

Angela
Rayner
Fighting to win.

Manifesto

for a **Movement**

Introduction

The Labour Party is the greatest force for change our country has ever seen. Born from organised labour to give working class people a voice in political life, we have changed the very fabric of our nation – from the welfare state and the NHS through to the minimum wage.

Our movement has delivered change. It's time to do it again.

Community by community. Workplace by workplace. Street by street. Cities, towns, villages, nations and regions. It is time for Labour to rediscover its roots and, in the adversity of a Tory government, to find a new strength and collective purpose.

Too often, modern day Labour is standing orders and minutes.

We're a movement, not a meeting.

This 'Manifesto for a Movement' doesn't have all the answers, but as part of my campaign to be Deputy Leader of the Labour Party it kicks off a discussion around what needs to be radically changed in the way we organise, connect and build in our communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'A Rayner'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the word 'Rayner'.

Angela Rayner MP

Candidate to be Deputy Leader
of the Labour Party



Labour: we're a movement, not a meeting

Labour exists to win power. We were formed because organised workers had found ways to exercise power by acting collectively in the workplace but knew that industrial organisation alone was not enough because employers controlled the laws they worked within. So the Labour Party was born, and so we have been ever since – where there is power wielded over the lives of the many by a few, Labour has sought to win and influence that power.

Without the inherited wealth and privilege of the upper classes and aristocracy, the only power working people could exert was through their own labour with an underlying principle of collectivism and solidarity. That many of those workers toiled in large workplaces and lived in communities built around their industry, strengthened common bonds.

Take pit villages – workers would have their local Labour club or colliery club, they had the colliery band, the colliery football and cricket teams. Take the Dagenham Ford plant which had local sports clubs and family days out to the seaside. Industry existed alongside collective forms of ownership in the mass council housebuilding programmes of the Becontree Estate that delivered aspiration and hope for so long, to so many.

Labour was part of a movement, and that movement had a culture rooted in the work, lives and communities of its people.

Now many of those workplaces are gone. The culture and community that came with them withered but, in many places, still longed for. As the world has changed, there has been no real attempt by any mainstream political party to rebuild a culture or a sense of belonging as part of a political project.

In post-Thatcherite Britain, New Labour did new campaigning. We introduced 'Voter ID' and ruthless message discipline. For years it worked as an electoral machine, but too often it didn't develop into deeper roots in the communities that needed us. We built new schools and hospitals but we didn't always build a sense of shared purpose or achievement with the parents and patients who benefited.

If we look at how the SNP has functioned in Scotland, we can see the opposite. Of course there are very different issues and challenges, but fundamentally the SNP is a political party that has developed a cultural following and identity.

They have understood that policies are important, but if you can create a sense of belonging and an 'I'm with them' mentality, those voters would be bonded to them through more than an individualised, transactional decision. They grew an ecosystem of think-tanks, institutions, cultural hubs and social spaces alongside community social movements and campaigns that all fed into one key aim, and sustained the energy and mobilisation through defeat, as well as victory.

We need that now more than ever.

It's not entirely different from Brexit. We don't intend this Manifesto to dwell on the arguments of the last four years because we need to move on, but a couple of factors are important to note. 'Take back control' tapped into the same aspiration of working people – to have power over our own lives – that the early Labour Party had embraced.

Taking control to many meant voting to Leave, and when those who wanted to remain were perceived to be trying to remove that control by overturning a decision Leave voters felt, not just politically, but emotionally and culturally attached to, it was always going to be difficult to find a middle ground. Labour suffered because of it.

Labour has to look anew at how we connect, campaign and build common bonds within communities. When we talk about building a new culture, we're talking about it in two mainways – a new culture within Labour but also a new culture for Labour as a movement.

There are some great examples already in action; this manifesto doesn't have all the answers but starts the discussion about how we start to do that as a Party.

Breaking the mould

The past few years have seen all kinds of innovation flourish. New movements are coming together, old ones reviving and organisations across the globe embracing technology to support their causes.

Kids are going on climate strike, football fans are running food banks and people from all walks of life are taking direct action on climate change.

The World Transformed's success is to bring together the newer, and often more horizontally-organised parts of our movement, with parts organised along collective lines. To provide a space for real dialogue between generations, and parts of our movement. The work they have done showcasing trade union organising successes to a new generation has been worthwhile. Their attempts to break out of the cities and organise events in 'red wall' seats are a bold attempt to move out of our comfort zone.

Labour must support the extension of these initiatives, so that the working class youth of Barnsley have a shared project for rebuilding our country and movement with the working class kids of Brixton.

The Durham Miners' Gala, which at one point was struggling financially, now has record attendance, so much so it's opened a campsite. The Tolpuddle Festival continues to grow. In that, we see writ large the new demand and energy for a collective culture where we all stand together – at both events unions are now mobilising their members not just to march but to attend political and campaigning schools, turning that solidarity into collective action.

GMB Union sponsors sports teams because they know that working class culture is where they need to be; their work at Whitehawk FC and Castleford Tigers puts them right in the centre of the community. What better way for a community to know you're 'one of them' than sponsoring the local grassroots team?

In the same vein, Unite the Union took a deliberate decision to campaign around football grounds at the last election – that's not an easy call to make, especially in the current political climate, but in Leeds, Barnsley, Sheffield, Hull, and right across the North West trade union activists were in supporter pubs armed with beer mats and speaking to people on match day in a way they understood, in a sporting community many have belonged to since they were kids.

ACORN Union is simultaneously a wonderful example of people trying to take control over their own lives and a wake up call to Labour. ACORN aims to bring together working class people in communities to help them make change for themselves, but it is set against the political establishment. ACORN is doing what we should have been. Labour was never meant to be the establishment – we want power, not to be part of the furniture.

When it comes to campaigning, Momentum has been a mobilising, digital and social media force. NEON has worked to fill the airwaves with progressive voices on the economy.

Too much of the innovation has happened outside of the seats we lost, or the places we need to win, and too often outside of the Party itself. Aligned, but not mainstreamed.

That is not to say that Labour people aren't making a difference. We have CLP offices turned into rights and advice centres, members and MPs organising school uniform swaps for families struggling in the new school year, people running and donating to food banks and fantastic local councillors who are doing the best they can in very tough circumstances. But often this organising and innovation is not plugged into the Party structures, and is not shared, supported or resourced.





Movement generosity

We need to find ways of being generous in our movement – too many trade union offices and buildings lie underutilised, whilst campaign groups and community change makers struggle to cobble together the money to rent a modest office.

Or local party's with resources, people, skills and ideas - yet no hope of beating a Tory on a mega majority – finding ways of being generous to other parts of our movement with what they have. Take Lewes Labour Party – an island of progressive politics, culture and ideas marooned in a blue sea of shire Tories. They have built a successful and well-attended series of annual events, tackling the big political issues of the day, with workshops, speakers, and music.

Linking up the local social justice movement and trade union with the Party – and then inviting campaigners in all the nearby marginal seats to come and take part, learn, upskill, and freshen up in the often gruelling slog to win marginal seats. A simple idea that surely could be harnessed and utilised across the country.

Or take TSSA union, like many others using its offices across the country as resources for community organising and campaigning. Linking up struggles and local movements, sharing ideas between campaigns, and most importantly being generous with modest resources that community campaigns can take a long way!

Shake it up: organising for the 21st Century

We must renew our commitment to organising, but not through top-down models dictated from a London headquarters.

Frontline activists will always know what works best and is best for the communities they live in. Our new approach must be at its very core activist-led and activist-centred. From the trade union movement to the increasing number of self-organised equality strand groups and organisations, self-organisation is fundamental to who we are – it's how we were formed and is how we thrive.

Parachuting in a paid activist to mobilise people to an event or do for people what they could be equipped to do for themselves turns the Labour Party into what – in union terms – is an officer-servicing model, not an organising one. Our staff are vital, but what happens when someone moves on? Sustainable and effective community organising structures cannot be built around paid staff, they have to be built around people and leaders in communities seeking change.

From the National Council of Labour Colleges in the interwar years, to recent attempts to get organised in communities, we have a rich history of action to support and empower our people.

That's what we must get back to – the role of paid organisers should be to train, empower, advise, offer specialist skills that you can't always get in a CLP (though our Labour Community should help with that – see 'Getting it done' at the end of this booklet).

It's important for the 'big picture' too. No one will believe we can change the big stuff unless they believe they can have some impact on the small stuff – it's unlikely in any union that your first dispute would be a national ballot. If there is a lack of trust or belief that anything can change, then a manifesto like we presented in 2019 will seem far less credible.

Case Study: The Battle for Barking and Dagenham

In Barking and Dagenham, the BNP was defeated through four years of relentless, solid community organising by Hope not Hate – training church after church, mosque after mosque, trade union branch after trade union branch, for one shared purpose: building a collective strength in the face of racism. It not only removed the BNP but built community ties and a sustained way of working in the local area that saw us hold Dagenham and Rainham at the last election, when by rights on the national swing it should have turned Tory.

Labour community

We have a mass membership packed full of talent, we need to utilise all of the skills our members bring to the table because there is a way for everyone to contribute. From videographers to designers, from those who understand how to make events accessible to public speaking skills – we need a system to help members and activists support each other in delivering change.

→ Build 'Labour Community' – think of LinkedIn for Labour! Let's share our skills and activism to support each other. If someone in Wakefield needs a leaflet design and someone in Wycombe has the time and skills let's put a system in place to support each other

→ Activist Exchanges – the debate around Brexit highlighted a division not just within the country but within Labour's membership, as a Party we need to understand each other if we are to be united.

So let's set out to do that – activists from Islington knocking on doors with members in Barnsley, activists from Hull on the doors in Cardiff. It might not mean we all agree with each other, but we might better understand where people are coming from.

→ Sharing what works – nationally facilitating the active sharing of ideas, achievements and ways of working that gets things done.

Building an organising culture

This has to be an organisational priority. To put organising at the heart of everything we do we need to live and breathe it.

All of our people need to understand it at a fundamental level – an organising model is fundamentally different to a mobilising one which the Party has too often been stuck in (and of course we mobilise at election time to get the vote out, but it's not the be all and end all.

→ Fundraise to set-up Labour Organising Academies

→ Work with experts from the trade union movement and grassroots groups to build a model of organising that works for Labour

→ Embed our new organising culture and purpose in rule

Getting it done

We don't have every answer in this Manifesto. This is the start of a conversation that will continue throughout the Deputy Leadership contest – many ideas will come to the fore throughout the campaign too.

We're starting down a long path and culture change that won't happen overnight, but if we get it right it will put Labour in the heart of communities, help us to deliver real change year round, and win elections.

Empowering people

Our movement is, and has always been, built on the principle that people should be in control of their own lives. Collectively when we stand together, we have power that we do not have alone.

Our job has to be to build a collective purpose, a collective strength and collective culture that delivers in all of our communities, the only way we do that is by investing in and empowering our people.

- **Investing in training** – equipping all of our activists & councillors with the skills we need to organise and win. That has to take a range of forms in everything from on the ground and digital organising to persuasive conversations on the doorstep and, of course, things like voter ID.
- **Investing in education** – training equips us to do things, education equips us to understand things. It's important that we help our members- and the communities we organise in – understand why the world is the way it is if we want to change it.
- **Training more trainers** – the Party can't centrally hand down a 'way of doing things' and train every activist, we need to empower our members to train people in their own communities and CLPs.
- **Diversity of candidates** – where we organise we find leaders. There should be clear path through political education and training for our leaders who are making a difference in communities to lead on the political stage too, that way we will have more politicians active in, and dedicated to, changing their communities.

Investing in our staff

Party staff are crucial and often overlooked. It can be a thankless job being an organiser when we know it's absolutely essential.

Every staff member will play a role in an organising culture because, without good data, you can't organise, without digital engagement everything is harder, if finances don't flow then nothing works – this involves all of us and we must recognise that an organising culture means not just investing in our activists but in our employees too (in consultation with staff trade unions and reps).

- **Community Organising Apprenticeship Standard** – work with other organisations to set up an Apprenticeship Standard using the Apprenticeship Levy to build the best trained organisers in the movement
- **Innovation** – give employees the space to suggest ideas, to try new things, share best practice across regions
- **Listen** – many of our Labour staff have worked with us for years, we don't need to reinvent the wheel where things work, and if people have experience they probably know how things can be improved too. Building a new culture to sustain Labour into and out of Power. Because we need a cultural shift within our Party, but also to build a new culture in our communities too.

Where now?

This is the start of building a complete 'Manifesto for a Movement' that maps out the road to the next election and the path to Number 10.

This means blowing the lid off the old models, innovating, being bold, trusting that when we empower people with the skills and resources they need, they'll make that change happen.

It means rebuilding a community culture that, in too many places, we have lost – we used to be the Party of Labour clubs and colliery bands, of working class wordsmiths, poets and artists – a cultural movement as well as a political one. Building our links with the hubs of modern and diverse Britain, in the churches, mosques, temples and gurdwaras, as well as the trades halls, food banks and credit unions. Helping working class communities make sense of the world, fight back and be proud of their struggle and their place in it. If we can re-connect with communities the length and breadth of the UK, if we can be relevant, if we take on the issues that matter year round, not just in the run up to an election, we won't just win votes, we'll win real change.

Our 'Manifesto for a Movement' doesn't have all the answers, but I know half a million Party members and a few million trade unionists who do. Join us. Let's make change happen.



Got an idea? Want to share your thoughts?

This is just the start of a radical rethink of political organising.

Get in touch if you'd like to get involved

Email team@angelaraynerfordeputy.com



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angelaraynerfordeputy.com

Angela Rayner
Fighting for

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angelaraynerfordeputy.com



AngelaRaynerMP



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C/O Unison,
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1 Hunts Bank,
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**Angela
Rayner**
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