

UKIP election candidate says it's time for change

UKIP has selected New Milton businessman Paul Bailey to contest the New Forest West seat at the next general election.

Mr Bailey, who was chosen by members of the party at their latest branch meeting, said he was delighted and predicted he would push current MP Desmond Swayne hard at the polls in May 2015.

He told the 'A&T': "With a lot of commitment, hard work and innovative thinking, despite there being a very large majority to turn over, I think we have a realistic 50/50 chance of victory.

"Desmond has indeed held the seat for a long time, arguably too long, and it is time for a younger approach, new thinking and someone from outside politics to take up the mantle. It is a good time to change."

Mr Bailey, who is in his 40s, is married to Eleonora and has lived in New Milton for the past seven years. He runs Col-Tec Solutions on the Queensway industrial estate which is involved in the manufacturing of equipment for the printing industry and allied trades. Around 80% of its current output is exported overseas to markets such as Nigeria, Iran, Lebanon and Sudan.

Mr Bailey, who formerly ran Setmasters, told the 'A&T': "I have learnt and achieved a great deal in my professional career which can be summarised as successfully running a micro government in business. I am ready to apply all that I have learnt to the benefit of others in the New Forest West constituency," he said.

Mr Bailey's hobbies include tennis,



Selected: Paul Bailey

running, boxing, kung fu, football and cinema, while he is also an actor and director for the Hampshire based Festival Fringe theatre company, which takes one-act productions on tour.

Mr Bailey said he wanted to talk to local people about what they wanted from him as their MP and he would let UKIP "speak for itself" at a national level on national issues.

"If I am able to assist a large proportion of those people with my action, support or explanation and thereby engage them in their personal politics, then I stand a better chance of winning their support," he said.

"This campaign will be more about them and what Paul Bailey can do for them, than it will be about national politics."

Asked about his views on immigration Mr Bailey said he was "open to ideas" about solving problems, such as overcrowded hospitals, created by a growing population.

"For me the buzz word is not immigration, it should be population or numbers. There are too many of us using the infrastructure and services that the UK currently has to offer."

He gave an analogy of a passenger manifest on a ship designed and built to cater for a nominated capacity, adding the boat would "eventually be at risk of sinking" if it was "completely unchecked".

Mr Bailey said there were "some benefits but more negatives" in Britain being in the EU and there should be "no worry" about the consequences if it was not a direct member.

He said UKIP had other policy ideas such as scrapping the "pernicious" employers' National Insurance tax and pledged to keep his campaign clean.

UKIP New Forest chairman Ann Vasilescu said UKIP would be holding meetings in the coming months so local people could talk to Mr Bailey.

At the last election in 2010, Mr Swayne won the New Forest West seat, which he has held since 1997 with 27,980 votes. It was more than 16,000 ahead of his nearest challenger, Liberal Democrat Michael Plummer.