

Pelican Coming to Meeting House Lane (hopefully)

Green Councillors have worked hard to get agreement from the County Council to put the upgrading of the zebra crossing on Meeting House Lane as the top priority for funding in the coming year. Cllr Gina Dowding said:

“There have been numerous accidents and near misses at the current crossing. We have argued for a long time that it needed to be a proper pelican crossing.”

The County Council also says that it will be resurfacing a section of Westbourne Road after originally promising to do it the year before.



Atherton Road play area (above) has received a makeover with some new equipment and safety surfacing. Money came from Gina Dowding's County Councillor's fund and from a grant applied for by Cllr Jon Barry (and help from the City Council).

Marsh Buses Saved (for now)

Following a widespread campaign from residents and councillors, the County Council has dropped its plans to remove all subsidised evening and Sunday buses in Lancashire. Instead, each service will be looked at “on its merits”. Castle Ward councillors will be arguing strongly to retain services to the Marsh.

Greens Condemn Housing Plans to concrete over South Lancaster

Green Councillors say that the City Council's new local plan will be a 'developer's free-for-all' and will allow wholesale destruction of the countryside around Lancaster. Around 8,000 houses could be planned for South Lancaster. The Green party wants the provision of social rented housing, to clear the council house waiting list, as a focus of housing policy – rather than executive homes on greenfield sites.

*Want to be kept informed?
Email Cllr Tim Hamilton-Cox
if you want updates on the
housing situation.
timhc@gmx.com*

Cllr Jon Barry explained: *"Consultants engaged by the city council have recommended that it needs to plan to build 610 houses per year, for the next 20 years. However, in the Green party's view, it is very difficult to predict demand for the next year, let alone 20 years. And, if you make different (and we'd argue more realistic) assumptions about population growth, job creation and household size, then you get a much lower target."*

"Lancaster district's population grew by 3,800 between the 2001 and 2011 censuses. The assumption used in the target calculations is that it will grow by another 20,000 over 20 years. There were 2,513 houses built in the ten years from 2002/03 to 2012/13. However, now the recommended target is to build more than 6,000 houses every 10 years."

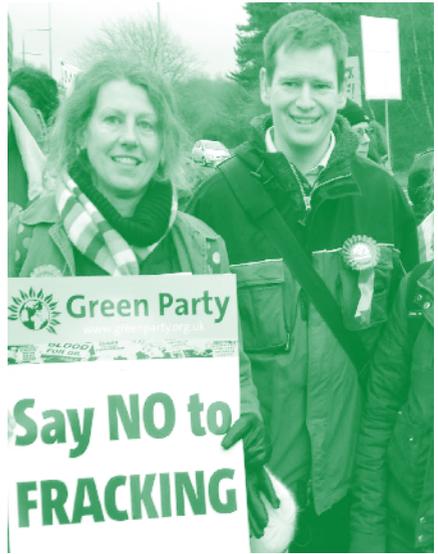
Clear water between Green Party policy and the large parties'

Local members were at the Green Party's recent national policy making conference in Liverpool. Highlights included revising the education policy and a campaign to oppose to the proposed TTIP (trade agreement) between the EU and the US- which will benefit corporations over ordinary people. The Green group in the European Parliament is fighting against it. For more information see www.greenparty.org.uk

N-compass Carers Point provides support and information for carers in Lancashire. Ring 0345 688 7113.

Why does Europe matter for a greener future?

Our top two Green candidates for the European elections on 22 May this year, Peter Cranie and Gina Dowding (pictured at Barton Moss protest in January), will be at a Public Meeting, Tues 8th April, 7.30. Friend's Meeting House. All welcome.



Council Tax budgets

City Council: An increase in Council Tax of just under 2% was agreed (equivalent to 8p a week for a band D taxpayer) for this year. The Council had to make savings following a reduction in Government grant of £1.7m. Total City Council spend is £18.54m. Cllr Melanie Forrest said: *"The Green priority was to make savings without cutting major services such as cleansing, parks and the CAB"*. Solar panels on City Council buildings are expected to bring in around £55k during their first year. Greens are pushing for further 'invest to save' projects, including more renewable energy.

The **County Council** has to find £300m of savings over the next 3 years. Green County Cllr Gina Dowding said: *"The Council has mostly done a good job in difficult circumstances. But I was unable to support the budget as it included cuts to school crossing patrols and recycling credits to community group - and new charges for post-16 Special Educational Need and disabilities transport"*.

County Rethinks Disabled Parking

The County Council will now NOT go ahead with the new Traffic Regulation Order for Lancaster's city centre that would have meant the loss of disabled parking spaces behind the museum. They have agreed to carry out further consultation with disabled people's groups before deciding on future traffic plans. County Cllr Gina Dowding said: *"I welcome the move to reduce traffic in the pedestrian zone, but there should be suitable parking places for people to use with severe mobility problems."*

Freeman's Wood art project

StoreyG2 (formerly Storey Gallery) will be running a project about land ownership - which will focus on Freeman's Wood as an example. They would like to talk to people who have memories of this site, hopes for its future, or a general interest. Please contact StoreyG2 via email:

info@storeygallery.org.uk or by answerphone: 01524 844133

The Vic

The Victoria Pub at the corner of West Road and Willow Lane has been purchased by two Lancaster people. Their initial plans are to create flats in part of the building and use the rest for local businesses.

Anyone for Tennis?

Lancaster Tennis Club in Lune Road is organising a bowls, cricket and tennis Junior Fun Day on Monday April 14th. Then **on Friday April 18th**, there will be the Club's popular adult round robin tournament, starting at 10.30.

New participants welcome.

For further information, contact Susan Lucas on 07771 734920 or susanlucas1950@live.co.uk

Ripley Heights

Cllr Gina Dowding has secured funding to improve the Ripley Heights footpath alongside the edge of Haverbreaks from the canal leading to Ashton Road. The

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work will aim to make the path less slippery and safer for walkers. For more information on Gina's other work see Council.lancashire.gov.uk/gdowding.

Residents' Parking

Changes to the existing residents' parking scheme – such as allowing limited waiting on Wheatfield Street – are due to be advertised in April.

In brief ...

500 trees have been planted by volunteers on the new FLORA land.

Vegan Fair: Town Hall and Gregson Centre, June 7th, 11-7

Want to get involved?

Do you want to help with Green Party campaigns in your local community? By delivering a few leaflets or chatting with people on the doorstep you make a real difference. To get involved contact Sam Riches on 07866806512 or sam_riches@hotmail.co.uk