



# *Grapevine*

**Newsletter of the South Shropshire Green Party**

*Issue 73*

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## **Spring Conference, new policies and the region**

Welcome to the first Grapevine of 2012 in which Janet reports on the national Green Party Spring Conference held in Liverpool in February, which agreed two important new policies on Food on Food and Agriculture and on the Marine and Coastal environment. Local member David Gibbon Gibbon had an important input to the Agriculture policy paper. David notes that the considerable amount of consultation and editing that he does is largely done without travelling all over the country, which brings us to the issue of transport policy.

In view of the Government's go-ahead for HS2 (the proposed high speed rail link from London to Birmingham), Mike discusses this transport issue in relation to Green Party policy.

On a lighter note there is an invitation to a summer garden visit and John reminds us of the highly successful local Green Party Apple Fairs and hopes that they may continue.

Finally, Madeline reports on the South Shropshire Green Party AGM and there is call from the West Midlands Party for financial support for our hard working Regional Support Worker.

Mike Tucker (Editor)

## Green Party Spring Conference 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> February 2012

This year's Spring Conference was in Liverpool, and perfectly timed for the Carling Cup celebrations. Liverpool is noted for its Quayside museums and walkways, Beatles and other 1960's pop memorabilia, and the beautiful Metropolitan Cathedral. As usual the conference organisers provided a busy and invigorating programme of fringe and training sessions, workshops, discussion panels to keep delegates on task.

Conference passed two important new policy documents. The new **Food and Agriculture Policy** is the culmination of more than eighteen months of discussion and revision. It includes sections on policies to tackle food poverty; substantial coverage of agricultural systems and practices, including sustainable farming, farmed animals and wildlife, and wildlife diversity; and comprehensive policies on food labelling, food waste and food safety.

Also passed with overwhelming support from Conference is our **Marine and Coastal Policy**. It makes provision for the protection and monitoring of at least 30% of the ocean under UK jurisdiction, and there are comprehensive sections on marine aquaculture, sustainable livelihoods, offshore wind and marine energy, marine pollution and recreation. Ian Campbell, of Ocean 2012, which campaigns for reform of EU Fisheries policy, visited Conference on 27<sup>th</sup> February to speak at a discussion panel: **No more fish in the sea?** He stressed the need for long term planning to protect the marine environment, deliver good governance and reward responsible fishing. Willie Mackenzie, Oceans Campaigner with Greenpeace congratulated the Green party on our Marine Policy. He reminded us that tuna fishing endangers other species, for example turtles, albatross and sharks; that EU subsidies support fishing which denies local communities dependent upon fish for protein.

To read these and all other policies go to the website: [www.greenparty.org.uk](http://www.greenparty.org.uk)

Conference is open to all members, so do consider coming to the Autumn Conference 2012 which will be in Bristol. It is a great opportunity to meet members from around the country and get up to date on Green issues.

Janet Phillips

## **Further notes on the Agricultural Policy**

For those who may not have time to read the whole policy documents, I would like to quote a few of the key agricultural policy paragraphs.

FA401 The Green Party believes that globalization of the food supply has exacerbated many environmental and social problems and that answers lie in sustainable agriculture, re-localisation, shortening of food supply chains and self reliance on a regional and local basis.

FA420(g) We will support agricultural employment and thriving rural communities, helping to reverse the trend towards increasing urbanization.

FA420(k) We support a moratorium on the use of genetically modified organisms in agricultural systems.

Mike Tucker

**South Shropshire Green Party 2012 AGM  
Ludlow Library, Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February**

As our advertised speaker, Tom Harris, had to withdraw because of ill-health, we were most grateful that Felicity Norman stepped into the breach at short notice. Felicity opened a lively meeting by speaking about her experience of being elected as Herefordshire's sole Green councillor. The party's Target to Win strategy had been very successful, but she stressed the need for a candidate to be well known locally through long-term community involvement.



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After Felicity's talk we moved on to the business section of the meeting which contained a detailed report from John Lloyd on the year's activity and progress. In Officer elections, Web Master was the only post which remains vacant. If anyone out there has web skills they could put at the party's disposal we would love to hear from you! To move with the times it is essential we have a good, regularly updated site. Officer information is, as usual, displayed on the back cover.

It was agreed that we need to stimulate informal membership clusters in Ludlow and Bishop's Castle, and Janet Phillips is taking the initiative on the latter. If you live in one of these areas and would like to meet up occasionally with like-minded people, probably in a member's home, please get in touch with Janet for Bishop's Castle or John Lloyd for Ludlow.

Madeline Haigh

## **High Speed 2 Railway proposal**

### **A discussion**

In spite of getting Government go-ahead, the proposed High Speed 2 railway from London to the Midlands remains highly controversial on environmental and cost grounds. Simon Jenkins in the Guardian of 11 January is scathing over the cost of the railway and lists many better ways to spend the money on smaller, less prestigious but more useful projects. The Green Party has also come out in opposition to the scheme, in spite of having a policy supporting new railways and public transport in general.

Perhaps the huge amount of money already spent on the Channel tunnel and the High Speed rail link from the tunnel to London, was one of the Governments concerns. If the case for a high speed rail link to the European mainland is justified, on economic grounds as well as potentially to reduce the number of short-haul air journeys, then the case that the rest of England (if not the UK) should also benefit is quite strong. The existing high speed rail encourages yet more concentration of economic activity in south-east England, especially London.

The Internet promised that business travel should become much less necessary, with everyone linked by computer but this does not seem to have happened. All the while people insist on making long-distance journeys, it is better that whenever possible they should use public transport, rather than clogging motorways with cars. Whether High Speed trains are justified on the grounds of reducing car journeys and short-haul aircraft flights, is unclear.

The Green Party needs to carefully consider the future transport needs of this country, both on economic and environmental grounds.

Mike Tucker

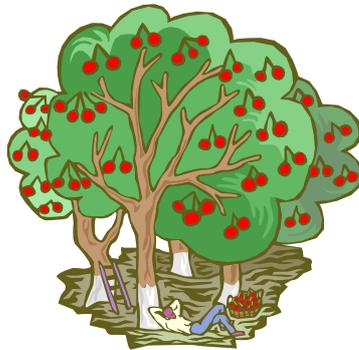
## The Apple Fair

The buds are beginning to appear on the fruit trees with the prospect that there will be another bumper crop this summer. It is also a reminder that this year should be one of our biennial Apple Fairs, an event that we have successfully staged for more than twenty years.

Having grown from very small beginnings, the Fair has blossomed forth, with some outstanding Fairs where attendance has exceeded 500 and there were displays of over a hundred apple varieties. It has been mentioned in the national press, sometimes whimsically, as with the 'Hello' magazine when we discovered a 'Square Apple' and the Murdoch press wanted to know more. The serious side of all our endeavours is to rescue old varieties of local apples for the sake of biodiversity.

The question now is 'Can we stage a Fair this year? I have had a leading role in this event since the beginning and wish to stand down, although I may still be able to make a contribution. We need someone to step forward to offer mainly clerical help. A deep knowledge of apple growing is not necessary, as over the years we have built up a file with contacts etc. There is also a band of people willing to help on the day. It would be a shame if so much hard work over 22 years is lost.

John Lloyd



## Diary Dates

The **South Shropshire Green Party meets** in the Acorn Cafe, Church Stretton. The next meeting will be on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April at 1030. **Subsequently meetings will be changed to Tuesdays.** There will meetings on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 12<sup>th</sup> June and 3<sup>rd</sup> July. As mentioned in the report of the Annual General Meeting, it was agreed that we should encourage local meetings in Ludlow and Bishop's Castle. Please contact Janet Phillips or John Lloyd if you are interested in such meetings or informal groups.

## **Open Garden at Prolley Moor**

Green Party members, Heather Williams and Julian French, will be opening their garden at Holly Cottage, Prolley Moor (near Wentnor) for the National Garden Scheme on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May from 2-6pm. The location will be sign posted on the day.



This is an organic garden of 2¼ acres created by Heather and Julian. Areas include 1 acre of 9 year old native woodland, a wild flower meadow with willow circle and an allotment area. Near the house the flower garden is stocked with herbaceous plants, trees and shrubs with pond and small orchard. There will be a display by the local wildlife group and plants and refreshments available to purchase.

## **West Midlands Green Party Regional Support Worker: financial appeal.**

It has become very clear that employing a Local Party Support Officer has been crucial in our continued success, and *we need funds to increase the hours from 1.75 days a week to at least 2.5.* If you can set up a standing order, no matter how small, it will help Chris Williams work even more effectively for us. Please contact The Treasurer, West Midlands Green Party, 122 Cinder Bank, Netherton, Dudley, DY2 9BP

**South Shropshire  
Green Party  
Officers 2012**

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