

# Green View



November 2015

News and Views from the Green Party in Scotforth West

## Greens Pledge to Challenge Housebuilding Figures

Green councillors have labelled City Council's planners' claims that the district needs 650-700 new houses per year until 2031 as "not based on common sense or a sound logical basis". The housing need figure comes from planning consultants Turley, who have produced a report for Council planning officers. Greens are challenging the figures on two crucial points. Firstly, Turley estimate a large increase in our population through new people coming into the district. This increase is at odds with government predictions and the actual far lower average population increases since the early 1980s. Secondly, Turley predict job growth at a rate that is five times the level the district has seen in the last ten years. Scotforth West Councillor Abi Mills says "City councillors have not yet debated this, nor voted on it, so it can still be changed. Releasing too much land means developers pick off the most attractive places. Brownfield land and the places where housing is needed will be ignored."

See more on page 2

### Purple Lights for Hope

Green Cllr Jon Barry, in his role as Mayor of Lancaster, agreed that the Ashton Memorial should be lit with purple lights on November 1<sup>st</sup> as part of the Purple Lights for Hope campaign, to raise awareness about 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.

### Housing Need or Planning Madness?

#### Public Meetings:

- Tuesday 17th November, 7.30pm  
*Greaves Methodist Church*
- Tuesday 8th December, 7pm  
*Lancaster Town Hall  
Banqueting Suite*

Due to public concern about planners' proposals, Green Councillors will critique the city council's figures for housing and suggest an alternative way forward. See our detailed report on the many flaws in the Council's proposals and find out how to comment to the council. "What's wrong with Turley" - available from:

[www.northlancs.greenparty.org.uk/campaigns/](http://www.northlancs.greenparty.org.uk/campaigns/)

### Green Christmas Fair

Saturday 21st November  
10am – 4pm at the  
Friends Meeting House  
(next to Lancaster rail station)



With lots of stalls, live music, café &  
Santa's grotto.

Admission 50p (kids free)

## Scotforth West Under Huge Housing Building Pressure

**Land off Ashton Road:** Story Homes is preparing an outline proposal for 125 houses on land east of Ashton Rd. One field is opposite Deep Cutting and the other is south of Pinewood Close. Developments on these greenfield sites would rely heavily on car use making existing traffic problems south of Lancaster much worse: <https://planning.lancaster.gov.uk/online-applications/>

**Royal Albert Fields:** Currently the application for 77 houses has been withdrawn pending discussions with the NHS. But assumptions are that it will be resubmitted at a later date. Further details from **Deborah Otway, Chair of Scotforth Residents' Group** - [deborahotway@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:deborahotway@yahoo.co.uk)

**Aldcliffe:** The Planning Inspector upheld the decision not to permit the building of 12 luxury homes on the green field off Aldcliffe Hall Lane, but the developer for Park Meadow has submitted a plan for even bigger houses.

### 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 – based on current figures – that in 2 years' time the county will barely have enough funding to cover services that 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 Councillor 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 and health services are increasing the demand for services, yet funding to local authorities continues to be cut. Things may get even worse as the Chancellor says he is contemplating even bigger cuts in the spending review due to be unveiled on 25 November."*

**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, rather than follow calls by the Trust's board of governors and local people to consider a not-for-profit alternative. These type of 'arms-length' wholly-owned subsidiaries have been successfully set up by other trusts across the country and the benefits include keeping the profits locally while still making VAT savings on drugs. Green Party Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox, who was instrumental in suggesting the alternative, comments that, *"The trust's 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 company with the sole aim of maximising profits for executives and shareholders."*

**Broadband on Highgrove update:** County Councillor Gina Dowding continues to try to find out what is really going on with regards to the lack of a firm commitment by BT Openreach to provide superfast broad band to the Highgrove Estate. Gina says *"At present BT have confirmed that Highgrove is commercially viable and not within the county council's subsidised programme for broad band roll out. They have indicated it is to be included in their commercial plan for 2016/17. We now know that BT Openreach is conducting a 'review' due to be decided in mid-November. I will continue to do whatever I can to support residents get a quick and firm commitment."*

# Locals aim for Paris Climate Summit

The Green Party's Emily House (pictured) is joining a group of local people on the five day cycle ride from London to Paris arriving for the Climate Change Summit. At the meeting, it is hoped that the Governments from around 200 countries 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."



## #ClimateSense Events

**Vigil for the Climate:** Sunday, 29th 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 Facebook page for details.

**People's Marches for Climate Justice and Jobs:** 28th & 29th November.

Thousands of people will be calling on our Government to protect our future. Contact us, or see Green Party website campaigns page for details:

[www.northlancsgreenparty.org.uk](http://www.northlancsgreenparty.org.uk)

## Renewable Energy versus Fracking

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 as 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 here [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

**Greens push for more Electric Vehicle Charging points:** Green councillors 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 help improve air quality. Scotforth West's Green Chris Norman is trying to help the RL1 to find ways to put in a charging point.

**Greens call on county pension fund to consider ethical investment:** As a member of the Lancashire County Pension Fund committee, County Councillor 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 provide a steady return for the fund. But of course there is more that could be done."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Councillor takes Lancaster Donations to Calais:** Green Councillor Rebecca Joy Novell travelled to Calais in October to take hundreds of donations from members of the public to refugees. She will be doing the same again over Christmas. If you would like to donate items or, more crucially, money, to help those in Calais, please see the Facebook page 'Lancaster Supports Calais Refugees' or email [rebeccajoynovell@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccajoynovell@gmail.com).



After a request from local residents, the Green Party's next **Scotforth West Tidy Up** will be a litter pick at the *Royal Albert Playing Fields on December 6th at 10.30am*. We will provide pickers, gloves etc. Please join us if you can. In September, a group of volunteers descended on Ashford Road near Caspian way in the last Scotforth West tidy up and cut back brambles and tidied the footway and cycle path area. Thanks to all who helped (some of whom are pictured).

**Friends of Dorrington Road Woods and Play Area:** After a successful first meeting of the group, Councillor Abi Mills has persuaded Council Officers to agree to regularly trim the paths and undertake tree maintenance. She is also hoping to recycle play equipment from Williamson Park to Dorrington Rd.

**Faulty lights on pedestrian crossing on Greaves Road:** Over many months residents and councillors have reported a fault with the pedestrian crossing by the Spar on Greaves Road. However, county engineers were never able to witness the fault themselves. Councillor Abi Mills put a notice up on the crossing, asking people to let her know if they experienced any problems with the crossing. With this evidence, the County Council have now agreed to change the detector button on the west side to resolve this problem.

**Report it!** You can report potholes, street lights and signals directly at Lancashire County Council's Report it page. [www.lancashire.gov.uk](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk)

**Princess Avenue area parking and pavement improvements:** The new parking proposal with limited waiting schemes to be introduced on Princess Avenue and Ashton Road cul-de-sacs should be completed by early December. Following requests from County Councillor Gina Dowding to make the slabbed pavement around the square more even, highways have now agreed to replacing the slabs with tarmac by Christmas, weather permitting.

**Dorrington Road Gardens:** Councillor Abi Mills is working with the Residents Group who are in discussion with City Council about the purchase of their gardens (that the council currently own) to find a solution to this that is reasonable for all.

**Aldcliffe Parish Council:** Chris Norman, Chair of Aldcliffe Residents Association says, "The community really came together in its opposition to inappropriate development and Aldcliffe and neighbouring Stodday residents are now in the process of applying for creation of a Parish Council."

### Contact us

County Cllr Gina Dowding [gina.dowding@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:gina.dowding@lancashire.gov.uk) 07838793674

City Cllr Abi Mills [amills@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:amills@lancaster.gov.uk) 01524389069

For details about our councillors, campaigns & local issues visit:

[www.northlancs.greenparty.org.uk](http://www.northlancs.greenparty.org.uk)