



# South Shropshire Green Party



## Officers 2003

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## GREEN FAIR

*(Continued from page 3)*

Environmental Network running environmental workshops at Ludlow Assembly Rooms.

Aragons will be providing their excellent vegetarian/vegan catering service and the ever-popular September Dairy organic

Thanks to all who have recently renewed their membership subscriptions and WELCOME to those who have joined us.

If you want an e-copy (pdf format) of Grapevine to send to friends email the editor.

ice cream van will be there.

We need plenty of help planning and manning the Green Party stall, distributing publicity in the weeks leading up to the event and helping on the day. If you would like to get involved, please ring Sally Ford on 01584 856376.

## DIARY 2003

Apr 1 <sup>st</sup>	Green Party monthly meeting	Ludlow, Feathers	8.00 pm
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	District Council Elections	A polling station near you, all day	
May 6th	Should the Green Party elect a leader?	Ludlow, Feathers	8.00 pm
May 28th	Green Tourism	Ludlow, Feathers	8.00 pm
Jul 27 <sup>th</sup>	Green Fair in the Castle Square	Ludlow	10.00 am to 4.00 pm



# Grapevine



*Newsletter of the South Shropshire Green Party*

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## VOTE GREEN ON MAY 1st (and persuade others to do so too)

On May 1st there are elections to South Shropshire District Council. We're concentrating our efforts this year on Church Stretton, where John Lloyd is defending his seat. Other Green candidates will be supporting his campaign in the Strettons.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT for us that this campaign is active, well-supported and successful.

There has been Green Party representation on South Shropshire District Council for eight years. One of our councillors, Tim Andrewes, moved out of the area, since when John has carried on alone. John's seat is now up for election. All of us who are in the Green Party, or support the Greens, or are sympathetic, or who 'think Green' should do our very best to get John re-elected because he is a hard-working and knowledgeable local councillor. He represents Church Stretton North very well - a good example of the Green Party in action. South

Shropshire District Council desperately needs Green thinking and Green input. This will all be lost if we fail to get John re-elected. If we fail all of us in the district will be the worse off as a result.

A Green councillor has ready access to officers of the council and to information on all the many matters in which the council has a hand. This is very valuable to all of us involved in campaigns and causes of whatever sort, especially those in our immediate locality.

So, for these and many other reasons, please get in touch and offer your support. We need help to deliver leaflets, knock on doors, put up posters, help on polling day and all kinds of tasks. If you can't manage any of that, we also need money and moral support!

Ring John on 01694 723143  
or Jim on 01588 638712

# SHOULD THE GREEN PARTY ELECT A LEADER?

This question has bothered us, the media and the public (especially those sympathetic to us) for years.

Our position has always been (roughly):-'We haven't elected an official leader because:

- 1) the media makes such a fuss over any political leader's personality, charisma (or lack of it), private life etc. that debate on ideas and policies gets swamped
- 2) a leader inevitably becomes so crucial to the political fortunes of the party that he or she gets great power over the party and starts to ignore the policies and principles for which the party should be standing (any examples spring to mind?)

On the other hand, without a leader, the media and the public find us much more difficult to relate to, and so we don't get anything like the coverage we need and deserve. A charismatic, persuasive leader would do us a power of good, so why not get on with it and elect one?

The Green Party's Chairman, Andrew Cornwell, has sent out a questionnaire designed to test opinion in local parties. Our meeting will discuss the issues and fill in the questionnaire.

Come along and let our National Executive know what you think

**May 6th, 8.00 pm**  
**The Feathers, Ludlow**

## GREEN POLICY MEETING ON TOURISM

Tuesday May 27th, 8.00 pm  
The Feathers, Ludlow

- What should the Green approach be, especially here in Shropshire and The Marches?
- Tourism will soon be the largest sector of Shropshire's economy. Many of us earn our living, at least in part, in ways associated with tourism.
- Road traffic levels, property prices, the shape of our countryside and the organisation of our towns are increasingly determined by the demands of tourism.

### So what is the Green response?

Come and find out, and put your point of view, at a meeting attended by professionals and interested parties as well as Green activists and sympathisers.

Contact Jim Gaffney 01588 638712 for pre-meeting info.

and other infrastructure. Readers who perceive opportunities for such developments should write to the Editor and the Green Party can then possibly formally present these requests to SCC.

SCC supports bus services with (currently) an annual sum of £2.3 million. This comprises £1.1 million from SCC, £0.9 million from Government Revenue support and £0.3 million from the Countryside Agency. All Sunday services receive support.

A difficulty with bus services is that there are a very large number of private operators. A recent count found no less than 27 bus companies put at least a wheel somewhere in South Shropshire. Different companies may run the same service on different days and the timetable is complicated and far from user friendly. A further problem is that bus timetables do not follow the discipline of the rail variety and services can be changed or even cancelled at short notice.

Despite these difficulties services have improved in recent years partly due to support from SCC. For example there is a now a bus link to Craven Arms station from the Clun Valley area although the link with trains is still not always satisfactory.

The development of real time information mentioned above would be a major improvement and pressure is being applied to SCC to introduce these ideas in South Shropshire.

## TESS

TESS (Transport for Everyone in South Shropshire) is an organisation which was set up in February 1999 with the object of making best use of existing transport within South Shropshire.

TESS provides information about public transport, supports voluntary car schemes, sets up minibuses where appropriate and arranges lift sharing groups where other transport is not available. TESS also organises the successful Shuttle HiL buses which convey passengers into the Shropshire Hills on summer weekends. If you have any particular transport problems telephone TESS on 01588 673888.

## THE 49 LINK

A brand new bus service is about to start in the Craven Arms area. This will be a fully accessible service taking wheelchairs and push chairs. With pre booking it is possible to be collected or delivered door to door providing the diversion from the specified route is reasonable.

The bus will travel a different route each weekday, including the town area, Corvedale and the Clun Valley. The route and timetable will be available shortly. The fare structure has still to be determined but it is anticipated that each household will receive one free bus pass valid for a limited period. For further information ring 0800 234567.

## LOCAL TRANSPORT REVIEW

*Gordon Gissing offers an 'all in one place' review of local public transport availability and new developments in South Shropshire.*

### **RAIL**

Wales and Borders Train Company operates the lines through South Shropshire. This franchise is currently open to bids and the new owner should be announced later this year.

The main line running north-south is extremely important for South Shropshire residents as it provides rapid and reasonably frequent services to all points of the UK, often with only one change required. Although there are continuing complaints that not all trains call at Craven Arms and Church Stretton the service has significantly improved over the last decade. There are commercial and operational difficulties relating to stopping all trains at all stations and this problem could be difficult to resolve. The local Rail Associations are lobbying the franchise bidders on this and other matters.

The other line branching off to Central Wales and Swansea at Craven Arms suffers from infrequent services and efforts continue to increase these. A one third discount pass is available on application, cost £5, for local residents and application forms are available at tourist outlets, or telephone 01597822053. This Pass, valid for 12 months, requires passport style photographs. Note it does not give additional discounts

to those already holding a discount card such as a Senior Citizen. Discounts apply to the whole of the Swansea-Shrewsbury line but on Heart of Wales Line services only.

An additional factor has arisen with the advent of the Gateway Project which is associated with the Market Towns Initiative. This project is intended to develop and improve Craven Arms station and its surrounds. An improved bus service to the station to integrate with trains is a major objective.

### **BUS SERVICES**

Shropshire County Council (SCC) receive both Capital Grants and Revenue Support from the Government. The Capital Grant available for bus development projects and safety matters amounts to 4.3 million for the coming year. One use for this money is to develop real time information systems for bus stops and some work has started on this with a pilot scheme in N. Shropshire. Real time information should inform the waiting passenger whether the bus is late or cancelled, where it calls and its final destination in a similar manner to the rail information at stations.

Capital Grant money can be also be used to supply bus shelters, timetable notice boards

## LUDLOW GOES TO STOP THE WAR

The organisers of the Stop The War demo on 15th February picked a beautiful day to hold it. Certainly we left Ludlow on a cold bright morning, ideal for enjoying the scenery through Herefordshire and Gloucestershire although by the time we reached London it had clouded over. At least the cloud cover might keep us warmer!

The last half mile of the journey was really slow as people were already massing, and as we disgorged from the coach all ideas we had of marching as a hundred - odd strong group were clearly impossible as one was swept along by the crowd. A few of us managed to get to one side to assemble the famous Ludlow Peace Group banner which remained our focal point for the day and was well worth the extra effort of carrying it.

Progress was very slow due to the sheer numbers of people clogging the streets - it has been described as not so much a march as a shuffle -and it took us five hours to cover the short distance along the Embankment and up

Piccadilly to Hyde Park, but it was wonderful to feel surrounded by people of all ages, colours, races (we were accompanied most of the way by a large Kurdish group) and physical abilities - many brave people had ventured out in wheelchairs or with pushchairs or walking sticks - quite a daunting prospect when in the midst of such a crush. We jiggled to the sound of several drumming bands, were cajoled into various chants and were entertained by the imaginativeness of the banners and slogans - my personal favourite was a Y-front shaped placard which read simply "War is Pants". Everyone, including the police (who must have been even colder than us, as they weren't moving at all) was very good-humoured.

By the time we arrived at Hyde Park the speeches were all over, but it didn't really matter. What mattered was the feeling of taking part in a momentous occasion, and being counted.

*Linda Senior*

## UPDATE - LUDLOW GREEN FAIR

Four months to go until South Shropshire's big Green Day on July 27th, but only a handful of stalls are still available for booking, reflecting the enormous popularity of this event with both local businesses and campaigning groups. Many of the stallholders are regulars who have supported the Fair since it began in 1997 and there is also an

encouraging number of new names, including Compassion in World Farming, Powabyke and Shropshire Ramblers Association..

Once again, children will be well catered for with open-air activities organised by Tanith Kinton and her Wildlife Watch group and the Women's

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## Timidity Rules – not OK

*District Councillor John Lloyd reflects on the council's budget and the implementation of policies during the last year.*

Budget time again. My complaint with the current administration is not so much the level of Council Tax announced by South Shropshire District Council, its that they are not delivering on their own policies, let alone the ones I want to see.

The council makes much play of its answer to the affordable homes issue and its initiative to re-cycle more waste.

As it stands, it looks as though not a single affordable home will be built in Church Stretton ! Being a community with a population of over 3000, building plots need to be over half a hectare before the policy comes into play. How many 'brown field' sites this big are likely to

show up?  
In Council I have called for a morato-

rium on all new house building with the exception being for affordable homes, especially second stage family houses. Without a radical policy nothing will be done and the only land coming forward for development will be agricultural, where the owner will make a fat profit if it is designated as 'development land'.

The Government has said it wants affordable homes built. Its up to the Council to confront them. If we don't want to spoil our lovely countryside and we want to forge balanced communities how are we going to do it if small plots of previously used land are not available?

So, the green box scheme has arrived at last!

Door step collection is to be welcomed but this is a puny scheme – news-



papers, bottles and tins. Where is the cardboard and other dry waste ? A comparable size authority in Switzerland would separate some 14 items. In Canada wet and dry waste must be separated for collection.

What is more we have a contract with Biffa which is structured so that any move to lessen the loads of refuse going to landfill has a price. Biffa, like all contractors, endeavour to externalise their costs, so the council does the promotion, answers the phone calls, supplies the green boxes. Why don't we do the collection 'in-house' as well? That way we can take a grip of developments. The true costs of these contracts tend

to come out later and we are not allowed to work them out. The Green policy is to end the commercial confidentiality of waste contracts.

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Keeping costs in check does not come easy for any organisation. South Shropshire DC is largely officer led and the new political structure favours this. Paperwork abounds. The problem is the Government generates most of it as consultation documents etc. What goes wrong is that the officers respond with an equal amount of paper. Its as though they feel they must provide documentary evidence in case some auditor asks for it. Sometimes a gallic shrug of the shoulders might be more appropriate.

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By the way, I voted against the Budget.

## Choosing a Childminder

*John, Dorry and Sam Brenton have had an happy experience and pass on a useful contact*

If you're going back to work after having a baby, you may be looking for a childminder. Did you know Social Services can help you?

There is an excellent, friendly and comprehensive service run by Social Services at the County Council called Childcare Outlook. We used it when Dorry went back to work after our son Sam was born.

Childcare Outlook provides free information and guidance on a wide range of children's activities and playcare services for children aged 0-14. By simply telephoning the service families can access up to date, accurate and local information on registered childcare in Shropshire.

We were given a list of registered childminders, who all have to satisfy certain criteria, and even helped to think about what questions we'd have to ask when we met potential childminders or visited nurseries. Sam's now very happy with his childminder, Gwen!

Childcare Outlook can help you find information and guidance on a wide range of children's activities and playcare services for children aged 0-14. They offers comprehensive information on all year round care including out of school clubs and pre-school playgroups - they'll even help you find playschemes for the summer holidays.

**For further information contact  
Childcare Outlook on 01743 254400.**

### Footnote

*The ingredients in a typical Christmas meal bought through a supermarket will have travelled over 24,000 miles. Buying seasonal products locally at farmer's markets might reduce that to 376 miles..*

Sustain