

CROSS-COMMUNITY LABOUR

FERMANAGH AND SOUTH TYRONE NEWSLETTER 2021

Your Voice for Real Change

Cross-Community Labour unites socialist activists with trade unionists and community campaigners and has had a real impact in Fermanagh and Tyrone. It offers an alternative for everyone who is in favour of the unity of working people and a future based on the shared interests of the many, not the few.

In 2019 Donal O’Cofaigh was elected as a councillor for Enniskillen. Since then, he has consistently raised the issues that matter to ordinary working people, exposed the traditional parties and explained what socialist policies have to offer. He has been selected to stand at the next Assembly election by local activists in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

Caroline Wheeler, a lifelong campaigner for carers’ rights and the NHS, stood on cross-community labour policies in the 2019 General Election and achieved a very strong vote for a first-time candidate. She continues to organise and advocate for carers and care staff, both in the community and through her union Unite.



Donal’s victory and Caroline’s stand have persuaded many that a new type of politics is possible. Cross-Community Labour will offer an alternative in every election and works to defend the interests working people and young people between elections.

Join with us today.



FIGHTING FOR WORKING-C

Defending Our Health Service

Our NHS was in crisis before the pandemic: ten years of austerity have left the North with even fewer intensive care beds per head of the population than England, Scotland and Wales. Stormont spends the least on primary care leaving communities in Fermanagh and Tyrone facing an acute GP crisis. We can be sure that these difficulties will be used by establishment politicians in Stormont and Westminster to push even more privatisation and cutbacks.

This is a scandal, and it occurred under the watch of the Executive parties. Cross-Community Labour activists have a track record of fighting to defend health services across Fermanagh and Tyrone.

We spearheaded successful campaigns against the closure of the stroke department and the neonatal unit in South-West Acute Hospital.

We continue to expose and fight against privatisation of our NHS including PFI hospitals, privatised ambulance services and the reliance on private care homes.



Health workers' picket line, South Tyrone Hospital

Delivering for Victims of Domestic Violence

Councillor Donal O'Cofaigh has secured improved provision for victims of domestic violence. The Covid lockdown resulted in a surge in domestic violence. There are only three beds for victims and their families in the Enniskillen area. Donal repeatedly raised the issue and ensured that the Council wrote to Stormont demanding action. As a direct result of this work and the long-term efforts of Women's Aid, the Housing Executive has now received funding to build four dedicated housing units for vulnerable women.

Campaigning to win Real Wage Increases

The Tories want to make working-class people pay for the cost of the pandemic. Universal Credit has been cut by more than £1000 per year and national insurance payments for a working-family are going up by £350 a year. The same happened after the financial crash in 2008 when the bankers were bailed out and working-class people paid the price through austerity cuts.

Enough is enough. Workers are facing real pay cuts as prices rise and wages stagnate. Cross-Community Labour activists work closely with trade union activists throughout Fermanagh and Tyrone to organise workplaces and support industrial action and strikes to win real pay rises and basic respect.

Exposing the Covid Care Home Scandal

Donal O'Cofaigh has exposed the practice in the early phase of the Covid pandemic of discharging patients from hospital before the results of their Covid tests were known. As a result, care home residents were put at risk of Covid infection and death. This practice was widespread, and Donal ensured that it became a major media story.

He has successfully proposed motions to Fermanagh and Omagh Council calling for an independent public inquiry into these events. He has also moved a motion demanding that the care home industry is brought into public ownership and integrated into the NHS, as the only way to ensure that residents are looked after to the highest standard and staff are paid the proper wage for a skilled and demanding job.



Donal pictured with Carmel Gates protesting against car park charges. Carmel, a Coalisland native, was recently elected NIPSA General Secretary.

CLASS PEOPLE EVERY DAY

Campaigning for the Rights of Carers

Caroline Wheeler has been a lifelong carer for her son Lee and became radicalised through the experience of having to fight for basic support. Working alongside other carers, she exposed the scandalous shortfall in funding for Adult Care in the Western region. An incredible £160 million has been stolen from carers over 20 years. Then Minister for Health Michelle O'Neill was forced to concede a public inquiry into the scandal. This was announced on the eve of the collapse of the Stormont Executive in 2016. Despite the Executive being re-established nothing has been done on this since.

Caroline has recently established a Carers' Branch in her union Unite and is organising to win payments for unpaid carers and to ensure a full public inquiry into the missing money.

Environmental Campaigning

Socialists and trade-unionists have a proud record of working alongside environmental campaigners in Fermanagh and Tyrone. Donal O'Cofaigh was a leading figure in the successful fight to stop fracking, and fully supports the campaign against gold-mining in Tyrone. After a three-week stand-off in his home village of Belcoo in 2014 the local community forced the Stormont Executive to withdraw its support for this toxic industry. He remains active in Belcoo Frack Free and works closely with the network of anti-fracking campaign groups across Britain and Ireland.



Give Young People a Future

Too many young people leave Fermanagh and Tyrone because they have no choice. They know they face a future of poorly paid and insecure work if they stay and will struggle to find appropriate housing. No wonder there is an epidemic of mental health problems.

Cross-Community Labour is fighting for massive public investment in the green economy to provide sustainable and quality public sector jobs paid a minimum of £15 an hour. Donal has pushed the Councils to force companies seeking council contracts to provide quality apprenticeships. He has also highlighted the severe lack of new public housing in this area.

Cross-Community Labour is demanding rapid investment in mental health services.



THE LABOUR AND SOCIALIST TRADITION IN FERMANAGH AND SOUTH TYRONE

Cross-Community Labour brings together socialist and labour activists, trade unionists and community campaigners.

The main political parties thrive on sectarian division. In contrast Cross-Community Labour works every day to defend and build the unity of working-class people and young people in the unions and community campaigns. We fight for LGBTQ+ rights and robustly oppose racism. We fight for reproductive rights and full equality for women. We stand against repressive actions from the state, for example the police actions taken against Black Lives Matters and anti-goldmining activists. We work with other activists to build strong unions in the workplaces.

We need a strong anti-sectarian and socialist voice on the councils and in the Assembly. Otherwise, it is like fighting with one hand tied behind our back. Donal O'Cofaigh's victory at the last election was an important step in re-establishing a presence for socialists on local councils-in the recent past socialist and left councillors have been elected in both Enniskillen and Dungannon.

We believe that it is only through the struggle for real change that we can solve our problems. Real change will only be delivered in a democratic socialist society, when the needs of all are met, and the democratic rights of all communities are guaranteed. Socialism is based on solidarity. We support and work with

workers and young people in struggle across the border, and in Scotland, England and Wales. Donal is a member of the group Militant Left which links up with socialists in dozens of other countries in a shared struggle for a better future.

We will be on the streets over the coming weeks and months campaigning on the issues that matter. We represent the future, not the past. Join with us today.



GET INVOLVED - JOIN WITH US IN BUILDING A REAL ALTERNATIVE

07375 530941

f: /CllrDonalOCofaigh

t: @donaloc

www.socialistfst.net