



INVITATION

**WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO PUT WOMEN'S EQUALITY ON THE
AGENDA IN LEWISHAM, IN THE MAYORAL AND COUNCIL
ELECTIONS IN MAY 2018?
HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT?**

**SATURDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 12.00 – 4.00PM
THE TALENT FACTORY, CATFORD**

**FREE (DONATIONS WELCOME)
TEA & COFFEE AVAILABLE
(BRING OWN LUNCH)
CHILDREN WELCOME**

Members and registered supporters* of WEP Lewisham (other branches welcome) are invited to an [open space workshop to help](#) us crowd-source our campaigns and our campaign strategies for the Mayoral and Council elections in May 2018.

Open space is a meeting without agenda where the people attending the meeting decide on the content by calling sessions on what they want to talk about at the beginning, responding to an umbrella question or invitation (see above). The question always relates to something the group needs to tackle and opens up the right to speak and raise a theme to everyone attending.

You don't need to be an expert on the question or idea, or you may have already loads of research done and just want some help to get it launched and realised. You may have attended lots of our events or this could be your first time. You may love brainstorming in a group or prefer working on your own. Whoever you are and however you like to work out ideas, open space is a great way to do it because you can gain from the experience of the group and you can go off and work on your idea - it's up to you.

The Open Space Technology format fits our "doing politics differently" ethos because it allows us to build on all the experience, energy and expertise in the room to ensure that our policies and campaigns are reflective of and authentic to our context. It's about putting people not party politics first. It's about thinking what we are campaigning for, the change and equality we want to see in Lewisham. It's the perfect event to bring new people to, so please think of someone to extend this invitation to and ask them to come along.

All you need on the day is an open-mind, a picnic lunch and if you don't have a question/idea to begin with, you'll find plenty of ways to join in with other themes from other people. If you're bringing kids (and you are welcome to), bring something for them to enjoy.

Help us determine the what, how and why of our campaigns and make a bit of Lewisham and WEP history. Be part of the story.

*If you're not a member you can still come and join on the day or better yet [click here](#).
The Talent Factory is accessible – if you have access requirements please let us know.



OPEN SPACE Technology - A quick guide by Rebecca Manson Jones WEP Lewisham (based on the original you can find here <http://openspaceworld.org/wp2/>)

Open Space - is a meeting without agenda where the participants determine the sessions. Anyone can call a session under an umbrella title at the beginning of the meeting.

You can spend 3 days or 3 hours working in open space.

I've done it for Local Councils, Community interest groups, at WEP conference (supporting Stella Duffy) recalcitrant teenagers, an entire staff and board of a theatre, members of the public in a public consultation.

1. Open Space begins with a question which applies to all the people attending the event.

Eg:

**WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO PUT WOMEN'S EQUALITY ON THE AGENDA IN LEWISHAM, IN THE MAYORAL AND COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN MAY 2018?
HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO IT?**

There is no other agenda apart from this question. The agenda is decided by the people in the room at the beginning of the day/afternoon, by means of anyone who wishes to writing down the theme for a topic to discuss which relates to the big question of the day.

This can take a few minutes and whilst it is going on, the people who are generating topics find a location and a time to have the discussion with the aid of the Open Space helpers.

2. When everyone has finished thinking of topics to have a discussion about, there has emerged a grid of discussions : a spontaneous timetable.

It isn't possible for everyone to attend every discussion, so we all get a chance to look at the grid and to write down the discussions we might like to go. So you decide your own agenda (and you can change your mind as the day progresses)

3. Then we start. Everyone goes off to the discussion(s) they are interested in and we see what happens. It's as simple as that.

4. At the end, the whole group meets up and reflections are shared. The notes from each session are collated so that everyone has access to everything irrespective of which discussions they were part of.

Open Space meetings work on the basis of principles:

Whoever comes are the right people:

Some discussions take a while to get going, or can be a small group or even one person making notes about their own thoughts. Some become massive debates or working groups that go on all day and beyond. These could split into sub groups – more people get to speak that way.... More people get to listen to more view/action points.

Whatever happens is the only that could have happened:

Open Space asks you to remove your badge of office: anyone can call a discussion, participate in a discussion, lead or leave a discussion whenever they want. The space is open, there is no predetermined agenda or outcome which can be planned for. If you want to call a session, call it, it's not up to anyone to say you can or you can't. It's up to you.

When it's over, it's over

The Open Space event is scheduled for however long you can manage but some discussions are bigger than the time available and some will only last twenty minutes. As a participant, you may find that for other people the discussion is over even if you think there is more to say. Or that for you it's finished and others are continuing. You can move on. In open space that's not rude or obstructive. You just leave, quietly.

Be Prepared to Be Suprised

You can't know which sessions will be called, who will come, what will be said or which actions arrived at. You accept what there is and if you think someone else should have been there – they weren't. They didn't prioritise it for that moment. If you need their input you could seek it later as an action. For the session, you work with the people who are there (even if that's just you) and you discover hidden or unknown gems.

There is also one law for Open Space: the **LAW OF MOTION/ or THE LAW OF SELF-RESPONSIBILITY**

If you find yourself in a discussion (which you may even have started) and you don't feel that you are contributing or learning (active listening counts as contributing) – take responsibility, leave the discussion and join another group. This law isn't designed as a tool for being rude to someone who is speaking or who has set up a discussion but it is about being honest with yourself and discovering what it is you really want to do with your time at Open Space.

What else?

Refreshments - Open Space was designed to be a bit like one long coffee break at a conference, so tea and coffee, water are provided. Bring a picnic if the event can't provide one.

Creche - Children are welcome and we ask you to bring something for your children to enjoy if they don't fancy joining in the sessions.

Note-taking - So that we can all get a sense of the day's overview, each meeting will be noted by someone in the discussion and the notes brought back to the centre so that everyone can browse them at the end and/or online. It's helpful if they can be typed up and recorded so that everyone gets a record of all the discussions, especially (as we hope) if it's a discussion that is leading to actions.

Calls for Action - Open Space is a meeting style that implies a call for action. Towards the end of the day, the findings from the various discussions will be looked at by everyone and the group will decide which areas seem most urgent and/or achievable. The final conversations will be focused on these issues and the same principles for participation will apply as for the early spontaneous topics. By the end of the day you will all know what ideas, concerns and potential solutions are in the room.

You will not have finalised the action plan but you will have a spent rare and important time laying some foundations.

Why me? Or do I have to come?

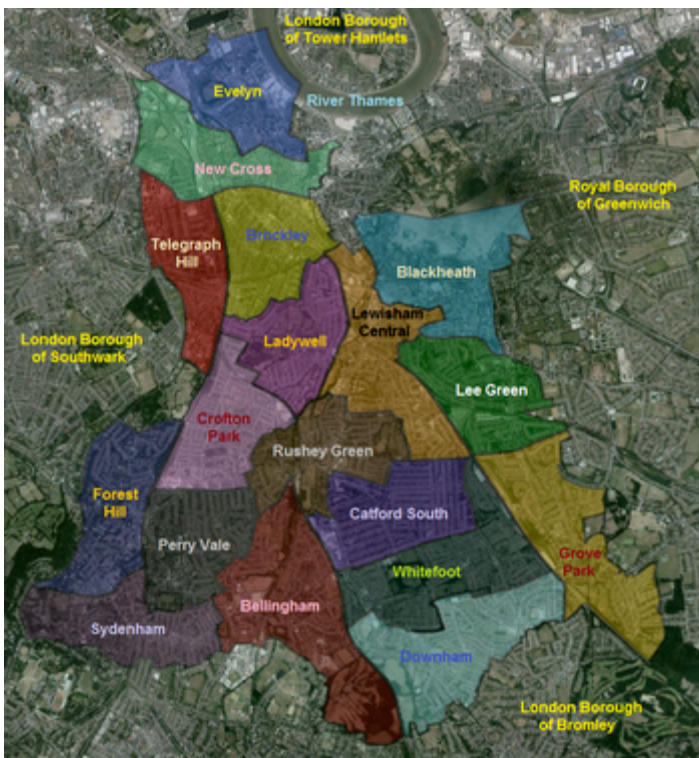
Lots of people find the idea of Open Space a bit odd. If that's you, please come. If you love the idea of it, please come. Be ready to make space for the people who are reluctant, let the people who have lots of ideas let them out. The ability to call a session means that we meet as equals and we listen to each other's point of view, and we also need to take note in our enthusiasm that other people may want to talk.

Just because you called a session doesn't mean you own it or need to have all the answers. Often the conversation can take a very different direction from what you expected. You will still have your ideas that you started with, plus a whole load of others. What's not to like?

What if I've already done a bunch of research on a campaign idea?

This is the third of our sessions on compiling ideas for campaigns and some people have already put some ideas out there and started work on them. If that's you, we hope you'll want to call a session and share what you've already come up with. There may be some people who can push the idea on with you. You might want to call for volunteers, try out the general theme for feedback, or crank up a computer and enlist help with online searches for information. All of these and more are possible in open space.

About the Council



There are 18 wards in Lewisham Borough Council with 3 Councillors in each.

All the Council seats in Lewisham except for 1 are held by Labour. Roughly 1/3 of Councillors are women. This has not always been the case.

The Council is led by a directly elected Mayor who has powers to make decisions directly or through the Cabinet which they appoint.

Sir Steven Bullock - the first and only incumbent to date - is standing down in 2018.

What is the Local Council Responsible for?

- **Council** (aka Social) **Housing** – approx. 9514 households currently looking for housing in Lewisham
- **Education Services** (although central government has clawed back funding so Councils have less influence about what happens in schools but has a statutory responsibility to provide a place for every child in their borough).
- **Electoral Registration** – they must support the democratic process.
- **Environmental Health** – including noise and nuisance.
- **Leisure and Recreation Facilities** (but not culture or arts, sports yes – and that's a gender issue as more girls and women continue artistic and cultural pursuits into adulthood but have to pay for them – Equally they are less likely to use sports facilities because the environment is too macho).
- **Libraries** – endangered species, rare free indoor space everyone is entitled to.
- **Local Planning** – (great potential for WEP here as planning now has to be more aware of environmental and social benefits not just financial best value – the safety of a development, the accessibility of it etc. –).
- **Parks and Public Places** (see above).
- **Regulation of Local Businesses** – Living wage payments, business rates, incentives to encourage recruitment /promotion of women and girls, flexible working, zero hours, part-time contracts,
- Road and Footpaths – safety for women and girls in the public realm.
- **Social Services** – care-giving (But not Health services)
- **Waste & Recycling** – everyone's favourite. – women are disproportionately implicated in the waste and recycling game as they make most of the household decisions about what is bought, used and wasted.... Need to work out how we can harness this into a useful angle for us perhaps for a campaign.

In addition, Councillors may be asked to sit on boards for schools, local charities, arts organisations and other community initiatives for funding, traditional or Qdos reasons.

Councillors hold monthly surgeries in community venues and quarterly Local Assemblies in their wards attended by their constituencies. They also attend meetings and local events.

Transport and Police are in London dealt with by the GLA but these are both big in everyone's heads.

