

## City council to change course on Canal Corridor?

Green Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox explains. *“In July, city councillors learned that the deadline for the developer British Land (BL) to submit a planning application had expired and it was open to the city council to withdraw from the exclusive contract with BL. In September the Greens asked full council to authorise a review by officers of other development options for the Canal Corridor. This was defeated but 2 weeks later the council's cabinet appeared to accept the need to think again. As a result, a report on alternative options for the Canal Corridor will be debated at full council on 16th December.*

*The Greens hope to persuade a majority of councillors to move away from big retail in favour of a scheme which includes a mix of social and private housing; space for small business; and, importantly, a small park for town centre residents to enjoy.*

### What is the Canal Corridor?

It's a roughly triangular piece of land bounded by St. Leonardgate, Moor Lane and the canal. Car parks owned by the city council dominate but it also includes the 18th century brewery.

### What is its recent history?

The city council entered into an exclusive contract with Centros in 2005 to develop a retail-led scheme. This was rejected following a public inquiry in 2009, principally because of adverse impact on heritage assets. British Land took over in 2012 and promised to submit a planning application by the end of 2013. That hasn't happened.

*This mix would complement a housing-led regeneration of the Gillow quarter which includes the council-owned St. Leonard's House.“*

## Grand foyer design gets support

The Grand theatre has re-launched plans for a £1 million extension which will house a new box office and bar. The renovation will also see the theatre become more accessible to people with disabilities with the installation of a lift. If the Grand gets planning permission, it will apply for



financial support from major funding bodies including Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Cllr Caroline Jackson adds, “Both the local Civic Society and the Theatres Trust are supportive of the application, in part because the foyer's glazed facade and scale is not seen as dominating the historic building. It's also worth noting that the overall scheme requires a small parcel of land owned by the council but currently included in the British Land development agreement.”

## Green Christmas Fair

**Saturday 21st Nov  
10am - 4pm**

Friend's Meeting House  
(next to the train  
station)

Loads of stalls, live  
music, tasty food and  
Father Christmas!



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# Greens pledge to fight housing numbers

Green councillors have labelled planning consultants Turley's claim that the district needs 650-700 new houses per year until 2031 as *"not based on common-sense or a sound, evidential basis."*

There are two crucial areas of dispute. Firstly, Turley estimates a large increase in our population through new people coming into the district. This increase is at odds with official projections and the trend of average population change since the early 1980s. Secondly, Turley forecasts job growth at a rate that is five times the level the district has seen over a 13-year period from 2000.

Cllr Tim Hamilton-Cox says, *"City councillors have not yet not debated this housing target, so it can still be changed. Allocating too much land for housing means developers pick off the most attractive bits and that leads potentially to piecemeal development and insufficient provision of essentials like walk-to shops and school places. Brownfield land, and the types of housing (truly affordable) which are actually needed, risk being sidelined if it's all left to the big private housebuilders.*

*We have a duty to base decisions on sound evidence, and be prepared to react to new evidence as it becomes available."*



# Greens support 'No NHS Sell-Off'

University Morecambe Bay Hospitals Trust decided in September to contract out its outpatient pharmacy services to one of the big chemist chains: preferred bidder is Lloyds, owned by McKesson corporation of USA. The trust's board of governors, residents and councillors cross-party, have all called on the trust's executives to consider a not-for-profit alternative. This type of 'arms-length' company has been successfully set up by some other hospital trusts and the benefits include keeping the profits in the NHS while still making VAT savings on drugs, which is one of the key motivations for change. Green party Cllr Tim Hamilton-Cox who was instrumental in suggesting the alternative comments that, *"The trust's executives decided two years ago, in secret, to contract out the hospital outpatient pharmacies. It became public in spring 2014 because of EU contracting rules. Trust executives have resisted the calls to consider options that would support the ethos of the NHS and instead the contract will now go to a multinational which can have no empathy for UK public service values."*

# Councillor takes Lancaster Donations to Calais

Green Cllr Rebecca Joy Novell travelled to Calais in October to take hundreds of donations from members of the public to ease the plight of the desperate people there. She will be doing the same again over Christmas. If you would like to donate, please see the Facebook page 'Lancaster Supports Calais Refugees' or email [rebeccajoynovell@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccajoynovell@gmail.com). Rebecca said: *"I know that the political situation is complicated but I cannot stand by whilst people are suffering. There is minimal medical care and sanitation."*

## Public Meetings on housing numbers

**1) Tuesday 17th November, 7.30pm, at Greaves Methodist church.**

**2) Tuesday 8th December, 7pm, at Lancaster Town Hall Banqueting Room.**

Green councillors will critique the housing figures and suggest an alternative way forward. See the report: 'What's wrong with Turley' on the North Lancashire Green party website > Campaigns > The Local Plan and housing.

Please feedback your thoughts so that the critique is the best and fairest that it can be [enquiries@northlancs.greenparty.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@northlancs.greenparty.org.uk)

## Date for your 2016 diary

**Public meeting Tuesday 9th February 2016 in Friends' Meeting House at 7.30pm.**

Green party councillors from City and County will explain the impact of funding cuts on council services before councils have their budget-setting meetings.

# Locals aim for **Paris Climate Summit**



A number of Lancaster residents are joining in a 5-day cycle ride from London to Paris arriving for the Climate Change summit. Governments from around 200 countries will be at the meeting and it is hoped that they will *“achieve, for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, a binding and universal agreement on climate aimed at limiting global warming to 2°C.”*

Green party County Cllr Gina Dowding said, *“It is vital that this summit succeeds in order protect the very eco-systems on which we rely for our food, water and health. The Green party is renewing its call for the positive transition to a low-carbon economy. Over the coming weeks there will be ways to join in local and national #ClimateSense events.”*

## **Middleton solar farm postponed**

Bulk ward Cllr Andrew Kay adds: *“78% of the British public would like Government to do more to support community energy, where much of the profits from the scheme are invested back into the local area – like the recently completed Halton Hydro project. Unfortunately, the Government is planning to scrap the scheme that makes this possible and the city*

*council’s long-awaited solar farm project at Middleton has been postponed because of the policy change.”*

## **Electric vehicles (EVs) and charging points**

Green councillors have asked the city council to follow through on its 2014 energy strategy and look at using EVs for its pool car fleet and install EV charging points in council car parks: in order to save money and carbon, and to lead the way on improving air quality. Scotforth West Green campaigner, Chris Norman, is trying to help the RLI to find ways to put in an EV charging point.

## **Pressure on County pension fund to increase ethical investment**

County Councillor Gina Dowding has been successful in getting the county’s pension fund to sign up to the United Nations’ Principles for Ethical Investment. Gina says: *“In a recent survey of local authority pension schemes, Lancashire has the lowest investment in fossil fuels. The fund has also recently signed a wind energy investment deal, on the basis that this will provide a long-term steady return for the fund. But of course there is more that could be done.”*

### **Vigil for the Climate**

Sunday, 29 November, 4-5pm. Dalton Square, organised by Churches Together & Lancaster’s Treading Lightly Network. The day before the UN Climate Summit starts in Paris. All welcome, whether of faith or of no faith.

### **New play areas for Williamson Park**

The children’s play area by the cafe closes 2nd November for drainage works and a complete replacement. The city council and Friends of Williamson Park have raise £100,000 to do the work – to get rid of muddy puddles, put in natural wood equipment and enlarge the top space for under 8s. Cllr Caroline Jackson, who led on raising £30,000 from the Lancashire Environment Fund for the Friends said, *“We are also beginning to put in a new more adventurous play area for older children at the foot of the slope. Everyone is invited to come and help 11.30am-3pm 28th November.”*

# News in brief

## Immediate funding success for new management at Ridge community centre

The city council appointed a new operator to run the community centre from 1st October. And in less than 4 weeks the management, including old-face Paul Ireland, has secured a £24k grant to re-equip the centre. Caroline comments: "Being aware of just how difficult it is to secure charitable money, this is an incredible achievement and should make a big difference to all community centre users."

## Ridge square

Ridge square public space protection order finally went live on 12th October after delays in securing the correct enforcement paperwork.

## Bulb planting in Park Square 'triangle'

Tim writes: "Despite the unpromising weather, many residents, including several youngsters, turned out on 24th October to weed the triangle and then plant several hundred spring bulbs kindly provided by the city council. Many thanks to all who contributed, including green bins and coffee/crumpets."

## Phoenix Street Drop-In

Caroline writes: "On Friday mornings, from 10 am at King's

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Community Church on Phoenix St, the church offers tea, cake and a natter at their community drop-in. The organisers invite anyone living in the area, including Newton residents, to join them. They promise a warm welcome and various activities for all ages. Some Newton residents told us back in May that they would like to organise their very own drop-in. If you would like to get involved in doing that, please call me on 07958 434549."

## New litter bins in Bulk ward

Tim says: "Many thanks are due to Paul Parker of the city council for siting new waste bins in an attempt to reduce littering, and in spite of budgetary pressures. It's a great response to residents across the ward. New bins are on the path from the canal to Mardale Rd. on Newton; on Esthwaite Gardens; on Park Square; on De Vitre St.; and on Ridge Hill Green."

## Tree pruning on the Newton 'Plantation'

The long-awaited pruning of 17 trees at the rear of properties on Langdale Rd is due, weather permitting, to start on 16th November.

## Vandalism, dog-fouling and motorbikes raise question of access to Grammar School fields

Councillors have been contacted by the Grammar school following the burning down of a shed in the LEAF centre (accessed up the steps from Esthwaite Gardens). In addition the school has ongoing concerns about misuse of the playing fields and says that access may be restricted if problems persist.

# Planning matters

## Moor Park depot on Quernmore Rd.

It is thought that Livesey is revising its housing scheme, which includes a shop facing Quernmore Rd. What the redesign involves is not known but it is certain that no plan will be going to the city council's planning committee before 14th December, at the earliest. Ward councillors will be in touch with residents when details are known.

## 43-45 Ullswater Rd/ Dalton Rd - garden to residential application

Ward councillors have objected to this poorly-conceived scheme and are hopeful that planning permission will be refused.

## Bulk Rd./Back Caton Rd. student village

Planners are telling councillors that the developer is amending the scheme again so that the application is not yet ready to be consulted on.

## Nile St. student accomodation

The 17-bed scheme, to the east of St John's Church at the rear of the former Inman's lighting shop on North Rd., was listed for refusal by planning officers but committee members opted to visit the site before deciding. Tim comments: "I don't believe that the 2- and 3-storey scheme impacts significantly on what I agree is a very beautiful building. And, importantly, it clears a longstanding grot spot at the back of the fire station."