



GRAPEVINE

The Newsletter of the South Shropshire Green Party

Issue 87

Autumn 2015

Building the future of South Shropshire Green Party: EGM Report

At the EGM in Ludlow on September 5th, plans were endorsed for adopting a more decentralised way of organising ourselves. The aim is to enable members who wish to be actively involved to be able to link up with others in their area, and initiate campaigns which reflect particular local interests. Members in places which currently have little party activity will be contacted to see if they would like to get together for Green Drinks, or just for coffee and a chat. Other start-up ideas will be circulated shortly.

Initially, South Shropshire has been broken down into four sub-areas as follows:

- **West Chapter** – Clun, Bishop’s Castle and Chirbury & Worthen
- **North Chapter** – Church Stretton & Craven Arms, Corvedale
- **South Chapter** – Clee, Ludlow East, Ludlow North and Ludlow South
- **East Chapter** – Alveley & Claverley, Bridgnorth East & Astley Abbots, Bridgnorth West & Tasley, Broseley, Brown Clee, Cleobury Mortimer, Highley, Much Wenlock and Worfield

Some towns, such as Bishop’s Castle, have already started working in this way, whilst in other areas there will be a lot of foundation work to do. It is hoped that a representative of each area or “chapter” will join the officers (see back page) to form a new Executive Committee.

Another aim is to make general meetings more interesting and participatory, bringing together activists from across South Shropshire. Discussions are underway about holding the first of our new-style general meetings in Bishop’s Castle in early November.



At the end of the meeting the party’s work in lobbying & campaigning for a humane refugee policy was underlined by a group photo to spell out the message “Refugees Welcome”

Special Interest Groups

In recent months a number of working groups based on specific topics have evolved, and members with interest or expertise are invited to contact the convenors named below. Discussions were held at the EGM as follows:

- **Food and Farming**

If you would like to contribute on related topics please contact Dr David Gibbon: dgibbon662@gmail.com

- **Transport**

Anyone with a special interest in Green Transport issues can contact expert John Whitelegg: johnwhitelegg@phonecoop.coop

Following lobbying from John on more widespread introduction of a 20mph speed limit, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner Bill Longmore has launched a public consultation on the matter. Email him on opcc@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

- **Healthy Greens**

With alarming proposals from the “Future Fit” project, and fears for the future of Ludlow Hospital, a Green NHS Group has formed. This group is also conducting high-level lobbying and recently met Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group’s Caron Morton. For more information on this contact John Crowe: crowe@freedomia.net

The 100 Club

Now that the busy election period, with so many requests for Green Party funding is over, we hope that you may consider signing up to our fundraising project *The 100 Club*. This costs £2.00 per month, and 50% of subscription money goes on prizes. Our first winners were John Cherry and Bill Eastwell.

To participate, please complete the form on page 6 and send to your bank or building society. We hope that this project will give us a regular and secure source of funding as we prepare to win Green Party seats on Shropshire Council at the 2017 local elections.

News in Brief

Church Stretton’s legal challenge to Shropshire Council’s plan to relocate the town’s library has passed an important hurdle: in August a judge ruled that the complaint had sufficient merit to go on to a full Judicial Review this Autumn.

Philip Dunne was recently lobbied by another delegation, including Green Party members, on climate change. As previously reported, he does not recognise the need for urgent government action. More lobbying is obviously needed.

Ludlow Green Fair

The results of two ballots at the Fair show strong support for Green Party policies, even among some Conservative voters!

1. NHS: *As well as being free at the point of use, the NHS should be publicly owned, managed and staffed*
290 votes cast; 88.2% in favour
2. Farming: *Farming policies & payments should enable a viable living for small farms and encourage farming methods that are not antibiotic-dependent and ensure high standards of animal welfare & wildlife conservation*
230 votes cast; 100% in favour!



The ballots will be repeated at Bishop's Castle Michaelmas Fair.

Diary Dates

Sunday 4th October Manchester

Michael Green of Knighton Action for Peace and Justice is organising a coach to an Anti-Austerity demonstration at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester, picking up at points en route to Shrewsbury, including Craven Arms. For more information contact: michael.green@fountainhead.org.uk

Friday 9th October 7.30pm Ludlow Assembly Rooms

Film: *'How to Change the World'*, charting the earliest days of Greenpeace.
Tel. Box Office 01584 878141.

Monday 12th October 7.30pm Church Stretton Methodist Church

Lecture by Mat Williams, Professor of Global Change Ecology at Edinburgh University.
Organised by Stretton Climate Care, Tel. 07528 493181.

Tuesday 3rd November 7.30pm Church Stretton School

Riding Lights, professional theatre company, present *'Baked Alaska'*, a high-energy, 'seriously funny' drama about the realities of climate change. More info. from Isabel Carter, Tel. 01694 722296 or visit www.ridinglights.org/baked-alaska



Our first local website, kindly built and managed by Tom Manson, has now been replaced by a new-look site, linked to the national Party website. Visit the new address at <https://southshropshire.greenparty.org.uk>

We also have an exciting new Twitter account [@GreensSSalop](#) managed by Hilary Wendt, which is attracting lots of new followers. This is visible from the new website as well.

Tender is Their Plight

As the Labour Party leader selection process ends with widespread criticism, John Lloyd considers its implications

Following the selection of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader, there will be repercussions for the Green Party as there will be for other political parties.

His win may well bring a downside for his new supporters when Jeremy's policies have to face the gauntlet of the Labour Party constitution and the opposition of sitting MPs. For example, any move against austerity or for the renationalisation of the railways will have to go through exhaustive procedures – e.g. N.E.C. and Conference etc. – and could still fall at the last hurdle.

Why, oh why, didn't many of this new band of supporters look to the Green Party which had already embraced these necessary reforms and was also the first to vote against the Iraq war!

There may well be a new enthusiasm to reform the Labour Party but we have seen this before and the truth is democracy from within doesn't come naturally to it. They are Centralists to the core and, unfortunately, this is reflected in their approach to social policies. The Labour Party has served its historical purpose and its demise may not be a bad thing.

Surprisingly, however, the Conservatives need the Labour Party. They will do all they can to wound it, but not terminally. They need an opposition in the House of Commons to justify what passes for "democracy" in this country and what better to face them across the House than a party that is opposed to proportional representation or fundamental constitutional change. What is more, no opposition would open divisions in their own party when the anti-Europe lobby is strong and UKIP still has some clout.

There is also still the underlying question of "Little Capitalism" and Global Capitalism. Notwithstanding the many changes the last hundred years have seen, there are many who still believe we live in a capitalist society and this is strong amongst Corbyn's supporters which is unfortunate. Most Government and Shadow Ministers wittingly or not foster and legislate for a post-capitalist "Managerial Society", in which ownership vested in the provision of capital by shareholders is divorced from the control exercised by directors, the new ruling class. The same can be said of state-run industries: there is no direct democracy. The boss and employee relationship remains. This is the common factor that unites both Labour and Conservative parties in their approach to Government.

Perhaps the most unpredictable effect of a new leadership in the Labour Party will be on the SNP. Having been slaughtered in Scotland in May, a comeback will not be easy for Labour as they face the more radical SNP. Can you see Labour putting forward land reform proposals,

calling for land to be used in the public interest and to contribute to the collective benefit of the people? Where has the Scottish Labour Party been for all the years they were in power?

I am not optimistic about Corbyn because in Government the Labour Party, like the Conservatives, will offer growth at the expense of the environment and both see the centralisation of power as the motivation for growth.

Fortunately, the Green Party can do better than this.

South Shropshire Green Party Officers Autumn 2015

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South Shropshire Green Party – for the common good.

'Green 100'

New bank 'standing order' (s/o) instruction.

Please complete, sign, date and send to your bank or building society: -

Your bank name

Your bank sorting code

Your bank account number

Your bank account name

Please make a first immediate payment of £ , followed by annual standing order payments of £24.00 with effect from(date) February 20.....(year) until further notice or, to20..

to.....The South Shropshire Green Party (SSGP) at,
Lloyds Bank, sorting code: 77 – 27 - 15 account number: 07933268
using reference: 'Green100'

Your signature: Date:

Print your name:

Notes:

- i) It may take a few days for your payment to reach the SSGP account.
- ii) Your own bank may only accept your instruction to pay the SSGP the amount/s on the due dates if funds are available to meet the payment.
- iii) Payment received by the 24th of a month will qualify for the draw on the 1st of the following month.

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