

The Wandsworth branch of the European Movement was constituted on 3 October 2017 with the objectives to

- to promote awareness of the European Union (EU)
- to disseminate a positive image of the European Union and Britain's role in Europe
- to campaign for the UK to remain a permanent member of the EU
- to further the aims and objectives of the European Movement by undertaking relevant activities.

as stated in the Constitution.

The committee decided together with HQ to incorporate Merton in our catchment area, since some of our committee members live there and there wasn't enough manpower to start a separate branch in the borough of Merton.

Since the launch of the People's Vote campaign, we have actively participated in their initiatives, since the EM HQ now cooperates with other pro-EU organisations under that umbrella. We have also, to our best ability, tried to accommodate calls for campaigns from Best 4 Britain, but that is more difficult because they don't offer any opportunities to dialogue.

### **The Committee**

The Constituting Meeting on 3 October 2017 elected the following committee:

Chairperson	Helen Rennie-Smith
Treasurer	Arjan Geveke
Secretary	Nigel Houghton
Campaign Executive	Ben Austin
Membership Officer	JP Cherrington
Other members	Peter Pollard and Emmeline Owens

Unfortunately Nigel Houghton and Emmeline Owens have not been able to take part in our work, but the Committee has co-opted Debbie Colson, Alban Thurston, Robin Phelbs, Barbara Callender and James Ryder who all contributed during the year. Debbie Colson and Alban Thurston resigned during the autumn 2018.

### **Strategy**

The strategy to reach the goal – to remain in the EU – has been, to promote a second referendum about Britain's membership of the EU. There are different opinions about the effectiveness and risks of yet another referendum, but most people agree that with the chaos which has developed in Westminster a referendum is the only sensible solution.

To achieve a second referendum, we need our MPs to enact it in Parliament. To this end, we have during the year continuously lobbied the five MPs in our boroughs.

### **Members**

In our NationBuilder database there are 3,222 contacts of which 1,075 are on the mailing list. The number of paid-up members amount to 77, a figure we are going to query with HQ, since we have indications it should be higher.

### **Activities**

Our first event was a brainstorming meeting where members and supporters discussed how to develop our new branch. On that day we decided to

- conduct a Brexit Audit among businesses and other employers in Wandsworth
- reach out to the community with leafletting, canvassing and street stalls
- organise socials and other events

## Brexit Audit

The Brexit Audit was published in March 2018 after three months of intensive work and can be downloaded at [https://www.wandsworth.eu/no\\_magic\\_wand](https://www.wandsworth.eu/no_magic_wand). It was presented at a member's meeting and at a breakfast meeting with Wandsworth Chamber of Commerce. Although initially it didn't get a massive response from the local community, it has proved a very useful tool to reach our overall targets.

The Brexit Audit was also received with great interest from The People's Vote HQ, which helped a volunteer group to conduct a similar survey at a national level. Our work was used as the pilot for this project.

## Campaigning

The campaigns have been coordinated by Ben Austin in cooperation with primarily Peter Pollard and Robin Phelbs. All members of the committee have contributed to different campaign activities.

- **Action Days**  
Our first action day was in early December 2017 urging our MPs to vote for Amendment 7, which would give Parliament a meaningful vote on the final withdrawal agreement. During the winter and spring we held one or two action days every month. We tried to follow up with a social in the following week, to round up people who had shown interest for our work.  
In late summer we geared up and have since had some kind of campaign activity every week and several in certain weeks.
- **Community Survey**  
In combination with the action day we have done "knock-and-drop" surveys in cooperation with HQ and Best 4 Britain.
- **Petitions**  
We have collected signatures for different nationwide petitions demanding a People's Vote.
- **Postcards**  
At the action days, passers by have been offered the opportunity to write a postcard to their MP asking for a People's Vote.
- **Thank You Cards**  
When Justine Greening had published her letter in The Times demanding a second referendum, we encouraged her constituents to write thank you cards and post them in a home-made postbox, which was handed over to Ms Greening when she came and visited our stand. Similar actions are planned for the other MPs when they publicly and whole heartedly support a People's Vote.
- **Brexitometer**  
The Brexitometer has proved a useful tool for campaigning. It is a very visual display of people's views and acts as a magnet for people to approach our street stalls. At the Battersea Square Summer Party our stand was the most popular one and we filled two Brexitometer charts.
- **Twitter Boards**  
The Twitter Board is a relatively new tool, where people can write a message on a handheld white board, which we photograph and post on Twitter. Getting a long string of messages to one MP gives a very strong and public message.
- **Marches**  
We have joined the big marches for a People's Vote in London under the Wandsworth banner.

Many of these activities are described in more detail in different blog posts on our website, [www.wandsworth.eu/blog](http://www.wandsworth.eu/blog).

## Events

- **Socials**  
Our aim has been to organise at least one social event every month. Some have been a simple meet-up in a pub, some have been more organised, e.g. when Hugo Mann from HQ came and talked about the People's Vote campaign when it had just been launched.
- **Fundraising Dinner with Charles Tannock, MEP**  
We organised a dinner in the Fox & Dog pub in Wimbledon on 28 September 2018, which turned out to be the Friday before the Conservative Party Conference. It was interesting to hear Mr Tannock's views on developments in Brussels and Westminster.

- **An Evening with Lord Adonis**

Lord Adonis gave a talk to members and supporters in Wimbledon Park Hall on 4 December 2018. We were pleasantly surprised to find among the audience reporters from local as well as European media.

## **Lobbying**

The facts we have collected in the Brexit Audit, in campaigns and social media have been successfully used when communicating with our MPs. While we cannot claim the whole credit for the fact that four MPs have decided to support a People's Vote, the facts, numbers and emotional arguments which we have relayed from constituents to parliamentarians have clearly contributed to their decision.

- **Letters, e-mails, postcards and phone calls**

As mentioned above we have – when out campaigning – encouraged the constituents in Wandsworth and Merton to contact their MPs and ask for a People's Vote. We have supplied postcards but also pointed to HQ's tools for writing or calling MPs.

- **Workshop**

On 24 September we organised a workshop, together with Your Liberal Britain, on how best to lobby your MP. A dozen participants came and learnt the tools for successful lobbying and have since coached other members to do the same. After the workshop we also published a webpage with useful tips on how to lobby, <https://www.wandsworth.eu/advice>

- **Meeting MPs**

- *Justine Greening, Putney*, was hesitant to meet with us until Charles Tannock recommended her to see us. She saw her constituent and EM Chairperson Helen Rennie-Smith in surgery in early October. She declined an invitation to meet the committee because “we should be concentrating on the other people who aren't on side yet”. Helen took the opportunity to show her the Brexit Audit and the latest Brexitometer and Ms Greening showed great interest in this factual evidence of her constituents' views on Brexit. Ms Greening supports the People's Vote campaign.
- *Marsha De Cordova, Battersea*, was the first of “our” MPs to meet with us in May. A small delegation saw her in Westminster and presented the Brexit Audit. It was also agreed to organise a public meeting in Battersea in the autumn, which unfortunately had to be cancelled. Ms De Cordova did, however, see the committee in December and we had a very honest discussion about the importance of a People's Vote. A steady stream of her constituents, including our committee members Peter Pollard and Barbara Callender, have also seen her in surgery to talk about Brexit. Ms De Cordova is in favour of a second referendum, but has not yet officially endorsed the People's Vote campaign.
- *Rosena Allin-Khan, Tooting*, has not had the time to see us, but had a telephone conversation with our committee member James Ryder. She supports the People's Vote campaign.
- *Stephen Hammond, Wimbledon*, did not want to take part in a public meeting but agreed to see the committee in November to discuss his stand on a second referendum. It turned out to be the same week as the Prime Minister presented the Withdrawal Agreement and several ministers resigned. The morning after our meeting with Mr Hammond it was announced that he was the new Minister for Social Care. This position makes it difficult for Mr Hammond to divert from the Government's official line. The evidence gathered during our campaigns didn't surprise Mr Hammond, who claimed to be well aware of the pro-EU sentiments in his constituency. His take, however, was to emphasise the importance of lifting the issue from constituency level to the national level and thus avoid our arguments.
- *Siobhan McDonagh, Morden*, is a public supporter of a People's Vote. We have not had enough communication with her, but made a point of writing to thank her every time she votes “our” way in an important vote in Parliament.

## **Communication**

- **Website**

The website, with domain name wandsworth.eu, was launched in December 2017. Until November there was an active blog, which declined through the end of the year due to lack of time. All events are posted in the “Events” section, there is advice on how to contact your MP, it offers the opportunity to sign up as a member or give a donation and we have a list of press clips.

- **E-mails**

There has been on average one e-mail newsletter from the Chairperson per week.

- **Social Media**

James Ryder, as Social Media Editor, has been in charge of our accounts on Twitter and Facebook, although we haven't used paid-for advertising heavily on either platform. We currently have about 350 Facebook followers, and about 630 on Twitter. We could likely increase both numbers significantly by interacting and commenting more with other posts in the Twitter/Facebook community, but time constraints prevent this.

We have shared thoughtful points of view and links on Brexit and the EU, whilst maintaining a rough political balance, and avoid anything too overtly party political. We don't share posts that unkindly disparage Leave supporters.

We have promoted upcoming events, and published photos, many of which are shared by other pro-EU groups and individual supporters - it's unlikely we are reaching much beyond our supporter base, but our supporters need morale boost in any case. We share photos and posts from other pro-EU groups across the UK.

It's hard to judge the effectiveness of social media in spreading information about our group outside the 'pro-EU bubble', though it's likely that our Facebook and Twitter profiles have been responsible in part for recruitment of volunteers and attention from the broader media over the last year.

Unsurprisingly, our most popular Twitter and Facebook posts have coincided with our action days and the Brexit marches, when numerous tweets are liked and shared. Our most popular live photos from action days have received more than 10,000 screen impressions and 400 engagements. During the last 28 day period, we have earned circa 2,500 impressions per day on average. We try to ensure that the relevant MP is 'tagged' in each tweet, so that they receive multiple notifications of the activity. Some local MPs, including Marsha de Cordova, Justine Greening and Rosena Allin-Khan (or their social media/comms person) have liked or re-tweeted our posts from time to time.

- **Traditional Media**

Barbara Callender was appointed Press Officer in September. Since then the EMW has received some noteworthy press coverage. There have been:

- Letters published in the Wandsworth Guardian and the South London Press
- Coverage of local campaigning in the New European, SW Londoner, Putney SW15
- Contributions by members to a variety of foreign language publications in a number of EU countries, including Deutschlandfunk, Ici Londres, Dagsavisen, Swedish Radio and – further afield – Korean Media Broadcasting.

All the above can be accessed on the website at: [https://www.wandsworth.eu/in\\_the\\_press](https://www.wandsworth.eu/in_the_press)

### **I spy...**

What can we tell about the future? The future of this country is uncertain and so is that of our branch. If Parliament agrees to a People's Vote on the Brexit agreement we will be very busy in a referendum campaign in the following months. If Parliament decides to take the country out of the EU, 2019 will be different.

The committee hopes to get some pointers from members in the discussion following the AGM and at socials coming up early 2019.

### **Thank you**

I would like to thank members, supporters, volunteers, HQ and the members of the Committee for a year that has succeeded all expectations. If we can keep up the energy and enthusiasm there is a real, tangible chance for Britain to stay in the EU.

Putney, 29 January 2019

Helen Rennie-Smith  
Chairperson