

Green View

November 2015



News and views from the Green Party in John O Gaunt Ward

Greens pledge to fight planning madness over housebuilding figures

Green councillors have described proposals by the City Council's planners to build 700-750 houses per year as "not based on common sense or a sound logical basis". The figure comes from planning consultants Turley, who have produced a report for Council planning officers. Greens are challenging the consultants' report on two crucial points. Firstly, they estimate a large increase in our population through new people coming into the district, which is at odds with government predictions and the far lower average increase since 1981. Secondly they predict job growth at a rate that is five times the level the district has seen in the last ten years. These two overestimations combined means planners would turn large swathes of our surrounding countryside into housing estates by releasing too much land to developers who would pick off the most attractive places. Brownfield land and the places where housing is most needed would be ignored.

**Find out more about plans for housing.
Public Meeting: Tuesday 17th November,
7.30pm**

Greaves Methodist Church

Green City Councillors Tim Hamilton-Cox and Caroline Jackson will provide an examination of the city council's figures for housing and suggest an alternative way forward

The Greens have written a detailed response on flaws on the Council's proposals "What's wrong with Turley": on the Green Party's website.

Action to reduce pedestrian and cycle accidents

Green Party member Paul Stubbins has been pressing Lancashire County Council for action to reduce pedestrian and cycle deaths and serious injuries, following the release of worrying casualty figures in 2013 and 2014. He met with the county Road and Transport Safety Manager at the end of March to visit the locations of accidents to pedestrians and cyclists in the city centre and south of town. Despite short-term solutions being identified, including remodelling of junctions, keep clear

markings, improved marking of existing cycle lanes and better signage, a lack of progress in implementing these prompted Paul to call a further meeting at the end of October, to include Cllr John Fillis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. The council has now committed to completing the signing and lining works before Christmas. "These changes are relatively inexpensive but can save lives and serious injuries" said Paul.



Paul Stubbins (right) with the Road and Transport Safety Manager.

Green Christmas Fair

Saturday 21st November
10am - 4pm at the



Friends Meeting
House
(next to Lancaster rail station)

Councillor takes Lancaster Donations to Calais

Green Councillor Rebecca Joy Novell travelled to France in October to transport hundreds of donations from members of the public to Calais refugees. John O Gaunt Green Chris Watkins also made the journey as part of the team. Throughout September, the people of Lancaster donated over 80 tents, 60 sleeping bags and countless boxes of clothes and food, as well as contributed £1,400 in money for those in need. "When we arrived at the camp, it was overwhelmingly sad to see the situation that nearly 4,000 people are living in," says Rebecca. "There is minimal sanitation and medical care with people living there walking around in the freezing cold in flip-flops and t-shirts. Thanks to the generosity of the people of Lancaster, we were able to buy an additional 60 pairs of trainers from a local cash and carry in France."

Rebecca will be returning to Calais in November to take more donations and again over Christmas and New Years. If you would like to donate items or, more crucially, money, to help those in Calais, please email her at rebeccajoynovell@gmail.com or see the Facebook page 'Lancaster Supports Calais Refugees.'

DATE FOR YOUR 2016 DIARY:
Public meeting Tuesday
9th February 2016
Friends Meeting house, 7.30pm
Green Party councillors from
City and County will explain the
latest budget situation before
councils have their budget
meetings

City and County Council budgets mean drastic service cuts inevitable

Government reductions to the county Council budget together with increasing demand for services mean that cuts in some key services will be inevitable. Recent budget reports at county show that based on current figures in 2 years time the county will barely have enough funding just to cover services it is legally obliged to provide (around £684m). The cost of non-statutory services such as youth work, street lighting, bus services (to name a few) cost around another £100m. County Cllr Gina Dowding says: *"It is not exaggerating to say that the situation is dire. The County budget has been reducing sharply for 5 years. Government cuts in other areas – such as welfare payments and in the NHS are increasing the demand for council services, yet funding to local authorities still continues to be cut. Things may be worse than envisaged currently: The Chancellor says he is contemplating even bigger cuts in the spending review due to be unveiled on 25th November."*

Purple Lights for Hope

Cllr Jon Barry, in his capacity of mayor, agreed that the Ashton Memorial should be lit with purple lights on November 1st as part of the Purple Lights for Hope campaign – to make people more aware of pancreatic cancer. This disease has the lowest survival rate of any cancer (4% survive for 5 years) and there has been little change in this figure over the last 40 years.

Greens support No NHS Sell Off

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust opted in September to contract out its outpatient pharmacy services to one of the big chemist chains, rather than follow calls by the Trust's board of governors and locals to consider a not-for-profit alternative. Nationally about 10 trusts have set up their own 'arms-length' wholly-owned subsidiaries, and the one in Warwick has been awarded a Social Enterprise Mark, demonstrating that this model is a viable alternative. The benefits of an wholly owned subsidiary includes recycling the profits yet making VAT savings on drugs. Green Party Cllr Tim Hamilton-Cox comments that, *"The trust's executives decided two years ago, in secret, to contract out the outpatient pharmacies. Since this became public in spring 2014 the trust has resisted the calls to consider alternatives. The contract will now go to a company owned by an American multinational with the sole aim of maximizing profit for their executives and shareholders rather than an ethos which brings benefit to the NHS."*

Locals aim for Paris Climate Summit

The Green Party's Emily House, (pictured), is joining a local group in the 5 day cycle ride from London to Paris arriving for the Climate Change Summit. It is hoped that the Governments from around 200 countries at the meeting 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 Councillor, 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. Green Party members are using this opportunity to 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."* See box for details.

Renewable Energy versus Fracking latest

Surveys show that 78% of the British public would like the Government to do more to support community renewable energy (where profits are invested back into the local area – such as the Halton Hydro project). But our Government is making it harder for the renewable energy industry to expand, yet it continues to support Fracking. As expected, the Government has agreed to shale gas company Cuadrilla's appeals to The Planning Inspectorate, against Lancashire County Council's decisions to refuse planning permission for shale gas exploration at two sites in the Fylde. The public inquiry will be heard at the beginning of February. Details can be found at www.planningportal.gov.uk

Working together on Climate Sense events

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 people of Lancaster, whether of faith or of no faith, welcome.

Lancaster Climate Action: events throughout November and December – see their Facebook page for details.

People's Marches for Climate Justice and Jobs: 28 & 29 November. Thousands of people from all walks of life will be calling on our Government to make a stand to protect our future. Contact us, or see Green Party website campaigns page for details.

Greens push for more Electric Vehicle Charging points

Green Cllrs have asked the City Council to look at using Electric Vehicles for its pool car fleet and install EV charging points in Council car parks, to save money and carbon, and to lead the way on improving air quality.

Greens call on county pension fund to consider ethical investment

As a member of the Lancashire County Pension Fund committee County Cllr Gina Dowding has been successful in getting action on ethical investment, with the pension fund signing up to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment. Gina says; "In a recent national survey of local authority pension schemes, Lancashire has the lowest investment in fossil fuels. The fund has also recently signed a major direct investment deal in wind energy, on the basis that this will provided a long term steady return for the fund. But of course there is more that could be done."

Fruity Corners goes from strength to strength

Run entirely by volunteers, the Fruity Corners project has grown edible fruit trees and bushes, herbs and salad leaves in Scotch Quarry Park since 2010. The group has a volunteer work day which meets on the first Sunday of every month, 10am until 1pm. Green party member Heather Hilton joined them in October, had a great day, and would recommend getting involved. The project has recently begun a partnership with the Probation Service to do some scrub clearance. The next stage is to plant an area for growing fruit and a wild-life garden. Rebecca Whittle, green party member and project leader from Fruity Corners,



has also announced plans to improve the park's woodland for 'for people and wildlife'. This will be a joint venture with the North Lancashire Community Forest Project.

Pre-school nursery opened in October on schedule



The pre-school nursery on the University of Cumbria's campus was proud to open for business on Monday 26th October. The purpose built contemporary facility, near the main entrance to the campus on Bowerham Road, has expanded nursery education provision for two to four year olds to 80 places. Places are available to the wider community as well as the children of staff and students, and the centre is open Monday to Friday for 48 weeks of the year.

For enquiries contact the Pre School Centre on 01524 590893

Your Green Party John O Gaunt contacts

Chris Watkins

07552 668656

littleorphanchris@gmail.com

Chris has worked at Lancaster Farms and Castle Prison and is currently retraining to be a primary school teacher.

Chris wants to see Lancaster as a place that is happy, healthy and fair for all of us.

Heather Hilton

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edieandmax@live.co.uk

Heather has worked for a major nature conservation charity for two and a half years and lives in Primrose.

Heather is passionate about animal welfare and protecting wildlife.

Paul Stubbins

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Paul is a secondary school maths teacher and lives in Bowerham.

He is passionate about us living in a safer, healthier and more liveable city and is committed to the Green Party values of compassion and equity.

<http://northlancs.greenparty.org.uk/>, twitter @NorthLancsGreen and North Lancashire Green Party on facebook.