Thank you chair.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen, comrades for being here today and for giving me this opportunity to briefly talk about our manifesto that will be published in advance of the General Election in May.

Before I do I want to start by paying tribute to a man that cannot be here today – Paul Liversuch – a man who has always put a first class effort into putting across a Socialist Alternative in the East Midlands.

I know that we all wish Paul well in his recovery from surgery.

Comrades, never before has the need for a Socialist Alternative been greater.

Today I am going to talk about our radical program for the upcoming elections.

I am going to talk about our updated manifesto that will put forward the case for Socialism in Britain in 2015.

Comrades, we have gone way past the point of a ‘cost of living crisis’.

The reality that more and more of the working class in modern Britain are being made to live through can only possibly be described as dire.

21% of people in Britain are living in poverty – 28% in London.

More than 1 in 5 rely on credit for food – that is 1 in 5 getting into debt just to feed themselves and their families.

But it does not end there.

I remember being here only a few years ago saying how awful it was that 100,000 people were now being forced to go to foodbanks just to be able to feed themselves and their families.

In May in our Party Election Broadcast for the European Elections Ricky Tomlinson stated that 350,000 starving people were being forced to rely on over 400 foodbanks across the length of Britain.

Comrades, now I stand here in December 2014 and state that according to the Trussell Trust we now have 950,000 starving people in the UK who are relying on foodbanks to eat.

On top of this 4 million people are at risk of going hungry. 3.5 million adults cannot afford to eat properly. 500,000 children live in families that cannot afford to feed them.

Britain in 2014.
In the midst of all of this desperation I am proud to say that in our new manifesto the SLP will become the first party to have a policy on food sovereignty that will set out practicable steps to bring an end to hunger in Britain.

This will not be a policy that we have entered into lightly.

We have been to Havana, Cuba, to see for ourselves the best example of urbanized food production in the world. Currently Havana produces 50% of its own food – 5 times more than any other city.

We have visited the largest urbanized food production set-up in the UK to see for ourselves how efficiently reclaimed land can be used for this purpose.

We have also looked at what can be done to ensure existing producers – farming communities, many of whom are financially struggling – can receive a fair price whilst ensuring food is affordable for the consumer. Taking us away from the bizarre situation we have now were billions of pounds of food is wasted in Britain by supermarkets every year whilst almost 1,000,000 go hungry.
We must of course also consider the politics behind what has got us to such a desperate point for so many.

We know that we are in the grip of a savage austerity agenda.

An austerity agenda that is meaning in real terms cuts to – pay, jobs, pensions, benefits, services – to everything.

An austerity agenda being used to end public services – a move that will only increase the suffering of the young, old and most vulnerable alike.

An austerity agenda that all in Westminster – and even more so UKIP – are fully behind.

In our new manifesto we will demonstrate how we can afford to not only end austerity but also how instead we can invest in industry and public services to bring prosperity to our society.

Comrades we need prosperity, not austerity.

In the next Westminster Parliamentary term those that follow the Thatcherite, Neo-Liberal, Capitalist model will aim to truly break our society.

Over recent decades we have seen the decimation of British industry and legislation imposed to tie the hands of our trade unions.

This was the first step.

The ‘austerity-lite’ we have seen over the last 4 and a half years has led to the conditions that I mentioned earlier.

‘Austerity-plus’ that those in Westminster want to impose after the General Election will make the state unrecognizable.

Too weak and unable to support those in need – forcing millions more into lives of poverty, misery and despair.

It will be used as an excuse to run down and sell-off every last one of our public services – including the NHS.

Make no mistake this is what austerity is being used for.

We have seen over recent decades how everything from our utilities to our Post Office have been sold off cheaply to those in the same Capitalist Class as the politicians.

They support their class and we must fight for our’s.
Austerity is being used to extend this cheap sell-off of our public services – including our NHS – more and more of which is being sold off.

Comrades we cannot tolerate this kind of future.

Enough is enough is enough.

In the simplest possible terms we can end austerity by simply collecting the over £120 billion that tax avoiding big business and obscenely wealthy individuals do not pay into the Treasury every year.

The Autumn Statement has shown that the Coalition plan to tackle less than 1% of tax avoidance. We would deal tax avoidance in its entirety.

We can immediately, overnight, increase the money in people’s pockets by ending VAT – the most unfair tax in existence – and by changing income tax thresholds we can ensure the overwhelming majority get a bigger pay packet and that only those that can easily afford it end up paying more.

We can restore the link to state pensions to ensure that unlike this winter hundreds of thousands of pensioners will not have to decide between eating and heating their homes – and that no more pensioners will die over winter as a result of not being able to afford to do both.

We can lift the mortgage-size debts off the backs of millions of young people by immediately ending student loans and by disbanding the Student Loan Company – giving young people a future to look forward to – rather than one riddled with debt.

We would not replace the outdated nuclear trident system, adding Britain’s name to the list of nations that have got rid of their nuclear weapons, meaning that we would become like the vast majority of the world – nuclear free and saving us over £100 billion in the process.

Money we could put into developing industry and services which, along with other measures such as lowering the retirement age, would lead us towards reaching zero unemployment.
Our energy industry needs huge investment.

Gas is running out, oil is expensive to import, the nuclear power industry needs billions of pounds of subsidies every year and on top of all this renewable energy technology is nowhere near the point at which it can meet our need.

We have only one option – coal and Clean Coal Technology.

We have 1,000 years worth of coal beneath our feet and through Clean Coal Technology we can remove 99% of emissions.

From coal we can also extract all the natural gas and oil we need to meet all of our fuel needs.

Using and investing in this approach would mean that in 12-18 months Britain could have secured a green, reliable energy future that would ensure jobs and prosperity for communities from Sacriston in County Durham, to here in Swadlincote in South Derbyshire, to any valleys town in South Wales.

As well as investing in our industries and services we must invest in housing – both affordable and social.

In Britain today we 200,000 homeless people.

26% of 20-34 year olds are dependent on other adults for housing – that is 3.3 million young adults who cannot afford their own place to live.

Under Capitalism houses have become a commodity – and not a home. We will end this culture.

We will set out plans to build new and redevelop existing properties.

We will pledge to create at least 1 million new habitable homes every year for 5 years.

This policy will set out to, for the first time, eradicate homelessness in Britain and will guarantee jobs for construction workers in the long-term.
Comrades, the policies that I have briefly covered here this afternoon will be but a part of our manifesto that will be launched in advance of May. They are a part of our vision for how we build a better society for all.

Sadly comrades as solid as our policies are for the General Election we must accept were we are at the present moment.

Whilst we will be able to have an impact on this election we simply – as a sole result of finance – are not able to stand enough candidates to win.

It costs well over £300,000 just to stand in all constituencies across Britain.

When you add publicity costs into this it becomes almost an impossibility to afford unless you have the tax avoiding, big business, obscenely wealth friends of but a few parties.

There is one way in which the interests of our class, the working class, could be represented in elections. One-way in which they could be funded.

It is high-time the trade union movement looked at its role in politics.

The ‘gagging bill’ hugely limits what unions can publically comment on politically – but it does not limit who or what they can donate to.

Donating blank cheque after blank cheque to the Labour Party gets us nowhere – just look at what Labour stands for.

Just look at what they did in Government.

Just look at what they are currently doing in the Welsh Assembly – where we have an NHS and education system that are being under-funded to failure.

Just look at what they have done in Local Government – elected in Birmingham to counter the Coalition austerity program by the time they’re done Labour will have got rid of two-thirds of the council workforce.

Labour offers no alternative. Labour is not the answer.

Neither is funding one of name-changing so-called left-wing coalitions like NO2EU or TUSC.
I am pleased to see the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa show how it should be done – by saying that South Africa needs a united, fully committed Socialist party to fight for Socialism.

The fact that the NUMSA has broken away from the ANC to fund this party to fight for Socialism is a great thing.

Unions in Britain should follow their lead and fund the only committed, united Socialist party in Britain – the Socialist Labour Party.

In the meantime our committed members and supporters will be the ones that ensure that the Socialist alternative is put forward – in as much of a capacity as we can afford.

In this election we will be clever in the tactics we adopt and the areas in which we stand – ensuring that we compel the broadcasters to give us as much coverage as is possible.

Comrades I am asking you all that if you currently haven’t pledged to our election fund to do so if you are able to – we need as much money as we can get in order to stand as widely as is possible.

Comrades I look forward to us fighting next year’s election together.

Thank you for listening.

Andrew Jordan
Party President
Socialist Labour Party
14th December 2014
Swadlincote, South Derbyshire