

GREEN DEVON

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL GREEN PARTIES

<http://southwest.greenparty.org.uk>

PHOTO: Widcombe in the Moor: The leaf that forms a part of Old Walls Hydro where renewable energy is generated producing enough electricity to supply eighty homes via the National Grid.

PUBLIC NHS | SUPPORTIVE CARE SERVICES | INCLUSIVE EDUCATION | COMMUNITY PLANNING | LOCAL FOOD – AND MORE



SPRING 2017

Greens call for a renewable energy revolution and massive home insulation programme. Tackling climate change will create a cleaner, healthier and more prosperous society. **JOHN GREEN & MOLLY SCOTT CATO MEP**

CLEAN ENERGY, WARM HOMES

In Devon, one in four households are fuel-poor, struggling to keep warm, with serious consequences for health and well-being. The county also has the highest Carbon Dioxide emissions in the South West, the main gas responsible for global warming.

Yet Devon has huge potential to generate energy from renewable sources. Green Councillor Dr John Green, renewables expert and candidate for South Brent & Yealmpton, says:

“A report produced for Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, demonstrated that, if, through energy efficiency, we reduce our demand by 40%, Devon can produce just shy of 100% of its energy needs from renewables, with off-shore wind being the county’s greatest untapped resource.”

“A host of renewable resources such as solar, tidal and wave power could produce over 100% of the South West’s energy needs. Such a renewable energy revolution could also create 122,000 new jobs – far more than nuclear power or fracking could ever create. Renewables also offer opportunities for giving power back to communities through small-scale community-owned projects.”

Molly Scott Cato MEP has also called for a massive, free, home insulation programme, concentrating on areas such as Devon, where fuel poverty is most serious. Green councillors will back her plan for a £45bn nationwide insulation programme which, over five years, would insulate nine million homes, taking at least two million of them out of fuel poverty. It could be paid for by changes in taxation. Molly said:

“The devastating floods we witnessed in Devon in recent years are evidence of the crisis that climate change poses. But far from being a burden, tackling climate change can actually improve our health and quality of life, especially for some of the most vulnerable people in society, and create thousands of quality green jobs.”

“The South West has some of the best renewable resources in Europe. A lack of political will is all that stands in our way. Green policies on energy and fuel poverty can create energy security and a prosperous green future, while tackling the serious threats posed by climate change”.

For more on the work of Molly Scott Cato, Green Party MEP please visit www.mollymep.org.uk

Renewable resources such as solar, tidal and wave power could produce over 100% of the South West’s energy needs.



Molly Scott Cato with John Green at the launch of her Report demonstrating that we can reduce our energy demands by 40% through energy efficiency.



OUR NHS OR THEIRS?

Greens will stand up for an NHS that is a ‘health service’, fully publicly funded, and free at the point of use, not just another opportunity for corporate profit. **NETTI PEARSON**

The axe is swinging over NHS services. Like Health Authorities across the country, Devon has faced new Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) which have resulted in closures or threatened closures to Community Hospitals and countless bed losses. STPs include the idea of ‘Hospital at Home’ – this is fine in theory but the plans are under-resourced and vulnerable to further cuts as Devon County Council faces a £6.4m overspend this year on adult health and social care alone. Green Councillors will robustly challenge plans which are under-resourced and vulnerable to further cuts.

The threats of closures to vital services such as Maternity, Neonatology, Paediatrics, Stroke and Trauma at North Devon District Hospital have led to huge demonstrations organized by the Save Our Hospital Services (SOHS) campaign. Green

Party activists have taken a leading role in these protests, alerting the public and taking the battle to county hall and central government.

Netti Pearson, leading SOHS campaigner, Green councillor, and candidate for Ilfracombe, says: *“The STP proposals look destined to fail. Cuts to both NHS and Social Care budgets could result in many patients finding themselves alone and frightened in their own homes and unable to reach the care they need when facing medical complications. The intentions of the Conservative government are clear: to cut services, sell off hospital estate and fragment the NHS into bite-size pieces ready to be snapped up for commercial profit.”*

However, pressure from the Greens and NHS campaigners may be paying off. Netti Pearson concluded: *“Tory Councillors*



Netti Pearson leading a march for SOHS, Ilfracombe. Photo: Tim Lamerton

are being forced to face up to the appalling damage that the STP procedures being pushed by their government could do. We must keep up the pressure for a fully public NHS, free at the point of use and free from corporate vultures seeking to profit out of health care.”



THE VULNERABLE: DEVON'S SOCIAL SERVICES

Greens will push for a minimum of 30 minutes for home care visits, re-open care homes and expand Sure Start programmes for vulnerable parents and children.

Directly related to the fate of the NHS is that of Social Care. Devon has seen huge numbers of closures of council-run care homes for the elderly and cuts in provision for 'Looked After Children' and those with mental health problems and learning disabilities.

Draconian cuts in local authority funding mean that people in need are too often offered minimal service – just 15 minutes for care workers to home-visit the elderly, for example.

Cuts to social services add further pressure to the NHS and increase costs when patients have to be admitted or cannot be discharged from hospital due to insufficient funding for care at home. Ruth Funnell, social worker for many years and Green councillor in Torrington, said:

"Draconian cuts by the Conservative government to

local authority funding for Social Care are nothing short of scandalous. Services for the vulnerable should of course be closely tied in with our NHS services, but successive governments have played cat and mouse with funding – pretending to bolster provision to the NHS while taking funding from the Social Care budget.

"As Greens, we commit to commissioning services which support the dignity of service users and carers and respect the workforce; a minimum of 30 minutes for home care visits; re-opening care homes and expanding rather than running down Sure Start programmes for vulnerable parents and children. We also want those with disabilities to lead full and interesting lives and we will fight for better provision for refugees and for women and young people fleeing abusive relationships."



THE TRANSITION MOVEMENT

The Green Party is deeply committed to the Transition Movement:
www.transitiontowns.org
LUCY WOOD



The Transition Movement is a global network that brings people together at community level to explore how to thrive while reducing dependence on fossil fuels and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

Transition activities range widely from energy and transport schemes to food growing projects and supporting local currencies. Many communities across Devon now have some form of Transition initiative and are increasingly important as local council cuts lead to the loss of officers responsible for things like green spaces and community development. Transition groups can act as the environmental and social consciousness of their neighbourhoods and contribute to neighbourhood plans.

Lucy Wood, Green councillor, and candidate for Yelverton, says: *"Green Councillors will ensure that Transition initiatives are widely encouraged and supported for the resilience they are bringing to our communities – both rural and urban."*



OUR HOUSING CRISIS IS A PLANNING CRISIS

Greens put their communities first for planning applications but the current government rules are stacked in favour of developers. **JACQUI HODGSON**

Devon is witnessing a boom in applications for damaging housing developments on the county's precious countryside. The Government's 'five-year supply of land' rules are stacked in favour of developers. New rules make it difficult for local authorities to get long-term local plans adopted and fearful of refusing permission. Devon Highways have also been reluctant to oppose developers.

Brownfield sites are often subject to complex ownership structures, contamination and irregular size, with sellers seeking unrealistic prices. It's no wonder developers currently go for greenfield alternatives. We urgently need to improve how we fund the decontaminating of land and

change the taxation of land to discourage speculation.

Jacqui Hodgson, Green councillor, and candidate for Totnes and Dartington, says: *"It's open season for any speculator who wants to make a quick killing by building inappropriate developments on the edge of town. Green councillors will put community first and have the courage to take a more robust attitude toward predatory developers."*

"New housing is urgently needed, but we need a long-term strategy which provides eco-friendly housing at prices local people can afford. We need innovative brownfield solutions, not incentives to build where it is going to trash our precious green spaces."





GREENS SLAM DECISION ON A30 'IMPROVEMENTS'

Greens oppose damaging road schemes and call for investment in regional public transport and cycling infrastructure. **OLLY DAVEY**

Greens have slammed Devon County Council councillors for approving a new road scheme through the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Encouraging economic growth in the South West, particularly large scale planned developments in Exeter, is cited as one of the leading reasons for backing the controversial road scheme.

Previous attempts to build a dual carriageway through the Blackdown Hills AONB have been rejected due to flimsy economic arguments and potential environmental damage, but the new proposals seem to have the backing of central government.

The Blackdown Hills are precious in their own right but also attract tourists wishing to escape to somewhere untainted by roads, traffic and the environmental damage and noise they create. The Green Party want to see the South West become 'a beacon of green tourism' and are calling for all investments in transport to be directed toward improving regional public transport and cycle routes. Ollly Davey, candidate for Exmouth said:

"Evidence consistently shows that all new road schemes generate extra traffic. Economic growth, particularly large scale development in Exeter, is the main driver behind this damaging road scheme. Greens look beyond economic

growth and see the bigger picture – our health, our wellbeing and protecting our precious green spaces."

The Green Party also believe building new roads is incompatible with meeting climate change targets. Mr Davey said:

"Given climate instability and the huge reductions needed to meet our commitments under the recent Paris Agreement on climate change, all new major road schemes in Exeter, Devon and beyond must from now on be rejected in favour of public transport and cycling infrastructure."



Greens pledge £1 billion of investment nationally in youth services. **JOE LEVY**

GREENS PLEDGE BOOST FOR YOUTH SERVICES

The Green Party condemned cuts of nearly £1 million to Youth Services in 2014 leaving young people across the county without access to essential services. Youth facilities have been closed. Only eight youth centres remain. 90 staff lost jobs as a consequence of the cuts and other youth workers have been 'outsourced'. As a party with many thousands of Young Green members, Greens have long been committed to facilities and services for young people. The Green Party has campaigned for increased central government investment in youth services and pledged £1 billion nationally in its 2015 general election manifesto.

Joe Levy, Young Greens representative in Exeter and candidate for Exwick & St Thomas, where there is now no youth centre, said:

"Young people have been hit by savage cuts to youth services. This has cut them off from their communities, limited their access to resources and widened the inequality gap. Young people's success now depends more on their parents' income than it does on their skills and opportunities."

"We need to restore a full youth service to the county, ensuring that every young person has the best chance in life with access to training, activities and welfare support. Electing Green councillors will ensure young people have a stronger voice in Devon."



A BURNING ISSUE: WASTE AND RECYCLING

Greens will stop the drive for incineration and push for more recycling and food waste collections. **RICKY KNIGHT**

Devon County Council recycles more domestic waste than most other county councils – 55% compared to the average of 45%. However, it could do a lot better.

At present Devon burns 120,000 tonnes of our mixed waste every year and intends to build more incinerators (or possibly 'pyrolysis' or 'gasification' plants). However, waste sent for incineration only burns because it contains paper, plastic and compostable materials – which could be recycled instead.

Incineration is an environmental disaster but also makes no economic sense. It's about the most expensive disposal option available. The Exeter incinerator cost £46.5 million to build. Devon County Council guarantees to provide 60,000 tonnes of waste a year and pays the operator to burn it. Even if waste is not sent to the incinerator the county still has to pay – over £6 million a year for the next 30 years.

When it comes to industrial, commercial and construction waste the County Council may not be directly responsible, but it does have the power to grant or refuse planning permission for processing plants.

Ricky Knight, candidate for Barnstaple North says:

"We will campaign against contracts for new incineration and find ways out of existing ones; oppose planning permission for other potentially destructive waste management systems, and campaign for the construction of facilities for sorting and processing recyclable materials and for new processes for composting organic matter like food waste."





EDUCATION:

A RIGHT, NOT A MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Local authorities must be strengthened, take back control of academies and free schools, and be provided with adequate funding. **DIANA MOORE**

Rather than eroding the role of local authorities in education, Greens believe we should be strengthening it. Breaking apart education by taking schools out of local authority control and handing them to the private sector has been damaging to children and the teaching profession. Free schools and academies should be integrated under local authorities, so they can be accountable and work together to achieve quality education for all.

We continue to believe that local authorities have a vital role to play in ensuring equal access to education, providing school support services and meeting individual needs, especially for 'Looked After Children' and those with disabilities, special educational needs and those at risk of exclusion.

There also needs to be an increased emphasis on supporting the development of a full range of high quality opportunities for continuing education and training post-16 into adulthood. Greens have stood in solidarity with striking teachers who have seen deregulation of pay and conditions and the disastrous introduction of performance-related pay. This has led to 'teaching to the test', at the cost of broader education which pupils both need and deserve.

Other educational services are suffering too. Local libraries, vital for both child and adult learning, supply a wide range of services but are being taken out of county control and run as new charitable bodies. This means they now have to 'bid' and fundraise to pay staff and run

activities. Greens believe that the only way to secure these valuable services for the future is to fund them properly.

Diana Moore, candidate for St David's and Haven Banks, said: "Education is a basic right not a market opportunity. Green Party councillors will continue to lobby for adequate funding so local authorities can invest directly in learning. An education policy which prioritises international economic competitiveness is leaving our children stressed and teachers disillusioned."

"We want an education system that will nurture a desire to learn throughout life and help foster social, emotional and environmental well-being as well as academic achievement."



DOES DEVOLUTION HAVE TO UNDERMINE DEMOCRACY?

The Green Party will push for genuine devolution, which places the wellbeing of people and the environment at its heart. **ROBIN LADKIN**

Over the last year there has been much excitement about devolution plans for the West Country. Proposals have included Somerset, Devon, plus the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay joining forces. The aim was to throw off some of central government's shackles over administration of health and social care, transport, education and other important public services. The government would give the combined authority a budget in return for a promise of economic improvement.

Since then Brexit has created deep uncertainty, as the

EU was a principal source of funding for Devolution related projects. A distinct lack of enthusiasm from many Somerset MPs has also pushed the current plans onto the back burner.

However, the Green Party is concerned that the 'big idea' to fire up local economies is fuelled by financial profit, rather than social wellbeing or any concern for the environment. Proposals have included 'super authorities', offering privileged access to big business with little accountability. Nor have the public, at the time of writing, been consulted on these plans and new bodies.

Robin Ladkin, Green councillor, and candidate for Kingsbridge, says: "So far devolution deals have been negotiated behind closed doors with almost zero public involvement. The Green Party believes we must devolve power and decision making to the most local level practicable. This will give people a real say over important local issues such as planning, housing and the local economy, helping them feel empowered and having a real stake in their communities."

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Tick the boxes below for ways in which you can help the Devon Green Party.

- Voting Green in elections
- Displaying a window poster at election time
- Delivering leaflets in your area
- Come to a Green Party event
- Support Green Party campaigns
- Make a donation
- Join the Green Party at join.greenparty.org.uk
- If you do not wish to receive information from the Green Party please tick here

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Please return this slip to **All Devon Green Parties, 1 Taw View Terrace, Bishops Tawton, Barnstaple EX32 0AW** or email devon@southwest.greenparty.org.uk. The Green Party will contact you using the details you have supplied.

A FOOD REVOLUTION



Greens want food producers and consumers to work together to create greener and healthier agriculture. **ROBERT MASDING**

Farming and food production are the backbone of the Devon economy but financial rewards are frequently low. Fishing is one of the oldest businesses in Devon but has had a raw deal in recent years.

For every job within agriculture, there are approximately five others dependent upon it. To retain and develop our vital food, farming and fishing industries and support all the other businesses which depend on them, from tourism to vehicle mechanics, we need a long-term sustainable agricultural policy. Brexit offers opportunities to move away from environmentally harmful practices towards options that will help protect our soils, increase biodiversity and help consumers lead healthier lives. Amongst other things, farming can also play a key role in preventing flooding and absorbing carbon emissions.

However, the government is taking us in the opposite direction – talking about decreasing crop types and rotations, increasing intensification in the name of 'competition' and approving the growing of GM crops.

Successive British governments have also neglected



our small and 'low-impact' fishing industry, favouring industrial-size vessels instead. In the 1980's small boats represented nearly 80% of English and Welsh fishing fleets, but by 2016 the government had allocated around 94% of fishing quotas to industrial-size vessels – which dredge the seabed and damage eco-systems. This leaves just 6% for the small-scale fishing industry, which is typical of Devon.

Robert Masding, Green councillor, and candidate for Exmouth, said: "What we need is a food revolution focused on producing healthy food in environmentally-friendly ways. And we need farming policies that support our food producers to make this happen."

"Devon has huge potential to build on its reputation as a quality food producer. But we need to move away from an export-driven agriculture policy towards a more localised one, where food producers and consumer groups work together, to plan how we can manage our land and seas in ways that produce nutritious food while protecting biodiversity."

