

The 2006 election results and the growth of the BNP

The 2006 local elections saw the number of BNP councillors nationally more than double from 20 to 48. This again confirmed the trend of rising BNP support, which has accelerated dramatically over the last six years.

Thirty-three BNP councillors were elected on May 4th. The BNP made their biggest breakthrough with 11 councillors (possibly 12 after legal appeal) elected in Barking and Dagenham, London.

The BNP stood their largest number of candidates and received their largest regional vote in the Yorkshire and Humber region — 105 candidates in 103 wards received 88,148 votes at an average of 19.1%.

21 of the 71 seats nationally the BNP can win in 2007 with a 5% or less swing are in our region [see diagram, page 1] — all but two of those are in West Yorkshire. 10 wards are in Bradford, 6 in Kirklees, 2 in Calderdale,

1 each in Leeds, Barnsley and Rotherham.

In Bradford the BNP contested 16 wards where they averaged 25.4% of the vote. They won the Queensbury ward and came second in 8 wards.

Contesting every seat in Kirklees the BNP received 22,914 votes at an average of 18.5%, and in 22 wards in Leeds the BNP received 22,642 votes at an average of 16.6%.

The local elections also show that once the BNP wins a council seat in an area it helps in their process of political legitimisation. As a result it also takes longer to defeat them and makes it easier for them to gain more councillors. The BNP's breakthroughs in Burnley, Epping Forest, Sandwell, Stoke-on-Trent, Bradford and Kirklees are clear examples of this. The BNP vote continues to grow in the existing bases of Bradford and Kirklees.

Preventing the BNP from gaining councillors in the first place is crucial,

that is why Oldham remains the model anti-fascist campaign. The BNP never won a single council seat in Oldham and the BNP's vote halved between 2001 and 2005.

Of course the BNP's key aim is to use local election gains to help it win regional seats in the European Parliament elections in 2009 and on the London Assembly in 2008.

BNP website:

"The real target for us now is the European Elections in 2009.... The BNP are now poised for a real political breakthrough in the 2009 European Elections. The local elections are important as they reveal that the percentage support we now garner in constituencies is capable of easily translating into MEP seats."

A breakdown of the BNP vote in boroughs contested in the 2006 local elections

Yorkshire & the Humber	Coun	Second	Cand	2006	2004	Change
Barnsley			11	4,462	5,092	+4.9%
Bradford	2 (-1)	8	16	18,212	12,079	+4.1%
Calderdale	2 (-1)	2	8	5,162	7,204	+0.7%
Doncaster				696		
Harrogate			1	162	131	
Kingston upon Hull			4	1,108	1,170	+2.1%
Kirklees	3 (+2)	5	23	22,914	20,672	+2.7%
Leeds	1 (+1)	4	23	22,642	18,652	+5.1%
North East Lincolnshire			1	577		
Rotherham			2	1,577	1,733	
Sheffield			2	2,906	5,460	-1.0%
Wakefield			4	8,426	9,492	+1.5%

Coun=Councillors following local elections (change)

Cand=Candidates stood in 2006

2006 and 2004=Total votes in those years

Change=Average change in percentage in wards where the BNP stood both in 2004 and 2006

All multi-seat elections have been adjusted by taking only the highest vote for each party in the election.

A regional breakdown of the BNP vote in the 2006 local elections

Region	Coun	<5%	Cand	BNP Votes		
				2006	2004	Change
Yorkshire & the Humber	8 (+1)	21	105	88,148	82,381	+3.4%
West Midlands	11 (+8)	22	86	64,345	45,668	+3.4%
North West	8 (+3)	11	53	23,083	28,320	+3.3%
London	14 (+14)	11	36	22,603		
Eastern	7 (+3)	5	23	10,946	6,670	+3.8%
North East			43	15,139	22,336	+3.5%
South East			13	3,513	3,381	+2.2%
East Midlands		1	3	1,293	811	+3.0%
South West			1	319	379	
Wales					254	
	48 (+29)	71	363	229,389	190,200	+2.8%

Coun=Councillors following local elections (change)

<5%=Wards within a 5% swing of BNP victory

Cand=Candidates stood in 2006

Change=Change in percentage in wards where the BNP stood both in 2004 and 2006

All multi-seat elections have been adjusted by taking only the highest vote for each party in the election.

In the 2004 European elections the BNP won just over 126 000 votes or 8.04% of the vote in the Yorkshire region. 12.5% of the vote was required to win the last placed seat in 2004 — but this is only a very approximate indicator of what % will win the last seat in 2009. Achieving a high turnout again will be vital if we are to stop the BNP in that election.

Another key point to note about the May elections was the role played by some of the media's coverage of the BNP during the election period which had the effect of legitimising their politics of hatred. The xenophobic media coverage of the release of prisoners described as 'foreign nationals', the talking up of the British National Party's (BNP) support by politicians and then seized on by the media with the

unprecedented coverage given to the BNP in the run up to the elections, led to the BNP being perceived by some as a legitimate political party.

BNP website:

"The real story of this election though is how the BNP have become normalised with the electorate. We have now transcended the cordon sanitaire that the media have placed upon us for decades."

An accurate assessment of the 2006 local elections is key to understanding what we need to do over the next year to stop the BNP making further progress in 2007.

'The local elections also show that once the BNP wins a council seat in an area it helps in their process of political legitimisation. As a result it also takes longer to defeat them and makes it easier for them to gain more councillors.'

Love Music Hate Racism



Music lovers of all ages and tastes were entertained by a variety of artists at anti racist gigs around the region in the build up to the election.

In Wakefield 80's hit band *The Beat* and other supporting musicians attracted hundreds of people across the age range. At Leeds University 350 students came to hear *Oceansize, This Et Al,*

Yorkshire Terrierz and others in an all day event. Sheffield had nearly 300 students at the LMHR launch with *Blak Twang* and *Yes Boss* to name but a few. Speakers from national and local organisations spoke about the racism and fascism of the BNP between the bands.

Students and staff at a school in Knaresborough put on a LMHR gig in the hall and had Liverpool boy band *Fade 2* play to a packed audience of young people. The students watched

the student version of 'Who Shot the Sheriff' narrated by *Ms Dynamite*. 'Cosmogirl' magazine featured the LMHR event in an article about racism in music.

LMHR is firmly established as part of the campaign to oppose racism and fascism. To find out more about plans for the coming year contact regional UNITE on 07980 131138 or email info@yhuaf.org.uk

Anti-fascists welcome Court of Appeal ruling against Bradford BNP councillor

Unite Against Fascism (UAF) has welcomed the Court of Appeal's decision overturning the Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) controversial decision which ruled in favour of BNP councillor Arthur Redfearn, following his dismissal from his job as a bus driver for people with special needs in 2004 after winning a seat on Bradford Council.

The Court of Appeal held that Redfearn's complaint did not fall within the Race Relations Act 1976 and that it was wrong to say that he had been dismissed on racial grounds. The Judge said that Redfearn's claim of race discrimination would 'cover cases that would produce consequences at

odds with the legislative aim' and 'turn the policy of race relations legislation upside down.'

The TUC welcomed the Court of Appeal ruling that the BNP councillor was rightly sacked. Commenting on the Court of Appeal ruling that SERCO could dismiss BNP councillor Arthur Redfearn as a driver because of the health and safety threat posed to the vulnerable adults and children he was employed to transport, TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber said:

'We welcome this clear and robust ruling today. SERCO were right to say that BNP activists should not hold this kind of job, and deserve credit for taking on this case that has now established this important precedent.'



To affiliate or find out more about Yorkshire & the Humber Unite Against Fascism or book a speaker for your next labour movement or community group meeting please contact us at

YHUAF c/o PO Box 3456
SHEFFIELD S5 7YY.

Tel: 07980 131138

Email: info@yhuaf.org.uk

Web: www.yhuaf.org.uk



The BNP can be stopped

Yorkshire & the Humber Regional UAF Chair, John Campbell, highlights the priorities for the anti fascist movement in our region

The 2006 local elections saw the BNP consolidate itself as a national political force. Our region more than mirrors that trend. Although the BNP in Yorkshire only saw a net gain of one councillor, 21 of the 77 seats nationally which need a swing of 5% or less for the BNP to win in 2007 are in our region. [See diagram below]

The BNP's provocative attempt to turn the local elections into a Referendum on Islam also reminded us that while fascism threatens many communities, the cutting edge of their politics is racism.

The breakthrough of the BNP into the political mainstream is not inevitable. Our main campaign asset continues to be the rejection of the

BNP by the overwhelming majority of the population, who know that it can only achieve its main aim of an 'all white' Britain by violence and the destruction of democracy. Mobilising that anti fascist majority to vote is still a central feature of our strategy.

However, the campaign to expose and isolate the BNP as an illegitimate fascist organisation was undermined in the recent local election campaign. The mainstream media provided an unprecedented degree of air time and legitimacy to the BNP in the run up to the elections.

The key to preventing the BNP's minority

national support from being translated into local breakthroughs is exposing the racist myths on which the BNP feeds – particularly, those given credibility by local politicians, media and institutions, such as the false claim in Keighley that exclusively Muslim men were grooming young white girls for sex and more recently the ridiculous myth that grants of £50,000 were made available for African families to move to Barking.

Over the coming months Unite Against Fascism will be doing its utmost to strengthen the alliance of the labour movement and all those communities under immediate threat from the growth of the BNP. Faith communities and students have also played a major role in challenging the BNP's attempt to portray themselves as a 'normal' political party.

Where the BNP have councillors we

have to ensure that their position is not normalised. Come October we may have to revive the mass court lobbies in Leeds which were such a success earlier this year. We have to study and publicise the significance of cases like that of the sacking of Bradford BNP Councillor Arthur Redfearn. We must also continue to respond energetically to urgent matters like the case of the racist lecturer at Leeds University. Unite Against Fascism will also play its part in supporting anti-racist initiatives, such as Love Music Hate Racism.

We still have much to do to create an anti fascist movement capable of stopping the BNP. We must continue to remind people that the lesson of Europe is that it is much easier to stop a breakthrough by the fascists in the first place than it is to reverse it.

The 21 seats in Yorkshire & the Humber within a 5% swing of BNP victory

Council	Ward	Majority		May 2006 result				2004 %	
		Votes	%	BNP %	Position	Elec	+/-		
Kirklees	Heckmondwike	-726	-13.0%	2035	36.6%	1 / 5	●	8.3%	28.3%
Calderdale	Illingworth & Mixenden	-235	-7.8%	1075	35.6%	1 / 5	●	2.6%	33.0%
Bradford	Queensbury	-296	-6.2%	1829	38.5%	1 / 4	●	14.3%	24.2%
Kirklees	Dewsbury East	-290	-5.4%	1902	35.6%	1 / 5	●	10.5%	25.1%
Leeds	Morley South	-293	-4.6%	2083	32.9%	1 / 6	●	15.5%	17.4%
Bradford	Eccleshill	63	1.6%	1142	28.6%	2 / 4			
Kirklees	Cleckheaton	140	2.7%	1621	30.9%	2 / 5		5.5%	25.4%
Kirklees	Liversedge & Gomersal	148	2.9%	1643	32.4%	2 / 5		10.2%	22.2%
Bradford	Wyke	131	3.3%	1142	28.7%	2 / 4		0.1%	28.6%
Bradford	Royds	143	3.8%	1250	33.0%	2 / 4		5.6%	27.4%
Bradford	Clayton & Fairweather Green	163	3.8%	1106	26.0%	3 / 4		6.7%	19.3%
Bradford	Thornton & Allerton	189	4.2%	1354	29.9%	2 / 5			
Bradford	Wibsey	176	4.3%	1251	30.4%	2 / 4		1.8%	28.6%
Bradford	Windhill & Wrose	193	4.5%	1022	23.7%	3 / 5			
Rotherham	Keppel	174	5.2%	936	27.7%	2 / 4		11.3%	16.4%
Calderdale	Ovenden	149	6.4%	796	33.9%	3 / 8 **		2.6%	31.3%
Kirklees	Golcar	349	7.0%	1104	22.0%	2 / 6			
Bradford	Keighley West	334	7.4%	1493	33.0%	2 / 4		3.9%	29.1%
Barnsley	Darton West	234	8.0%	701	24.0%	3 / 4		14.0%	10.0%
Bradford	Tong	266	8.4%	1012	32.0%	2 / 4			
Kirklees	Holme Valley North	563	9.9%	858	15.1%	4 / 7			

** indicates a 2-seat election
+/- = change in percentage from 2004 election ● shows where a BNP councillor was elected