



Christmas Newsletter 2025



Our stall at the Brunswick Festival

Merry Christmas — and thank you all for your support.

2025 has been another encouraging year for Brighton & Hove Compass. A big shout out to everyone who has come to our coffee mornings, helped at stalls, supported campaigns, shared ideas, or simply stayed connected.

Brighton & Hove Compass is run entirely by volunteers, and what keeps it going is the sense that people value a space for informed, respectful and hopeful political conversation. As we head into 2026, we'd love you to keep coming along — and, if you can, to deepen your support.

Our Year in Brighton & Hove

It's been a busy and productive year, marked by new connections, growing confidence, and a real sense of momentum. We've focused on strengthening our campaigning voice, building community and responding to major political changes locally and nationally.

Democracy, Devolution and the Sussex Mayoralty

A major focus of our work this year has been the government's plans for devolution in Sussex. Alongside the Lewes group, we have been working as Sussex Compass to scrutinise proposals for a new mayoral authority with significantly expanded powers. While devolution has the potential to bring decision-making closer to communities, we have been concerned about both the speed of the process and the lack of democratic safeguards.

Early in the year we contacted Compass supporters across Sussex, urging them to learn about the coming changes, and take part in government consultations. We followed this up with a coffee morning and Sussex-wide Zoom meetings, and then a coordinated letter-writing campaign, direct engagement with councillors and MPs, and a petition to the Minister to press for the mayor to be elected using the Supplementary Vote (a fairer system than First-Past-The-Post). In November, members wrote again calling for a delay to the election, so that it would be run after the reinstatement of the Supplementary Vote in 2027.

In early December the government announced a two-year delay to the mayoral election — a significant outcome, even if the manner of the announcement and length of the delay left much to be desired.

Coffee Mornings 2025



March: Polly Toynbee with Stewart Lansley and Colin Miller

We continue to run our bi-monthly 'Progressive Coffee Mornings'. These are open to all and we pride ourselves on the congenial atmosphere and informed conversation. We had six great meetings in the year.

- 25 January – What now for climate action? with Sian Berry, MP for Brighton Pavilion and Emma Montlake, one of the founders of the Love Our Ouse campaign.
- 22 March – It's the economy, stupid — is Reeves right? with Polly Toynbee, Guardian Columnist and Stewart Lansley, Progressive Economy Forum Fellow.
- 10 May – Devolution in Sussex: how can our voices be heard? with Dr Matthew Fright, Institute for Government, Devolution Team and Cllr John Hewitt, Cabinet Adviser for Devolution and Local Government, BHCC.
- 19 July – What's poverty got to do with it? with Andrea Cornwall, Professor of Global Development & Anthropology, Kings College London and Reyna Kothari, CEO and Consultant at The Old Boat Corner Community Hub, Hollingbury.
- 13 September – Progressive politics — what's next? with Sue Goss, Founding member of Compass and Author of *Open Tribe* and Mark Perryman, Author/Editor of *The Starmer Symptom*.
- 29 November – The political economy of the food system with Stuart Gillespie, Honorary Associate IDS, University of Sussex; Ali Ghanimi, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership; and Ben Simanowitz, from the Plant-based Council Campaign.

Campaign Highlight: Wellsbourne Healthcare



Tug-of-war for Wellsbourne

One of the most encouraging local stories this year was the successful pushback against the proposed takeover of Wellsbourne Healthcare, a much-loved GP practice serving a disadvantaged area of East Brighton. The plan to replace the non-profit Community Interest Company with a large for-profit provider generated widespread concern.

Grassroots action by patients and the wider community, supported by media coverage and advocacy, some of it driven by members of our Compass group, led to an independent review and a halt to the process — a reminder that local organising and principled campaigning can still have real impact.

Brunswick Festival



As in previous years we ran a stall for the two days at the Brunswick Festival in August. It was a great way to get out into the community and talk to all kinds of people. We were delighted with all the support we got.

Dates for the Diary

Next year's coffee morning programme is still in preparation but the first one is now settled.

- 31 January – 'A Time of Monsters' - Resisting the rise of Reform and the rest. What is to Be Done? With Paul Taggart, Professor of Politics at Sussex University and Lena Swedlow, Deputy Director of Compass. At the Friends Meeting House, Brighton.

Further coffee mornings planned for 28th March, 9th May and 25th July.

Get Involved

At the end of 2025, Brighton & Hove Compass continues to grow with over 1,200 people on our mailing list and 110 paid up members.

If you'd like to get involved — whether by helping at events, supporting campaigns, or joining the steering group — we'd love to hear from you. And remember, membership helps fund national campaigning and strengthens our local voice.

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Happy Christmas — and see you in 2026.



New premises at the Friends Meeting House

