

Please Vote for an Independent Non-Party Candidate and Keep “Blue Labour” Influence Out of Portsoken



MUHAMMAD AL-HUSSAINI

Portsoken Election 2014

Dear Lovely People of Portsoken

I'm delighted to have the privilege of writing to you as your only joke/musical candidate in the upcoming Portsoken Ward Election – aiming to inject a bit of humour, colour and song into the proceedings... Portsoken is enriched by its people of so many diverse walks of life, cultures and traditions, and it is a special place in the City of London.

Greetings to My Fellow Candidates!

I want first of all to send warm greetings to my fellow candidates, **Marie Brockington**, **Evan Millner**, **Roger Frank** and **Syed Mahmood**, and express my warm regards and good wishes to you all. Marie has the strong support of Portsoken Ward Club, has lived in the Ward for many years and worked hard to support local people here. Evan is a principled chap who is also an Independent Candidate and locally-resident, and has taken a stand in the past for vulnerable minorities in the Ward against the far-right. I am confident that a **local candidate who is standing as “Independent” (not party-affiliated)** would make the **best** sort of Common Councilman to serve the local needs of the people of Portsoken. I am certain you colleagues are all excellent folk and will do a great job when you are elected, and I wish you the best of luck.

Portsoken and the City of London has Always been Non-Party Political – for a Very Good Reason

It has been great to meet so many local people from Portsoken in recent days and weeks and, though I'm standing really as a light-hearted candidate to play my fiddle and sing some songs for you, it has made me realise something really important...

The great tradition of the City of London is that it is **not** party-political nor “quasi-party”-political, but run by “Independent” Common Councilmen who are working to serve the local needs of local people – without under-the-table agendas of power-seeking for themselves. In the 2013 City of London elections, ordinary residents and workers in the City voted overwhelmingly for “Independent Candidates” over and **against** political parties or pressure groups like the “**City Reform Group**”.

I myself had happily signed up to the CRG's apparent ethical pledges – purely as values in, and of themselves firmly without the supporting the CRG's leadership – and likewise, as a clergyman, I had previously taken a keen though always critical and ambivalent interest in the various voices of protest around the City such as around St Paul's, and I served on the Clergy Liaison Group with the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral during that time. But I have since learned the hard, bitter way that we should not be naïve about the agendas behind some of those who attack the City or call for “reform of the financial system” – which latter I'm sure all ordinary British people support in principle. After all, the racist British National Party is also dead keen on reform of the City of London, challenging bankers' bonuses, caring for the environment, and giving power to local people. But I wouldn't vote for them!

“So What is Blue Labour?” – Blue Labour, Ethnic Minorities and the English Defence League

My dad and mum have been lifelong Labour Party supporters but, like a lot of their immigrant generation, they have been appalled by the right-wing tendency in the Labour Party, “Blue Labour”, an informal grouping founded by a chap called Maurice Glasman – who is closely-linked to the currently running Labour candidate in Portsoken. Glasman and his close colleagues have made a strong campaigning agenda of challenging and criticising the City of London and the **City of London Corporation** in particular. At the same time however, concerning ethnic minorities like my own family, Glasman says:

“To build a [Labour] party that brokers a common good, that involves those people who support the EDL [English Defence League] within our party...It is also not the case that everyone who comes is equal and has an equal status with people who are here.” *Maurice Glasman, Founder of Blue Labour, in Progress Online, 19 April 2011*¹

These views have been widely condemned by senior members of the Labour Party, like Roy Hattersley, Diane Abbott, Peter Mandelson, Helen Goodman,² by Trades Union leaders³ and Jewish and Muslim clergy speaking in unison.⁴ There’s a lot more to this story as it relates to the City, but not time to go into it here.

So Who’s Best to Represent Portsoken?

Well that’s for the ordinary people of this fine Ward to decide, and in the Independent Candidates I named above, you have some good folk, whom I believe genuinely care about the needs of local people here. Bless them!

As an academic, imam and also a keen sportsman and musician, I’m a proud member of my own local Ward Club in Castle Baynard (near St Paul’s), and have come to respect and admire my colleagues there who do a great job. So please enjoy the music, and please vote for an “Independent” non-party-political candidate, someone with integrity, financial honesty and truthfulness – such as the good candidates named above.

I look forward to meeting you, and I’d appreciate any feedback and questions or criticism, comments and critique of the music, or to discuss over a coffee anything else you’d like to talk about. Oh yeah...and please support Willie the Hamster for Portsoken Lord Mayor!

Cheers

Muhammad Al-Hussaini (and **Sir William Wallace**, my hamster)

Portsoken Election Candidate

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¹ Robert Philpot ‘Labour isn’t working’ *Progress Online* 19 April 2011

² Patrick Wintour ‘Peter Mandelson lambasts ‘anti-immigrant, Europhobic’ Blue Labour’ *The Guardian* 26 July 2011

³ Billy Hayes ‘Trades Unions Must Defend Multiculturalism’ *LabourList* 16 June 2011

⁴ ‘Rabbis and Imams Open Letter to Ed Miliband on the English Defence League and Blue Labour’ *The Guardian* 28 July 2011