

A record of the meetings organised by Woman's Place UK



This is a record of the meetings organised by Woman's Place UK since our inception in September 2017, together with some details of the difficulties we have faced from people opposed to these meetings taking place.

For more, and links to media coverage, statements and rebuttals see our website.

1. A Woman's Place is on the Platform

Cambridge, Thursday, 23 November 2017

Tickets: 104 Venue: Friends Meeting House

Speakers: Linda Bellos, Helen Steel, Anne Ruzylo, Heather Brunskell-Evans, Judith Green (Chair)

Our first meeting was in response to women's right to speak being threatened. We platformed Linda Bellos (who had been disinvited by a student society of a Cambridge College); Helen Steel (physically threatened and surrounded at London Anarchist Bookfair for defending women distributing leaflets); Anne Ruzylo (subject to harassment in her role as Women's Officer of her Labour Party); and Heather Brunskell-Evans (sacked from her Women's Equality Party spokeswoman role, for expressing her views on Radio 4).

There was no protest although we had had to inform the police about this message sent to us on Facebook, *"If Isis only blow up one event this Christmas..."*.



A recurrent accusation that is made against us is that Anne Ruzyllo made offensive and abusive comments about trans women at this meeting. This accusation is entirely false.

2. A Woman's Place is Under Threat

Manchester, Wednesday 17 January 2018

Tickets: 223 Venue: Friends Meeting House

Speakers: Bea Campbell, Kristina Jayne Harrison, Ruth Serwotka, Beth Aze (Chair).

The venue received calls calling us a hate group and asking them to cancel. There was a very small protest outside, but no trouble.

3. A Woman's Place is Speaking Out

Bristol, Thursday 8 February 2018

Tickets: 130 Venue: conference venue

Speakers: Jo Bartosch, Lynne Harne, Stephanie Davies-Arai, Judith Green, Raquel Rosario Sanchez (Chair).

There was mobilisation for a masked protest advertised on Facebook and an open letter circulated against the meeting, naming our Chair. The local organiser informed the police as a courtesy about the possible protest and our arrangements with the venue. Police then visited, following which the Church steward felt it was no longer a routine booking and had to inform more senior people. They deliberated and cancelled our booking the day before.

An alternative venue was successfully found and the meeting went ahead.

The threats and intimidation by a student against our student Chair became the subject of a university disciplinary case, still unresolved and recently reported on by The Times.

4. A Woman's Place Loves Women's Rights

Edinburgh, Wednesday 14 February 2018

Tickets: 108 Venue: Out of the Blue Drill Hall

Speakers: Jackie Mearns, Emma Wiles, and a mother of a 'detransitioned' teen (speaking anonymously).

There was an intimidating protest outside with protestors banging pots and pans throughout the meeting – audible in the video of Jackie Mearns' talk. After the meeting, the venue was relentlessly targeted on social media with negative reviews and accusations of transphobia.

5. A Woman's Place is Making a Stand

Central London, Tuesday 27 February 2018

Tickets: 439 Venue: Bloomsbury Baptist Church.

Speakers: Steph Pike, Lucy Masoud, Pilgrim Tucker, Megan Dobney (Chair).

There was a small protest by Sisters Uncut outside the venue, interfering with Church facilities for the homeless. One woman had her glasses knocked off by a protestor.

Paula Lamont was subsequently bullied off BECTU picket line at the Picturehouse on International Women's Day on account of being recognised as having been at the 27th February meeting.

6. A Woman's Place is a Sanctuary

Birmingham, Thursday 15 March 2018

Tickets: 155 Venue: Priory Rooms (FMH)

Speakers: Rebecca Reilly-Cooper, Debbie Hayton, Aysha Iqbal and Karen Ingala Smith (Chair).

No threats against the meeting received by WPUK, but threats of disruption were made by transactivists before the meeting.

7. A Woman's Place is Speaking Up in Wales

Cardiff, Thursday 12 April 2018

Tickets: 168 Venue: local hall

Speakers: Jeni Harvey, Raquel Rosario Sanchez, Helen Mary Jones AM and Ruth Serwotka

This meeting had to be moved at the last minute when the advertised venue cancelled our booking after pressure from transactivists who made defamatory claims about WPUK

A new meeting venue was hastily arranged, and the individual involved in arranging the new venue was then harassed about this.

8. A Woman's Place is Ours to Define

Oxford, Wednesday, 25 April 2018

Tickets: 117 Venue: Friends Meeting House

Speakers: Stephanie Davies-Arai, Nic Williams, Raquel Rosario Sanchez and Philippa Harvey.

This was the second attempt by Oxford women to organise a meeting. A meeting to be held at the University in January 2018 was cancelled under pressure from activists. A large protest was held outside the venue, disrupting a survivors group meeting (who had nothing to do with our meeting) and distressing staff of the venue.

9. A Woman's Place is to be Inquiring

Basingstoke, Thursday 17 May 2018

Tickets: 72 Venue: local community centre

Speakers: Catia Freitas, Hannah Clarke, Debbie Hayton, Sarah Johnson

We held this meeting in Maria Miller's constituency as she was the Chair of the Women & Equalities Select Committee whose recommendations were, at the time, the subject of the GRA government consultation. Maria Miller was invited but was unable to attend and sent an apology. This is the only meeting where the local authority actively supported the holding of the meeting on premises they funded. A local government official attended the meeting.

No protests or negative comments about the meeting were received by WPUK or published in the press.

10. A Woman's Place is Standing Her Ground

Newcastle upon Tyne, Thursday 24 May 2018

Tickets: 192 Venue: Northumbria University

Speakers: Dawn Furness, Heather Brunskell-Evans, Judith Green, Bea Campbell (Chair).

The venue had to be rearranged after original venue cancelled. Following a risk assessment, the University agreed to host us in accordance with their free speech policy with the stipulation that all speakers had to confirm in writing they would comply with the university's equality and diversity policy, and that we should pay an extra £300 towards extra security staff.

There was a small protest outside.

11. A Woman's Place is to Encourage Debate

Todmorden, Thursday 7 June 2018

Tickets: 157 Venue: local hall

Speakers: Gill Smith, Ruth Serwotka, Kristina Jayne Harrison.

There was no protest against this meeting; the only one of our meetings to have open local advertising before the event.

12. A Woman's Place is on the Frontline

Hastings, Wednesday 20 June 2018

Tickets: 79 Venue: local community centre

Speakers: Phillipa Harvey, Jeni Harvey, Kristina Jayne Harrison, Megan Dobney (Chair).

There was difficulty in securing a venue and a forced change of venue after a local campaign of vilification and disinformation about WPUK. A bomb threat against meeting was considered viable and investigated by local police. Police cars drove by the venue throughout the event to ensure safety of attendees.

13. A Woman's Place is Turning the Tide

Brighton, Monday 16 July 2018

Tickets: 192 Venue: The Jury's Inn

Speakers: Kathleen Stock, Helen Saxby, Gill Smith, Ruth Serwotka, Philipa Harvey (Chair)

A booking was made with Friends Meeting House Brighton. Local organisers met staff at the venue and discussed in detail the nature of the meeting and that previous meetings had been protested. The venue was happy to go ahead and they suggested an evening when potential disruption could be minimised.

After lobbying by individuals, FMH Brighton cancelled our booking with only 5 days' notice giving us no opportunity to address concerns that had been raised or to meet with them, despite asking for a meeting.

We secured two other venues, both of which were fully briefed about the nature of the meeting. One of the organisers went into the Jury's Inn and met with staff and gave them a full briefing on our campaign and that previous meetings had been protested. They were happy to go ahead.

On the evening of the meeting, large noisy protests were set up at both entrances to the hotel. Police were in attendance. After the meeting had started, the hotel management approached us and said they wanted to cancel the meeting. They also said the hotel was being inundated with abusive phone calls which were upsetting the staff.

We were very concerned for the safety of our attendees if they had to leave and we felt aggrieved that a booking made in honesty and good faith was now under threat because of a protest. We persuaded them that the best option was to let the meeting continue. We agreed to finish early and discussed how to enable attendees at the meeting to exit the building safely through a range of different exits.

The meeting went ahead and was concluded early at 9.15 as promised to the hotel management. Many women were afraid to leave through the main exits and we had to escort several of them out through the car park and side exits. Some women went to the bar hoping the protest would disperse and they could leave later without fear.

Despite the meeting ending at 9.15pm, the protests continued until at least 10.30pm causing great, and unnecessary, inconvenience to hotel guests. Several came down to complain about the noise.

Someone created a fake Facebook account posing as an attendee, using someone else's photograph, and posted lies about the meeting.

14. A Woman's Place Takes Nerves of Steel

Sheffield, Thursday 20 September 2018

Tickets: 54 Venue: a city centre pub

Speakers: Michele Moore, Helen Steel, Sian Griffiths, Zlakha Ahmed

A threat was made by ticket holder on Twitter to publicise venue. The landlady of the pub came under intense pressure by transactivists and councillors to repudiate the meeting. She made an official complaint to Leeds council about allegedly libellous comments made by two councillors.

Torrential rain, flooding and road closures hampered the arrival of speakers and attendees but the meeting went ahead.

The speech Michele Moore gave that night has had over 36,000 views. She has since come under attack for speaking out, with attempts to have her removed as editor of Disability & Society which she has managed to resist.

15. A Woman's Place is a Safe Port

Labour Party Conference Fringe Event (Unofficial), Tuesday 25 September 2018

Tickets: 165 Venue: city conference centre

Speakers: Lucy Masoud, Helen Watts, Ann Sinnott, Debbie Hayton, Ruth Serwotka, Megan Dobney (Chair)

There was no protest at this meeting, but there was condemnation of it on social media and a counter meeting was organised.

This meeting was reported on by BBC Politics Live.

16. A Woman's Place is Speaking the Truth

Leeds, Friday, 28 September 2018

Tickets: 200 (all refunded) Venue: a city pub

Speakers: @STILLTish, Karen Ingala Smith, Nic Williams, Stephanie Davies Arai

This meeting was cancelled by Leeds Council at around noon on the day of the meeting. Initially they cited a health and safety issue with the room booked but later conceded it was because of pressure from transactivists. A statement made by Judith Blake was challenged by WPUK and we later held a meeting with her to challenge the decision. We were supported in this by some local councillors and the event created a lot of press coverage and local debate.

17. A Woman's Place Is to Be Heard

Bath, Thursday 1 November 2018

Tickets: 101 Venue: arts centre

Speakers: Sarah Ditung, Clara Greed, Raquel Rosario Sanchez, Sarah Johnson, Bo Novak (Chair)

There was a small protest.

18. A Woman's Place is at the Bar

Reading, Tuesday 4 December 2018

Tickets: 66 Venue: a city bar

Speakers: Rosa Freedman, Julian Norman, Ruth Serwotka, Sarah Johnson (Chair)

There was a small protest outside. Rosa Freedman cited a pattern of harassment by students.

19. A Woman's Place is Resolute

London, Monday 21 January 2019

Tickets: 59 Venue: Marx Memorial Library

Speakers: Ruth Serwotka, Lucy Masoud, Karen Ingala Smith, Kiri Tunks, Philipa Harvey

This meeting was to launch the WPUK New Year Resolutions for 2019.

There was no protest at this meeting.

20. A Woman's Place is Breaking Ground

Norwich, Monday 25 February 2019

Tickets: 103 Venue: Friends Meeting House

Speakers: Hibo Wardere, Linda Bellos, Kiri Tunks

The meeting was protested by a small group of people who stood right by the entrance with a banner and rejected attempts at dialogue. They took photos of attendees. After the meeting had started, they set off a fire alarm.

21. A Woman's Place is Made to Last

Leicester, Monday 15 April 2019

Tickets: 66 Venue: a local theatre

Speakers: Jo Phoenix, Nicola Williams, Judith Green, Viv Pointon (Chair)

There was no protest.

22. A Woman's Place is Back in Town

London, Monday 20 May 2019

Tickets: 524 Venue: Bloomsbury Baptist Church

Speakers: Meghan Murphy, Julie Bindel, Selina Todd, Maya Forstater. Ruth Serwotka (Chair)

There was no protest.

23. A Woman's Place is on the Podium

London, Wednesday 10 July 2019

Tickets: 758 Venue: QE II Centre

Speakers: Emma Hilton, Sharron Davies, Victoria Hood, Nicola Williams, Judith Green, Kiri Tunks (Chair)

A protest was organised and publicised on social media. It was later called off and there was no protest at this event.

24. A Woman's Place is at Conference

Brighton, Monday 23rd September

Tickets: TBC Venue: Local community centre

Speakers: Dani Ahrens, Onjali Rauf, Kay Green, Kiri Tunks (Chair)

This meeting was subject to a co-ordinated slur campaign which led to a last-minute change of venue.

The meeting was also subject to an aggressive and intimidating protest by over 100 activists. Despite a police presence, the protestors were allowed to congregate in close proximity to the entrance, blocking the pavement, access to and exit from the venue. A splinter group of protestors went to the back of the building where they were permitted by the police to kick and bang on the windows of the meeting room for two hours.

The protest was publicised and supported by delegates to Labour Party conference and Labour Party staff members, one of whom tweeted about the protestors failure to adhere to Labour Party principles or rule.

Over 75% of the attendees were members or delegates to the Conference. Also in attendance were Labour staff members.

Woman's Place UK has submitted a formal complaint to both the Labour Party and Sussex Police.

25. A Woman's Place is at the lectern

Oxford, Friday 25th October

Tickets: 175 Venue: Oxford Examination Halls

Speakers: Allison Bailey (Chair), Selina Todd, Susan Matthews, Raquel Rosario Sanchez

The meeting went ahead without obstruction. A protest was organised by Trans Action Oxford but this was held away from the venue.

26. A Woman's Place is marching on together

Leeds, Friday 22nd November

Tickets: 175 Venue: Leeds Civic Hall

Speakers: Louise Moody, Thomasin Pick, Karen Ingala Smith, Ruth Serwotka

The meeting was held in Leeds Civic Hall, the venue which cancelled on us at very short notice 28th November 2018. Following that meeting we were in communication with Judith Blake and members of Leeds council. We are delighted that our booking was honoured this time.

There was a demonstration outside Leeds Civic Hall of around 25 people. They dispersed around 20 minutes after the meeting had started.

27. Women's Liberation 2020

London, Saturday 1st February

Tickets: 939+ Venue: Institute of Education, University College London

Speakers: Pragna Patel, Joanna Cherry QC MP, Maya Forstater, Joan McAlpine MSP, Julie Bindel, Kiri Tunks, Sophie Scott, Holly Smith and over 80 other contributors.

Hosted and co-organised by UCL Women's Liberation Special Interest Group, this conference brought together nearly 1000 people to reflect on the gains made for women's rights since the first Women's Liberation Conference held in 1970 and to discuss what more needs to be done to achieve equality and justice for women and girls.

The conference was attended by several press and media representatives including the Morning Star which published several articles about the day and BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour which ran a report on the event on Friday 6th February.

A Woman's Place is in the House of Lords

In addition to our public meetings, we were invited to organise a panel discussion in the House of Lords hosted by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne.

London, Wednesday, 10 October 2018

Tickets: 70+ Venue: House of Lords Committee Room

Speakers: Kathleen Stock, Julian Norman and Raquel Rosario Sanchez, Baroness Winterbourne (Chair)

There was no protest.

July 2020