

Williamson Park Funding

The Friends of Williamson Park is to apply for a £30,000 grant towards a new play area in the wooded dell below the Memorial.

Cllr Caroline Jackson said: *"It is clear from the results of the consultation that all age groups would prefer natural wood play equipment which uses the trees in the woodland setting."*

Money is being sought from the Lancashire Environmental Fund, matched by funding from Lancaster City Council.

Fracking in the dark

Green County councillor Gina Dowding has persuaded Lancashire County Council to demand that the Government release information on the impact that fracking will have on rural communities. A report

'Shale Gas- Rural Economy Impacts', published last year by the Government, was 'redacted' and had much of the information in it blanked out. Gina said:

"It is ridiculous that the Government has withheld information. We should know the full facts about the economic, social and environmental risks of this new form of gas extraction in the UK."

Green mayor not to use limo

Green City Cllr Jon Barry has been in the news after he revealed that he will not be using a limousine and chauffeur to ferry him to engagements if he becomes mayor in May. Cllr Barry said: *"I take the role of mayor very seriously. However, especially in the current funding crisis, I would rather that the City Council spent money on real services rather than ferrying me around in a big car."*

Solar Farm at Middleton?

The City Council has agreed to a detailed study to place a solar farm on 32 acres of former industrial land at Middleton. Green Party activist Chris Watkins explained: *"Initial reports suggest that the 5 MW farm could provide electricity for 1500 houses and bring in £4m to the City Council over 20 years."* It is intended to manage the farm in a wildlife-friendly manner to complement the birds and amphibians that live in the area. Solar panels on council buildings already produce £55k per year, and are expected to pay for themselves after around 8 years of their 25 year life.

City Council Budget

The City Council has set a budget with a Council Tax increase of 1.99%, equivalent to £3.98 per year on a band D property. Important services have been retained despite a £1.7m funding cut from central government, although £1m has been contributed from balances to achieve this. Council officers are advising that a further £3.5m of savings must be found by 2018. Green councillors supported retention of additional funding for Police Community Support Officers and reducing the number of empty homes in the district, plus a small increase in street cleansing budgets. Note that the majority of Council Tax goes to the County Council, which has also set similar increase.

Friends of Greaves Park funding successes

Green City Councillor Abi Mills, Chair of Friends of Greaves Park, has been successful getting funding from two pots of money that will make a huge difference to improvements in the park. Both Lancaster Community Fund and the County Council local Members Grant scheme are funding work party equipment and breathable high-visibility jackets and also insurance for events. Look out for details of a consultation that will be carried out in May about the master plan that is being developed.

Scotch Quarry Fruity Corners

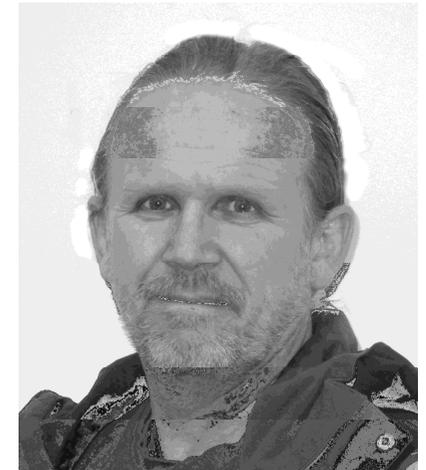
New hand-painted signs have been added to the garden, to make it easier to identify the different plants that you can pick from during the year. Thanks to the Community Payback Team, work will begin to clear the area of scrub and brambles next to the cottage garden beds. **Rebecca Whittle, John o Gaunt Green party candidate and Fruity Corners volunteers says** *"The plan is make a corridor of fruit trees and bushes, thus adding to the edible goodies on offer in the park and making the area look more loved and beautiful."*

Dog Fouling

Green Cllr for Scotforth West, Abi Mills met with the Council's new Dog Fouling Enforcement Officer, to discuss 'dog fouling hot spots' in the area. Abi asked parents of Bowerham and Scotforth School to identify these hotspots. Phil is going to increase his presence and put posters up in certain areas, e.g. along Bowerham Road and in Greaves Park, stating that those dog walkers who don't pick up their dog's mess could be issued with an £80 fine. We are hoping that this will greatly reduce the amount of dog mess in the area.

Reducing waste in the NHS 'market'

Green Party general election candidate Chris Coates (right) is supporting an NHS bill that is designed to restore the NHS as an accountable public service. This would include abolishing the purchaser-provider split and joining-up health and social care services. *"Market structures in the NHS cost more than £10bn a year- money that could be better spent on patient care"*, Green MP Caroline Lucas told the prime minister in parliament before proposing the bill. For more details see www.nhsbill2015.org.



Wi-fi for all in the city centre?

Lancaster University's Digital Lancaster project offers the prospect of free wi-fi in the city centre. Green councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox said: *"There's a huge opportunity here for the City Council and University to collaborate to make the city centre a wifi hotspot to benefit residents, visitors, and businesses."*

Transport masterplan for Lancaster

The County Council has prepared a 'vision' of how it believes the district's transport network should look in 2031. Due out for consultation on 23rd March, following a year's delay, it particularly seeks to address the one-way system and the A6 corridor to Galgate.

City Council Elections and General Election on May 7th

On May 7th, voters will have 2 ballot papers. One is for the General Election, to elect your MP. The other is to elect 3 City Councillors for John O’Gaunt Ward. You don’t have to vote for the same party in both elections. The Green Party candidates in John O’Gaunt are:

Chris Watkins has lived in John O’Gaunt ward for over 20 years and has two children. He worked for 15 years at Lancaster Farms and Lancaster Castle, as a civil servant, teacher, family worker and union representative. Lately he has gone back to college, retraining to be a primary school teacher, and is sometimes seen working behind the bar at the Robert Gillow.



Heather Hilton works for a major nature conservation charity as an Events Coordinator. She is passionate about animal welfare and protecting wildlife. Having studied English and Sustainable Development, she has lived in John O’Gaunt for the past two years with her two dogs, Maxi and Edie. She loves looking after her pony and volunteering at a wildlife orientated childrens' club, and wants to help create wildlife-friendly parks and gardens.

Rebecca Whittle has lived in John O’Gaunt Ward for 7 years and is a keen gardener. She can often be spotted volunteering at the Fruity Corners community garden in Scotch Quarry Park, or cycling up to Lancaster University where she works part-time as a geography lecturer. She is a passionate about increasing access to fresh, healthy and sustainable food.



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