



# South Shropshire Green Party



Officers 2003

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Articles for next edition of Grapevine due with the editor by May 16th. Please send by email if possible.

## EURO-ELECTION

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local shops close down, and public transport becomes more expensive, less reliable and infrequent. And we have seen more and more small farmers unable to make a decent living, as the Common Agricultural Policy rewards large agribusiness and monoculture.

"With a West Midlands Green MEP joining our other British Greens in the European Parliament we will make **Real Progress** for this region on these and many other issues."

Proportional voting in this election gives us a real chance to have a Green MEP on 10th June.



# Grapevine



Newsletter of the South Shropshire Green Party

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## POLICIES FOR A GREENER UK AND A BETTER EUROPE

The Green Party is focussing on three main themes for the Euro-election on June 10th: - Strong Communities, Food and Farming and Global Peace & Justice.

On the first theme, we emphasise that real economic progress involves encouraging more local, smaller businesses. These are the real backbone of the economy - not the multinationals which wield huge power but provide relatively few local jobs and most of them lowly paid.

On the second theme the message is that real progress is represented by more healthy food grown by local farmers, not by GM-contaminated and pesticide-sprayed supermarket imports.

On the third, we are highlighting the unfair trade system which subsidises the dumping of food

surpluses in developing countries.

Our key message throughout is that of making **'Real Progress'**. For example "nuclear power is dirty, expensive, creates few jobs and leaves an appalling legacy of dangerous waste for future generations - is that progress? Renewable energy is clean, efficient, does not contribute to global warming, and creates many new jobs - that's **Real Progress**".

Here in South Shropshire the GM arguments will resonate loudly and we will also ask whether **Real Progress** is represented by greenfield development of industrial and retail parks.

Chris Lennard is the lead Green candidate for the West Midlands. As the election uses proportional representation if we gain sufficient

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**On holiday on June 10th ? Register for a postal or proxy vote.  
Call the Electoral Services Office on 01584 813277 or 813272**

# EURO ELECTION 2004

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votes regionally he will become an MEP, hopefully joining our two existing Green MEPs who are both seeking re-election. There is a real chance of achieving that goal.

The list also includes Tom Hellberg, Damon Hoppe, Felicity Norman, Rebecca Roseff, Barney Smith and David Wall. They will appear in that order in publicity but the final electoral order has yet to be decided.

Chris reinforces the local theme as one which South Shropshire will relate to.

"Green MEPs and local Greens here in the West Midlands are working with 'Localise West

Midlands', to secure local procurement of goods and services; and we are backing the 'Local Communities Sustainability Bill', to reverse the decline of local services, to promote local public transport provision and to reduce 'food miles'. We are working for the scrapping of the CAP, with higher farm-gate prices for our local farmers; more investment in organic farming; and we Greens are leading the opposition to GM, both locally and in the European Parliament.

"Here in Shropshire we have seen the decline of rural communities, as post offices and

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## Election Appeal

The West Midlands Green Party has to provide a deposit so that it can nominate candidates. The deposit is returnable if our vote reaches 5%.

### Can you help ?

The Regional Party is issuing 250 £10 bonds to fund the deposit. Any individual can subscribe to as many units as they wish. The bonds are refundable if the election deposit is returned.



Our total election expenditure is likely to top £25,000 which has to be raised through donations, so any additional help which can be given will be gratefully received and put to good use.

**Please contact John Lloyd or Jim Gaffney if you can help.**

forward were

- target marketing of the area with a consistent message always emphasising above all else the natural peace and beauty -ie aim to attract only those more likely to value sensitivity to the environment (Scotland has been better at this than, say, Cornwall.)
- put serious resources into getting tourists out of their cars. How can we design and offer a rewarding, relaxing, car-free break or holiday in this region?
- there is a scheme, just beginning to take shape in the Borders, for an "ecological footprint" branding. This would be offered, for example, to accommodation providers who took advantage of energy audits and subsidised energy efficiency improvements, or to restaurants which offered meals with ingredients entirely sourced locally - plenty of ideas of this kind are around.

Sadly the District Council is nowhere near this kind of thinking, and nor

are the County and Regional Strategies which are also in the making!

### ***And then there are the toilets ...***

I wrote to the District Council as a Green Town Councillor urging them not to abandon their responsibility for the Bishop's Castle public toilets.

On the one hand they say they want to encourage tourism, on the other they want to save money on the cheapest and most essential service that can be provided for a visitor.

The attitude is PATHETIC and is a shameful contrast to the excellent standard of public conveniences provided in most parts of the world which cater for tourists in this day and age.

The draft Tourism Strategy is in the public domain and available from District Council Offices in Ludlow. It can be downloaded from <http://www.southshropshire.gov.uk/static/page1331.htm>

## DIARY DATES

- Sun May 2nd May Day Party - Tan House, Little Stretton. Evening event, booking essential - contact John Lloyd.
- Sat May 8th Shrewsbury Green Party hosts MEP candidates
- Mon May 17th Ludlow and Church Stretton visits by MEP candidates. Stall and poster parade. Local election workshops - Shrewsbury (book with John Lloyd).
- Thu June 10th European elections - if you would you like to be at the count contact Diane Gaffney.
- Sun July 25th Green Fair - Ludlow - all day. Green Party Stall. Ideas for exhibition on the stall ?
- Sat Oct 23rd Apple Fair - Church Stretton.

# Tourism – Green Opportunities to be Won

*South Shropshire District Council is preparing its Tourism Strategy. Jim Gaffney went to Ludlow to read the draft consultation document.*

Of course tourism to South Shropshire is inevitable and economically essential. As such we have to face the challenge of managing it in a way that protects the local environment and the quality of life of those who live here. It is a complex issue.

## Assessing the Impact

We might consider life in the Lake District or the Yorkshire Dales to see some effects of large numbers of tourists in outlying rural areas of England. They include:

- much heavier traffic on country roads
- the impact of larger numbers of people on the countryside: litter, wear and tear on gates and paths, disturbance to wildlife and livestock, more maintenance of fences and hedges and so on
- impact on the quality of rural life, more noise and disturbance, more pressure on local facilities
- rented accommodation gets scarcer and more expensive with the boom in holiday lets - a problem already keenly felt in Bishop's Castle
- as the area gets more popular, property prices spiral beyond the reach of people on local wages
- tourism can be a very fickle employer as the Foot and Mouth crisis demonstrated.

These problems affect everybody in the area, but not everybody benefits directly from tourism. Tourism is

extremely important economically, but as Greens, we should do our best to restrain the policy makers from mindless "gung ho" pursuit of more and more tourism for its own sake.

## South Shropshire's Strategy

With or without district, county or regional policy, we will, no doubt, continue to receive more and more visitors. South Shropshire is very beautiful and the word is out!

The District Council's draft strategy for tourism is concerned almost entirely with increasing the volume of tourists in the area. There is no consideration of the potential problems associated with such an increase. The strategy fails to meet the challenge illustrated by the impact tourism is having elsewhere. It is not learning important lessons and it is putting forward some potentially damaging policy ideas. For example, proposals in the South Shropshire Tourism Strategy seek to adjust planning policy so as "*not to obstruct*" developments to attract tourism. This could lead to some very silly and unwelcome projects.

## A Green View

The last policy discussion meeting we organised in Ludlow last year was on the theme of tourism.

Several South Shropshire voluntary groups and professional bodies were represented. The three most significant positive ideas put

# A LUDLOW DAY IN MARCH

*Murri Smith takes time to reflect as spring arrives to welcome the anniversary of the day she and Ian arrived in Ludlow.*

Dull, damp day, thoughts of going to my allotment have faded - but it may brighten up later, and there has not been that much rain!

Read in last week's Advertiser that the first round in the Foldgate Lane development saga has been 'won' by the protesters, but that the developer will be appealing.

An appeal was a foregone conclusion, they must have spent a lot of money already and will not give up easily. Noted earlier that the planning department had approved this development, I wonder what criteria they use? Obviously not the well being of the town's business centre. Shame they didn't try to put this development at Craven Arms, it would suit that town better, I think, and Claude Bodenham is reported as saying that this development is a wonderful idea!

Walked through Ludlow yesterday and noticed that Brettons in Valentine's Walk is closing, the notice said that rents had gone up to an impossible level and they could not find anywhere else in the town. Also saw that the shop that used to sell clothing, at the corner of Valentine's Walk and Broad Street, has now re-opened as a shop selling nuts, dried fruit etc., thought the shop fittings seemed of a rather temporary nature.

Later heard a rumour that the owner of the properties along Valentine's Walk wants to re-develop them as 'Holiday Homes' and close Valentine's Walk to the

public. I find this rather disconcerting feeling that an opportunity has been lost in this walk and also Pepper Lane, which it joins. This could have been thoughtfully developed into a nice little shopping area, useful and pleasant for both residents and tourists.

It does though, if true, fit in with my worry that the planning department seems to be doing all it can to support conversion of commercial properties in Ludlow into residential.

ITS OFFICIAL - This year's Green Fair is going ahead and will be run by the Ludlow 21 group. I have heard from both Jim Gaffney and from David Currant of '21'. Ludlow 21 seem pleased to be able to run the fair and definitely did not want it to close. They already have a co-ordinator and a publicity person and the Town Council is helping out as much as it can, seems they don't want it to close either. Tim and the rest of our local Greens certainly had a good idea way back when they ran the first one, and I'm very glad it is carrying on.

Five years ago this month since we moved to Ludlow and it is still a very pleasant place to live and has fulfilled all of our expectations. In spite of all the changes, we can buy all we need here for day to day living and there is adequate public transport to take us to other places when we wish - and the scenery is just gorgeous!



## GREENING THE HOME OF CHEMICAL NASTIES

*Home and garden 'nasties' need green disposal, argues Councillor John Lloyd, especially as Euro legislation now limits access to the worst of them.*

Back in January 2002 I called on the District Council to initiate a Toxic Spring Clean – a day set aside in our main market town to collect those forgotten hazardous products lingering around in most people sheds and garages.

The half-used packet of garden pesticide, old batteries, partly used and never-to-be-reused cans of paint, paraffin for the greenhouse heater that hasn't worked for years etc. All of them hazardous to humans because they are rarely stored properly and highly damaging to the environment if not disposed of correctly. Yet there is very little information on how they can be disposed of safely.

Health & Safety regulations impinge on

door-step collection and the County Council's drive-to waste facilities require a special journey by car. Neither fact is well publicised. How many people move into a house where such products have been left behind by previous occupiers? Into the dustbin or down the drain they will go in many instances, or into a skip (which ends up in landfill), or hidden amongst bulkier items in a visit to the County Council household waste-site.

The real answer is a collection service which allows people to behave responsibly but in the meantime, while my request received 'short shrift' from our own Council, things have been happening in the wider world.

Since 1993 the European Parliament has been looking at a whole range of active

substances used in the home and garden to assess their negative effect on human health or on our environment. Those tested, passed and licensed for amateur use will remain on the market after this March. Others, many of them well-known household brand names, will be banned.

A useful source of information on potential hazards can be found on the Pesticide Action Network UK's website at [www.pan-uk.org](http://www.pan-uk.org). It lists the active ingredients but not the product name - although readers of Grapevine are no doubt used to reading the small print on product labels. There is a lot to be said for the organic approach. It is arguable whether any of these hazardous products were needed in the first place.

Big manufacturers are busy finding substitutes which will not be so highly toxic. Even so these products will not be inert and their misuse, especially over-use, could have serious consequences. How can we get a green and pleasant environment free from contamination by man-made chemicals?

A start has been made because sites such as the new Craven Arms waste transfer station in Long Lane can take them in, but people have got to get them there, not something everyone can do. They need collecting, ideally house to house, or as an interim measure using collecting points closer to where people actually live or shop. In some towns in Holland a small van does a fortnightly house collection service.

Its time our District Council did something to help rein in these nasties which our society has created. A green lead has been taken by European legislation. It is now time for our local council to act too.

## Tree Action Appeal

John Lloyd's article on the disappearing tree cover in Church Stretton coincided with the needless destruction of trees close to where I live. The gap left in the canopy is now clearly visible from across the valley.

Whenever I hear a chainsaw I get knots of apprehension in my stomach and the cracks and groans of falling timber are truly gut wrenching. Not long ago I heard a chain saw at work and then the sound of trees crashing down. When I went to investigate I felt quite sickened by the sight of two majestic fir trees lying prostrate on the ground. It had taken just 15 minutes to fell trees which were at least 80 years old.

Thankfully, I thought, the group of Scots Pines, complete with elaborate rookery, remained intact. Not for long! A few days later these came down as well and suddenly a whole colony of birds which had lived there happily for at least twenty years, were homeless. It has been suggested that the reason for all this destruction is because the lady of the house wants a seat placed at a particular spot. With a very large garden in which to choose a site I remain unconvinced.

On a more positive note, concern about the loss of trees in the Strettons generally has prompted the formation of a Tree Conservation Group. We are intent on trying to extend the present conservation area and also to identify specific trees which may be at risk with a view to placing TPOs on them.

Would you like to help? Are there any trees in your area that may be under threat? If so please write to your local town or parish council, who can then request the District Council to take action. Raising awareness is something we can all do to try and conserve our environment, not just for the wildlife, but for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

*Jill Evans*