



South Shropshire Green Party

Officers 2004/5



Secretary: Jim Gaffney
37 High Street,
Bishop's Castle
Shropshire
SY9 5BE
Tel: 01588 638712
Email: jim@textiletechniques.co.uk

District Councillor: John Lloyd
Rock Cottage
All Stretton
Shropshire SY6 6HH
Tel: 01694 723143

Branch Contact: Mrs Madeleine Haigh
The Tan House
Little Stretton
Shropshire
SY6 6RE
Tel: 01694 723627

Grapevine Editor: Roger Wilson
Orchard House
Bromley Road
Ludlow
Shropshire SY8 1QY
Tel: 01584 878829
Email: roger@dfair.demon.co.uk

2005 AGM

The South Shropshire Green Party Annual General Meeting is to be held in **The Gallery Ludlow Assembly Rooms on Saturday February 26th At 2.30pm**

The Gallery is on the top floor of the Assembly Rooms and there is lift access.

Our Guest Speaker is Mr Peter Carty from the National Trust.

Please come - no prior notice is necessary. You may attend as an observer if you are not a Green Party member.



Grapevine



Newsletter of the South Shropshire Green Party

Issue 44

Winter 2005

MAKE 2005 A GREENER YEAR

What are your New Year resolutions ?

Lose some weight, use your bike more often, something similar ?

How about making a Green New Year resolution. It is a good time to renew our faith in the Green message and carry it publicly forward.

It might seem difficult in the current political climate when we have a government which was full of promise once upon a time, but has lacked resolve to carry through its (rather pale) green commitments.

The memory of "ethical foreign policies" don't sit well alongside the Iraq conflict. Greenhouse gases, integrated public transport, renewable energy, waste management – all had targets which have been missed. Then there is support for Africa. Its true that Tony Blair is concerned, but where is the action?

Its up to each of us to be sure that the Green message is not marginalised. As individuals we can stand up and be counted, we can

each make a contribution over and above the practical things we do which help conserve our planet's resources or make life fitter for all.

What about letters to the paper, or to your councillor, perhaps standing for election yourself, helping with election campaigns, just talking 'green' with neighbours – perhaps helping those who don't use their green boxes to see the wisdom of doing so.

Make things happen, lets all help to make real progress, as it says on the Green Party logo.

Now isn't that a good New Year's resolution? One which at the end of the year you will be able to look back on with the satisfaction



GENERAL ELECTION 2005

Any National Green Party member is invited to put their name forward to become our prospective Parliamentary candidate for the Ludlow constituency. Please contact John Lloyd if you are interested. If we have any one coming forward, a postal ballot of the South Shropshire membership will be organised.

Chris Rose, the Green Party's National Election Agent, is most concerned that the gender balance of our candidates is getting very one-sided -less than 20% women at the moment. This is especially disappointing as in 1997 we had the best balanced slate in this

respect of all parties. So could our women members think especially hard about standing?

If we don't get a candidate, we can put our effort into supporting our neighbours in Shrewsbury and Leominster. However, we'll have to swallow the disappointment of having no-one to vote for who dissents from the "carry on consuming" message of all the other parties.

The Lib Dems will be especially relieved to have seen us off. Have Matthew Green and the Lib Dem local authorities in Shropshire really done enough to deserve no challenge from a Green perspective?

The Asian Tsunami Tragedy

The Boxing Day earthquake and the tragedy which followed as the resulting tsunami hit the shores of the Indian Ocean shocked everyone. The generosity of individuals and governments has been heartening. We hope that the survivors can rebuild their lives and that, perhaps, a better world will result because of the understanding of suffering which the world now shares.

Jim Gaffney knows the area well and gave us a personal reflection on the response to the tragedy.

"I shared everyone's great shock and sadness at the death and suffering caused by this terrible natural disaster. I have been a frequent visitor to Thailand and Indonesia, with my work, for more than twenty years. In that time there's been a great change in the way many British people think about the countries of SE Asia and South Asia.

"Now, many people have visited those countries themselves, or know others who have. This seems to me to have made the response to the disaster much more personal and direct than I would have expected. The generosity of donations to the Tsunami appeal shows how keenly we feel the suffering of people leading very different lives a very long way away.

"If there is anything positive to come from such an event, I would say that it is this solidarity and sympathy across the world."

penalties, which would become a council tax charge, although you could also argue that it sets a price for trading the allowances.

Under the allowance trading scheme, authorities will be set limits for the amount of biodegradable waste they can landfill. The limit will be an allowance which they will be able to trade with other disposal authorities; selling allowances if their waste has been diverted to other disposal routes, e.g. recycling, or buying allowances if they exceed their set limit. Waste disposal authorities will also be able to save allowances or bring forward part of their future allocation (borrow against future plans).

The scheme is the first of its kind in the municipal waste sector, but trading schemes have already been used, controversially, across the world in other sectors, most notably to reduce industrial emissions to the atmosphere. Whether the government's plans will create an incentive to more and better recycling schemes in UK local authorities, or just establish a new public sector 'allowance trading' bureaucracy, is something we will watch with interest.

Meanwhile Shropshire is improving its re-cycling capability. The waste transfer station in Craven Arms is now in full use and regularly recycles more than 50% of the waste taken there. Similar transfer stations are now being opened in Shrewsbury and North Shropshire.

South Shropshire District

Council is also planning to change the way in which household waste is collected. Existing green box and green bag schemes will be unaltered but most households will be equipped with two wheelie bins, one for recyclable 'green' waste and one



for everything else. Bags will be used by households where wheelie bins are not practicable.

The opening of Greenfinch's anaerobic digester at Coder Road in Ludlow during 2005 will mean that the content of the 'green' wheelies (kitchen waste and cardboard) can be recycled into energy and fertiliser. The pilot digester project in 1999-2001 handled waste from 1200 local households and successfully proved that the process is as green as you can get with today's technology. Its introduction will be a 'first' for Shropshire and is a tribute to the work of Michael Cheshyre and his team.

We can be happy that a municipal incinerator has never been a realistic option in Shropshire but only time will tell whether Shropshire efforts will make it a net winner in this new DEFRA scheme.

OUR MUNICIPAL WASTE-LAND

Government incentive schemes, new waste collection schemes, and a South Shropshire first - Roger Wilson looks at the scenery.

DEFRA is to launch the world's first allowance trading scheme for municipal waste. It will be introduced in April 2005. It is a further step in the government's drive towards more sustainable waste management practices. Most waste authorities now have schemes for biodegradable waste, such as kitchen or garden refuse.

Councils in the Isle of Wight District Council, Windsor & Maidenhead, and Dorset could benefit immediately. They were the top three recyclers in 2002/03. All three now deal with all kitchen and garden waste by collecting, composting and recycling it, accounting for over a quarter of household waste produced in their areas.

The scheme has been developed to help local authorities meet tough targets under the EU Landfill Directive to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste

going to landfill sites. One tonne of biodegradable waste produces between 200 and 400m³ of landfill gas. Landfills released 25% of the UK's methane emissions in 2001, which represents 2% of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions.

The Landfill Directive requires that by 2006, biodegradable waste going to landfill must be 75% of the amount produced in 1995; by 2009 this is reduced to 50% and by 2016 to 35%. The UK government has taken advantage of a Euro-rule which allows it to defer these targets by four years because we landfilled more than 80% of our waste in 1995 !!

The Government has also reduced its proposed penalty for non-compliance with targets to divert biodegradable waste from landfill, from £200/tonne to £150/tonne. This makes the allowance trading scheme look like a move to help more dilatory authorities avoid

DIARY DATES

Sat 29 th Jan	1.30	West Midlands AGM, Birmingham
Mon 7 th Feb	10.30	Acorn Restaurant, Church Stretton
Sat 26 th Feb	2.30	Annual Meeting, The Gallery, Ludlow Assembly Rooms
		Guest speaker: Peter Carty - National Trust
Mon 7 th Mar	10.30	Acorn Restaurant, Church Stretton
Mon 4 th Apr	10.30	Acorn Restaurant, Church Stretton
Sat 23 rd Apr	2.30	Ludlow Meeting - The Gallery, Assembly Rooms - with Guest Speaker
Mon 1 st May		May Day Special Event - to be arranged
Sat 7 th May to 14 th May		Ludlow Green Festival

John Lloyd Recalls Apple Fair 2004

It was with some reluctance that I took on another Apple Fair in October. After six previous events I knew just how much work it would entail. The trouble is I've had a love affair with apples for so long that I find it hard to make the break.

As it happened it was just as well, for this Fair proved to be the best yet and there was an unexpected development which we might have dreamed of, but could never have anticipated.

As usual the central exhibition tables were pride of place and this year they literally heaved with different varieties of apple. There was in the region of 120 different varieties on show. The public came in their droves – was it because we had changed the day of the Fair to Sunday? What is more important it was a happy gathering, which was more than confirmed by the letters of appreciation received. What a wonder-

ful atmosphere there was, and how enjoyable, they said.

The press and the BBC gave us a lot of support for which I was grateful. This may well have helped bring about the coup I had long been waiting for, discovering a "lost" apple variety. A visitor brought in a delightful little eating apple which was mentioned in Hogg's Herefordshire Pomona (1878-86) and which had been assumed lost. Even the National Collection at Brogdale in Kent doesn't possess one – though it has hundreds of varieties. This lovely apple is called Gypsy King and hopefully it will join the National Collection next season when a graft can be taken.

Identification of apple varieties is not easy and it was most fortunate that Mike Porter was on hand, for it was he who remembered reading about Gypsy King in Hogg's manual. I only wish I had a memory like that!

My thanks to everyone who entered into the spirit of the occasion and to all who helped in such an unstinting manner. A special thank you to non-Green Party helpers who helped us cope with the number of visitors.

All I have to say now is keep your diaries free for Sunday 22nd October 2006. I will need your help again.

John Lloyd



Chris Bland's stunning apple cakes

AFFORDABLE HOMES POLICY IS A HYBRID PROMISING FUTURE PROBLEMS

South Shropshire District Councillor John Lloyd takes a look at the council's current housing policy and doesn't like what he sees.

Top of the agenda in South Shropshire District Council is affordable housing. On the face of it this has a laudable claim to the top billing. Housing surveys would have us believe that there is an insatiable demand. This is based on the assumption that everyone wants to get on the housing ladder not simply because they want a home, but as an investment. We are all accountants now; the historical view tells us that if house prices have risen by roughly 10% annually over the past 40 years they must continue to do so.

Housing policy persists in supporting this situation, just as in transportation where policies mean you have to own a car, so you must aim to own a house. The problem is that current local wage levels make buying a house of one's own virtually impossible. Alternative policies, to provide adequate public transport or social housing, remain poor relatives.

What is clear to me is that with all the elaborate policies woven by the District Council for 'affordable housing' those who are most worthy of being re-housed could well be on the waiting list when all the new housing schemes have come to fruition.

The reason is that building land that does exist is not

exclusively available for social housing. At the time of first draft of the Local Plan I advocated a moratorium on all house building except 'affordable'. For far too long plot after plot has been taken for new 'executive homes'. These aren't what local people need. Those wanting to buy such homes can buy existing second-hand property. Land is in short supply and proper priorities should be set, whether you are building on a brown field site, or spreading further into the countryside with your new housing development. The policy of build build build will do irretrievable damage to the environment in South Shropshire – more houses means more traffic means worse roads means etc.

There has to be some restriction on numbers. This is recognised by the Government and its own Inspectorate but by few members of the District Council. We have a hybrid policy for housing, which allows free market housing with some 'affordable' schemes. The executive home will still be built but developers seeking to build in certain areas need to provide an affordable element in any development.

This means a little more of the countryside can be lost because affordable homes are being

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

provided. In most cases such decisions go directly against the concept of rural sustainability which was espoused in the Local Plan. This is acceptable to the majority of District Councillors who take an entirely parochial view, ignoring the larger picture.

Given the present housing policy with its variations on what can be built and where, according to population and other criteria, it means that the bulk of new housing development is still going to happen much as it has before, with a reluctant share devoted by developers to social housing under the 'affordable' badge.

The more they use up sites, presenting a token affordable element to make their case, the greater the pressure on the local authority to break into greenfields and the Shropshire countryside to satisfy demand. That is the larger picture.

Let us also take a view on another longer term aspect of this push for affordable homes. The present shortage is for second stage homes, housing for young families. This is the heart of social housing needs because families need space, children need to play and parents to socialise. When built away from town centres two cars are often needed, in the absence of buses, when children reach school age.

When developers build affordable housing they tend to push it into a corner and try and offer 'starter homes' built down to a price on a tiny plot. Whether they build starter or second-stage homes, or

both, they rarely sit comfortably alongside their neighbouring 'executive' homes. We see double-fronted five-bed double garage houses sitting alongside plainly designed terraced and semi-detached homes clearly of a different size and quality.

Why can't the planning authority insist on equality for a change. Why should there be a difference between the two? Why cannot we see a harmonisation of frontages? The interiors can be different according to income and ability to pay. It should not be possible when walking onto a housing development to pick out the 'affordable' from the open market homes.

The council's hybrid policy, which gives them an excuse to roll-over and have their tummy tickled by developers, means a lot more houses being built with only a dribble going to the local people who need homes the most.

But I wonder if anyone has thought whether we will be pleased with what we will see and experience in twenty years time. The promise of today's policy is of rambling suburbs built on formerly glorious countryside facing social problems created by distance from town centres and by avoidable visual apartheid?

Are they tomorrow's ghettos in the making?

