



Y'alright there,

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It was only not many months ago that NIP was a small group of tentative idealists staring at each other over Zoom, surprised and relieved to see others who shared their vision for the North. We all had high hopes, but no illusions; it's a bold proposal, a free North, you're not exactly setting yourself an agenda that's going to immediately get you a warm slap on the back and a thumbs up from a media class that, at best, shrugs resignedly at the continued existence of an inequitable union that structurally depletes the North. We expected mockery and derision, we're all resilient people with a sense of humour (as our Twitter account attests), we know a target ripe for ridicule when we see it and unfortunately, it was undeniable we were one ourselves. We may have had an arsenal of clap-backs to deflect from torrential scoffing, but what was utterly uncertain was whether us basking in Centrist spittle actually mattered. Whether it would alter anything, whether we could build a movement or whether we truly were what we'd been dismissed as -

jumped up shit-posters. But we dived into it. We manoeuvred as deftly as possible through teething problems, the occasional flounce and the threat of declarations of war being made by the Grand Witan of Mercia after they claimed we were encroaching on the territory of his people (seriously, google and venerate him; anyone with that much dedication for such a niche cause deserves our utmost admiration, even if we may have to one day call the police from our HQ because he's outside with a spear). And, you know what? We would have ploughed that furrow for a long-time more even without any real sign of success; we believe in this, of course we were willing to abide by our vision even if we were looking increasingly silly.

Then, you all came along. Brilliant Northern people, who heard what we had to say and got it – entirely and irrevocably got that the North deserves more than it gets. When joining a political movement, I think there can be a tendency for people to underestimate their own impact; to assume 'well this was it's own thing before me, what do I matter?' Let's make this clear, you are the catalyst for this party transforming from an idealistic project, into a serious and credible movement. We talked a big game and we had faith, but that is no substitute for incredible, talented people stepping up to contribute and adding their own particular flavour to this heady mix of Northern intellect, determination, compassion and a sprinkling of Gobshite.

So, thank you. Thank you for believing and taking it on yourselves to put your shoulder into this and shove us into the national conversation. It's been a big week, we've achieved a lot, but it will pale in comparison to the future achievements you will forge for this party. This movement, this community, will grow; let us never forget that each and every addition makes us stronger and elevates us. Every one of us matters and we will not let those who want us to tear us down dismiss us.

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## **Headlines from Northumbria: what have we been banging on about recently?**

### **Dr Paul Williams - Labour's candidate for Hartlepool**

Where do we start with Dr Paul Williams? His support of Saudi Arabia? His tolerance for imperialistic violence? His questionable dinner party conversations about Tory women who happen to be mothers? His absence of unequivocal support for a substantial pay rise to his NHS colleagues? I mean, he's trying – bless him. He parachuted in there with nothing but a discomfitingly sympathetic stance on privatised health-care and a dream of running his own lucrative maternity unit populated exclusively by aesthetically pleasing Tories (he'd have a league table in his office so he can rigorously determine who is his favourite). But, he's quickly found that the world, shockingly, is not as it was in 2015 when you could get away with being a cipher that people project the party-line on. He is being held accountable for falling short as a remotely ideal representative for Hartlepool. Yet, there are people in the Labour party who decry us 'splitting the vote'. Let's face up to reality, we're not splitting the vote - the vote was split as it was, because entitled parties have assumed they can demand people's loyalty for being slightly less nauseating than the alternative. As much as we'd love to revel in being the cause, we're just a symptom. I'm afraid, good Dr Williams, Hartlepool and the rest of the North have contracted a severe case of optimism around actually being democratically represented and, for you, this condition is terminal.

### **Tory intervention into Liverpool City Council**

We can't ignore that Liverpool city council seems to have been run by a bunch of charmless, pompous scallies whose claims to have been toiling selflessly for the people of the city are evidently entirely jarg. However any provincial greed or gangsterism is dwarfed by the

institutional corruption that ideologically infuses the Tory party. Liverpool city council let the city down, but their failings are nothing when held up to the swaggering negligence of the Tories. Which is why the Tories imposing their input on the city is so problematic – they are not a solution. Why respond to a problem by creating a bigger problem? It's like reacting to finding a rat in your home by asking Piers Morgan to move in. No excuses for the council, but their conduct didn't 'lead the Tories to our doorstep' as reported by The Liverpool Echo. They may have left the door off the latch, but the Tories were lurking ready to scurry past and sell off our furniture. In 3 years we'll get back in to find nothing but bare rooms and an unflushed bog. This is a premeditated attack on the city by a party that disdains Liverpool's recalcitrance and refusal to submit itself to the lies of the Tory press. It's also an attack condoned by a Labour Party who fails to recognise that their support in our Northern cities and towns is not unconditional. Lucky there's another party for them to turn to, eh?

### **Bristol Police Brutality**

The recent round of protests in Bristol being met with a barrage of violence by the police is deeply, deeply disturbing. The police need to be held accountable for their actions. An investigation is essential - there should be serious, lengthy and interrogative questions around the competence and possible presence of insidious intent of anyone who authorised an escalation in force. All officers exploiting that instruction with unprovoked aggression should not only face disciplinary action, but criminal charges. Let's be real, the police need not act like that. Speaking personally, I am a mental health nurse and have worked closely beside many intelligent, compassionate officers mindful of their duty to the communities they're immersed in. Not holding the police to a high standard does a disservice to all those officers who do want to help people, rather than brutalise and oppress them. As a mental health nurse I myself

have detained people; I'm fully aware of the reasons you try to avoid doing that, because it is genuinely traumatic to anyone you inflict it on. I've been looked in the eye by people I have both physically restrained and deprived of their liberty; that look should sear your soul. If the officers involved in the draconian actions in Bristol don't have that reaction, that's often due to systemic pressures within the police force having cauterised their humanity. This shit drags us all down and we need to combat it with empathy for some of those on the other side of the barricade; those who perhaps know that this isn't right, but feel too disempowered to challenge the rationale behind their orders. We will never toe the mainstream line of unerringly supporting the police as an institution, but we should have the back of the working people of the police who want to be an asset to communities, rather than a force to be clumsily wielded by those who profit from weaponizing them.

### **Public control for Manchester's buses**

Andy Burnham's plan to bring Manchester buses into public control has rightly been applauded, but it's a startling reminder of how rabidly free-market hegemony has mauled the North that such a common sense move seems radical. It's not quite what we'd want for Manchester, it's still necessary for a private operator to run the service, even if their thirst for profiteering will be curbed by local council regulation. A publically owned bus company would provide better service, value and security for workers within the sector. However, to be fair to the mayor, doing this is not within his power. Burnham may belong to a different party, but we're not afraid to praise people willing to do what's right for the North regardless of their political allegiances – though a hefty slice of the credit should go to campaigns like 'We Own it' whose efforts have flung the logic of public transport being for people, not profit, from wherever it languished back into the civic imagination. So, nice one Burnham!

Keep this up and we even have a little bit of difficulty taking your job ;)

## **Phillip Proudfoot and the Centrist Fury**

Solidarity to Party Founder and Co-Leader Phillip Proudfoot, who has been receiving an unwarranted kicking on Twitter. Some media commentators will scorn Phil as he has the temerity to be an articulate guy thoughtfully voicing bold and clever ideas publically, whilst also not only refusing to disguise his Northerness but drawing attention towards it to champion the place he's proud to be from. This Northern pride has, ironically, been perceived as evidence of him supposedly being Southern! There's been numerous claims made to corroborate that Phil is an imposter – some have said he's from Bath, some say he owns a house in London, one person claimed they'd heard he was a minor relation to the Queen, while another said he is actually either Chas or Dave from the hit Cockney combo 'Chas & Dave' and this was some sort of elaborate promotion for a greatest hits collection. Like some sort of gentry Sasquatch, everyone seems to have a sighting of Phil living a life of hereditary luxury down South – quaffing cognac while claiming it's actually gravy. And though we will respond to these attacks with the bemused mirth they deserve, it's important we recognise that the public faces of our party are no different from us; the fact they've stepped up and out to be our voice and face doesn't make them immune to the emotional impact of a battery of bell-ends making up stuff because they can't stand their convictions. So when we defend Phil or Thelma or Evie or any other NIP figure foisted into the public eye, we're not just doing so to defend the cause. We're doing so because we know them, we care about them and we want all those people who come for us to be acutely aware that we protect our own.

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## **Thelma Walker: The Woman With Northern Soul**

This week many of us participated in a historic vote to nominate Thelma Walker as the first NIP candidate to stand for a parliamentary seat. Let's mark this moment with words from NIP founder and co-leader, Phillip Proudfoot and from our favourite future Hartlepool MP herself:

### ***Phil:***

The Northern Independence party will endorse Thelma Walker as our candidate in the Hartlepool By-election. Thelma won the candidacy with 69.7% of a vote from the members in a democratic, online ballot.

Mrs Walker defected from the labour party to stand for democracy and to represent the left behind communities of the North. She is a lifelong education campaigner, former MP and proud socialist.

We believe that the people of Hartlepool deserve a democratic socialist option, and not a candidate forced upon them from the establishment Westminster parties.

Thelma is one of our own, a Northerner who shares our values and our vision for a fairer and free North. We believe she is the best candidate to represent the people of Hartlepool.

### ***Thelma:***

Hello to all NIP members - I'm Thelma Walker, former teacher, headteacher and from June 2017 to Dec 2019, MP for Colne Valley in West Yorkshire. Whilst MP I served as PPS to John McDonnell MP and was a member of the Education Select Committee.

I want what is best for the people of Hartlepool but also what is best for the whole of the North. I was born in Manchester and have lived in Yorkshire for the past 30 years. Living in London and working in

Westminster I saw first-hand that North/South divide. Yes there is of course deprivation and the forgotten towns across the country, but as a Northerner, I'm fed up of our region being under funded across health, transport and education. We need regional funding and an end to centralised Westminster control. We need ownership of our own spending and economy.

I have experience of how Westminster works and see how democracy is being undermined both in Government and, sad to say, in the Labour Party when candidates are being imposed on Labour members.

I'll be Hartlepool's voice in Westminster. My work for local people will not be a career but a vocation. I will fight for the right to food and to end food banks. I'll fight to end child poverty and support local community wealth building. I'll fight to create new, green jobs and employment.

Our country can be so much better than this and the grit, humour and determination of us Northerners can begin the regeneration of our community and deliver a happier, more equal society, which is everyone's right.

I have a Northern soul and will give my heart and soul to Hartlepool as your MP.

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## **Spare 5 minutes for the Northern Revolution**

[@SupportNorthNow](#) is a twitter account founded by our irrepressible Mia yun Ruse, who set out to publicise local initiatives and businesses in the North that deserve a leg up. The account is reliant on our members to share the vibrant enterprises around them that they value and think should be shown some love. So please message the #support-the-north group on Discord, or the twitter account with your suggestions so we can continue to demonstrate



our solidarity and support for hard working Northerner's contributions to their communities.

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## **Party Opportunities**

### **Campaigning for our Councillors**

We've had a huge swell of support to help Thelma in Hartlepool, so we're hoping you'll all be as excited to campaign for our councillors.

We're looking to know who lives locally to our councillors and can help them better understand what the local issues are, as well as for people who live and work nearby who are willing to travel there and support with campaigning.

Please take a look to see if we're campaigning near you, and let us know how you can help!

**Join the  
Campaign**

### **Community Engagement: Discord**

The Northern Independence Party is looking for a motivated supporter with a strong track record in community management and volunteer engagement to assist in the operation of the NIP Discord Server. This is an unpaid, volunteer role for the foreseeable future. The successful applicant will be able to evidence prior experience of:

- acting as a facilitator for community spaces,
- managing volunteers,
- using the Discord moderation tools,
- conflict management,
- de-escalation,
- and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups (including children).

As this role involves regulated activity under statute, successful applicants will have to submit to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. Successful applicants will work closely with the Discord moderation team to help deliver a friendly, welcoming and safe space for our members.

If you think you can add value to NIP through this role please [apply here](#).

Applications are open until 23:59 on Monday 19th April.

[Apply Now](#)

## **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer**

The North is a diverse and amazing place, and that's reflected in our Party.

We're looking for an outstanding individual who is committed to helping the NIP achieve its full potential through providing the right support to its people.

Successful applicants will have to submit to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. To read more about the role and apply, click the buttons!

Applications are open until 23:59 on Monday 19th April.

[Job Description](#)

[Apply Now](#)

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## **NIP Social Events**

**Name that Whippet!**

Our canine logo, pet to us all, has been around a while now. It's been a good dog and never caused anyone any trouble, no matter what Centrist twitter claims when they cruelly say it makes its masters look stereotypical and we should have it put down. We love our Whippet and it's going no-where. However; we have to shamefacedly admit - we've let our dog down. What sort of care are we providing to this wonderful icon when we haven't even decided what it should be called yet?!

So, we need your help. What should we call our Whippet? Fill in [this form](#) to let us know what you think would be the fitting name to sum up this smart and strong stunner. The chosen moniker will be revealed to the world on Twitter in a grand celebration championing this symbol of the North's spirit.

**Whippet Good!**

### **Join our Discord**

If you haven't already - join the Discord! We have some great discussions, and it's a way to make friends and find support in the Party.

1. Download [Discord](#).
2. Add your Discord username to your profile [on our website](#).
3. Follow this link to [join the NIP Discord](#).

### **Come to the first NIP Book Club meeting**

Join the #reading-room channel on the Discord server to take part. We're meeting at 8pm on Wednesday 14th April in the Book Cozy voice channel to discuss [New Model Island](#). Hope to see you there!

### **The Whippet**

The Whippet is always eager to hear from members who'd like to contribute. Every voice within our movement is vital, if you have

something to say let us know and join our team. Contact

[thewhippet@freethenorth.co.uk](mailto:thewhippet@freethenorth.co.uk)

If you missed out on previous editions of 'The Whippet', dry your tears as they are now [available on our website](#) (for members only, so you'll have to sign in).

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Enjoy the Easter weekend and, as always, ta!

The Whippet

Northern Independence Party

<http://www.freethenorth.co.uk/>

Northern Independence Party

This email was sent to [hannah.apestake@freethenorth.co.uk](mailto:hannah.apestake@freethenorth.co.uk). To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).