated approach would be. One which also seeks to provide the advice and support to those who may feel forced to think about taking such a life changing decision.

The Labour manifesto states simply that "We will uphold women's reproductive rights and decriminalise abortions." We have not stated that time limits will be reviewed, and definitely not that they should be increased.

Labour would propose a wide public consultation on the detail of new laws and regulations and of course I will play my part in that discussion in ensuring that your views are heard.

Labour has stated that abortion procedures and those performing them must be properly regulated but vulnerable women should be advised and assisted rather than criminalised.

On back ground to this: The 1967 Abortion act legalised abortion under certain strict conditions, if two doctors agree that continuing a pregnancy would affect a woman's mental or physical health.

But the 1967 act did not repeal the 1861 Offences Against The Persons Act, which still technically means that anyone who attempts to "procure her own miscarriage" is committing a criminal act and subject to a jail sentence.

Northern Ireland was always exempt from the 1967 reform, but recently MPs voted to abolish the 1861 act too, meaning the province is the only part of the UK where the practice is decriminalised.

11. Discrimination on grounds of disability or gender are illegal in this country except in the case of termination of pregnancy, would you support removing this discrimination?

It is currently legal to terminate a pregnancy up to full-term on the grounds of disability while the upper limit is 24 weeks if there is no disability. I personally do not agree with this position and agree with the words of the Disability Rights

Commission that “the context in which parents choose whether to have a child should be one in which disability and non-disability are valued equally”.

12. What is your personal view on the issue of legalisation on assisted suicide?

Against. I voted against the private members bill on assisted suicide a few years ago.

Aside from the moral and ethical red lines, I had serious concerns that those who looked at assisted suicide may simply feel compelled to end their own life for reasons beyond it truly being their time to go.

I understand that many in pain may face an unbearable existence but my fear is that they could choose such a path because they feel a burden on their families, they may not be getting enough support to deal with pain or it may be that they simply haven't got enough support to live the quality life they deserve. The bill itself also looked at medical professionals judging whether someone was terminally ill. Whilst in many cases it may be obvious that someone is terminally ill, there is always scope for human error.

I would much rather we invested more in end of life care to support those who are suffering and their families.

13. Do you think that those who uphold pro-life views should have the right to hold elective office in your party?

Yes

14. Our diocese provides homes for families driven out of their homelands by war, refugees from violence; what policies does your party propose to alleviate the terrible situation in which so many families find themselves?

Refugees are victims of wars, environmental catastrophes, famine or persecution. This government has failed its international legal obligations to refugees and to allow people to exercise their rights to seek asylum.

A Labour government will uphold those rights and meet those obligations. We will work with others to resume rescue missions in the Mediterranean, co-operate with the French authorities to put an end to the horrific camps, and establish safe and legal routes for asylum seekers.

Once here, refugees will have the right to work, access to public services and will be treated humanely by government at all levels.

Responses to Questions from Barbara Keeley, Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Worsley and Eccles South

1. What policies do your party have to ensure that the need for food banks will disappear over the next parliament?

Labour will end 'food bank Britain' and introduce a new 'Right to Food' to ensure everyone has access to healthy, nutritious, sustainably produced food. We plan to halve food bank usage within a year and remove the need for food banks altogether within three years. We will make food security a reason to intervene in the economy and work with local councils to minimise food waste.

2. What will your party do to promote cleaner energy so that climate change can be reversed?

We must act now to tackle the climate emergency. Labour's plans mean that we will deliver nearly 90% of electricity and 50% of heat from renewable and low-carbon sources by 2030. This will mean building 7,000 new offshore wind turbines, 2,000 new onshore wind turbines and enough solar panels to cover 22,000 football pitches and new nuclear power facilities.

We will also trial and expand tidal energy sources and invest to reduce the costs of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen production.

3. What are your party's policies regarding cuts in our education system which have led to schools having to shorten their teaching week as well as fundraise for essentials?

Labour will reverse the cuts to school budgets which have been made under the Conservatives. We will also introduce a fairer funding formula that leaves no child worse off. This will ensure all schools are open five days a week, and that class sizes are capped at 30 in primary schools.

4. Do you value the role that the Catholic community plays in providing education in Catholic schools?

I attended Catholic schools myself and I do value the role that the Catholic community plays in providing education in Catholic schools. I was a Governor of Catholic Primary School before I became an MP and I also value the role that Governors and priests play in the life of our Catholic schools.

5. The care of the elderly and all those in need of extra support is an essential part of Catholic ethos, how does your party propose to provide comprehensive social care provision?

As the Shadow Minister for Social Care, I am committed to ensuring that everyone can access the care and support they need. Social Care is in crisis due to cuts which have been made to budgets since 2010 and Labour will put in an immediate investment of funding to fix the crisis. We will introduce free personal care for all people over the age of 65. This means that everyone over 65 who needs help with basic tasks like getting up and dressed, bathing and eating meals will get that help free of charge. We will also cap the total amount someone could pay for care across their lifetime. I value the role of care staff and we must improve their pay, conditions and training. Labour will pay care staff a real living wage, pay staff for travel time and invest in better training.

6. As a candidate do you have a personal faith or spirituality? And if so how does it help you in your daily life?

I do have a personal faith and I am a practicing Catholic. My faith gives me a moral compass and a sense of the Common Good, of solidarity with others and of the need for compassion for the vulnerable. It also reminds me that we have a duty of stewardship for the earth.

7. Due to University fees, fewer school leavers are choosing to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend University; what proposals does your party have to encourage young people to engage in further education?

Higher and further education should not be only for the wealthy. Labour will scrap tuition fees and bring back the maintenance grant for university students. We will also restore Education Maintenance Allowances so that young people can be supported to stay on in college and give everyone an entitlement to free lifelong learning.

8. People increasingly feel unsafe on the streets of our constituency, how would you propose to counter this?

Since 2010, Greater Manchester has lost 2,000 police officers due to budget cuts as part of cuts made to 21,000 police officer posts across the country. This means we have lost our model of neighbourhood policing. Labour will re-establish neighbourhood policing and put 2,000 more police on the streets

than the Conservatives are planning. This means more visible police officers protecting our streets and helping reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

9. Would your party introduce policies to protect women in the workplace against discrimination on grounds of pregnancy?

Nobody should face discrimination because they are pregnant. We will strengthen protections for whistleblowers and give rights against unfair dismissal for all staff, with extra protections for pregnant women, those going through the menopause and people who are terminally ill.

We will improve rights for parents by increasing paid maternity leave from nine to 12 months, doubling paternity leave to four weeks and extending pregnancy protection. We will ban the dismissal of pregnant women.

10. Do you support the bringing the UK's law on abortion into line with the law in most EU states by lowering the gestational time-limit for abortion?

No.

11. Discrimination on grounds of disability or gender are illegal in this country except in the case of termination of pregnancy, would you support removing this discrimination?

No.

12. What is your personal view on the issue of legalisation on assisted suicide?

I am against the legalisation of assisted dying/assisted suicide and I have voted against it. We need good quality, compassionate end of life care to be available so that each person nearing the end of life can feel supported.

13. Do you think that those who uphold pro-life views should have the right to hold elective office in your party?

[no answer]

14. Our diocese provides homes for families driven out of their homelands by war, refugees from violence; what policies does your party propose to alleviate the terrible situation in which so many families find themselves.

Refugees are victims of wars, environmental catastrophes, famine or persecution. The current government has failed its international legal obligations to refugees and failed to allow people to exercise their rights to seek asylum. A Labour government will uphold those rights and meet those obligations. We will work with others to resume rescue missions in the Mediterranean, co-operate with the French authorities to put an end to the camps there and establish safe and legal routes for asylum seekers. Once here, refugees will have the right to work, access to public services and will be treated humanely by government at all levels.

Message from the Catholic Bishops of England & Wales General Election 2019

*The Lord Jesus said:
'I have come so that they may have life
and have it to the full.'* (John 10:10)

This General Election is profoundly important to the United Kingdom. Catholics cannot simply “watch from the balcony.”[\[1\]](#) Conscious of the common good of every person and our society as a whole, we ask everyone to engage with the election and vote.

Honest political activity depends upon integrity. We urge all in public life to recognise that telling the truth, not making vindictive and abusive comments or unattainable promises, are essential.[\[2\]](#)

The question of the United Kingdom’s place in Europe continues to dominate political discourse. In whatever way our future relationship with our closest neighbours develops, Britain must be committed to a positive engagement as a key international partner in promoting peace, security and responsible stewardship of the planet. As Pope Francis reminds us, “good politics is at the service of peace.”[\[3\]](#)

Citizens have a duty to emphasise and help shape a politics rooted in the service of human rights and peace. The test of any policy should be its impact upon human dignity, particularly for the most disadvantaged in our society. In making judgments about how to vote, please consider carefully the following and ask your candidates how they would uphold:

- The innate dignity of every human being; defending both the child in the womb, the good of the mother and an understanding of the immeasurable good of a child not yet born?
- The dignified care for those who are terminally ill and dying while resisting the false compassion of assisted suicide or euthanasia?
- The needs of those who are frequently neglected or discarded by society such as people with disabilities, Travellers, older people, those who are homeless, those in prison and those trapped in modern slavery?
- The process of integration of migrants and refugees who have made their homes here^[4], challenging the global rise of xenophobia and racism that is so radically incompatible with our faith^[5]?
- The rights of those in our own communities and overseas who “can see no end to the tunnel of extreme poverty,”^[6] providing them with assistance and confronting the structural injustices that compound their suffering?
- Care for our common home and tackle the climate emergency which threatens the future of our entire human family and is already having a profound impact upon the world’s poorest people^[7]?
- Freedom of religion and belief, ensuring that everyone has the right to exercise their conscience and practise their creed freely without fear?
- The cherishing of marriage, recognising the essential place of the family in the service of life and of society?
- The right of parents to educate their children in accordance with their faith and support the work of Catholic schools in their contribution to society and their promotion of the common good?

Jesus tells us “I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.” Informed by the work of our parishes, schools and charities, we should all approach this election as an opportunity to promote life, dignity and human flourishing for all.

We call on all Catholics to pray for the wellbeing of our society. May the Holy Spirit guide our choice as we seek together, and for all, “life to the full.”

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