



Malvern Hills Green Party E-Newsletter

Issue No. 16

February 2013

Welcome to the February issue of the Malvern Hills Green Party E-Newsletter. The first few weeks of 2013 have been busy ones for us; with a 'Big Day Out' leafleting on Saturday 26th January with the help of friends from across the West Midlands region, followed by our highly successful Burns Night Ceilidh. This event raised more than £500 for branch funds on top of providing everyone with a wonderfully memorable evening of fun on the dance floor and good companionship. Thank you to all those who made Saturday 26th January such a great day for Malvern Hills Green Party. Then on February 7th we had our AGM the outcomes of which are summarised below. The other important news is that Malvern has now been formally confirmed by West Midlands Green Party as a 'target-to-win' area for the forthcoming County Council elections in May which means we will benefit from the provision of support and assistance from across the region, particularly in canvassing and distribution of election leaflets. This is a great fillip for us and the support will make a big difference in helping us to achieve our goal of retaining the seat currently held by Clive Smith in Link ward (but now as a Green seat, rather than a Lib Dem one) and in winning Trinity ward (West and North Malvern and Dyson Perrins area). With the elections just three months away, there is much to be done. But we Greens in Malvern Hills have been flying high in the past two years, and so there is a great basis on which to build and win.



Up-and-Coming Events



Friday February 15th at 7.30pm. **Malvern Bookshop Cooperative Quiz Night**. This is not a Green Party event, but perhaps it is one in which you may wish to participate. Julian Roskams is Quiz Master for what promises to be a fun evening to test your specialist and general knowledge in teams of four. Come along (with or without a team) to the Bookshop at 2 St Anne's Road, Malvern. Free entry; refreshments available.

Thursday 7th March, **Malvern Hills Green Party Monthly Meeting**. 8.00pm, Great Malvern Hotel. The business meeting will be followed by a talk and discussion, led by Anna Stenning, on 'Can poetry (and literature and art) save the planet?'

Friday 15th March, **Malvern Hills Green Party Quiz Night**. 7.30pm, Great Malvern Hotel.

Saturday 16th March, 10.00 'til 2.00pm, **Malvern's Third Repair Café** - at Malvern Cube. Another chance to have that faulty vital appliance or that broken favourite toy mended by our team of expert volunteer engineers. The range of repair services on offer has now extended to include knife and tool sharpening and the team includes a qualified PAT tester for electrical appliances. Where a repair is deemed beyond the team's immediate abilities, advice on what to do instead will usually be offered. At last month's repair café more than 60 successful repairs were completed! So bring your broken items along – it should be worth your while (and, importantly, good for the planet!).

Saturday 23rd March, **'While we two walked' – A Talk by Anna Stenning** on How local (Dymock) poet Edward Thomas's Field Notebooks contribute to our understanding of a literary friendship. 2.00pm at Redmarley Village Hall. This is not a Green Party event – but again one in which E-Newsletter recipients may be interested.

Report from our AGM (Feb 7th)

Our recent 2012-13 AGM for Malvern Hills Green Party at the Great Malvern Hotel brought together our newest member, Alex, with one of the longest serving, Dennis Nightingale-Smith, who with three colleagues founded the People's Party here in Malvern (and which renamed itself the Ecology Party before finally becoming the Green Party).



In his Chair's report, John Raine, reviewed memorable events of the past year month by month, highlighting in particular the successes of four Dinema evenings in February - May, two quizzes (in March and November; the camping night (in John and Susan's garden in June!), Julian's election success in July, followed next day by Luna and family's departure for Malaysia; the trip to see an eco-housing development near Bristol in August; John and Julian's work on an alternative strategy for housing growth in Malvern Hills (the CPG Report); Clive Smith's switch from the Lib Dems to become our first County Councillor (as well as being our third District and third Town councillor) in November; the 'Big Day Out' in January delivering leaflets in Malvern Vale/Dysons area; and a brilliantly organised ceilidh by Will and Anna to round off the day (and a great year for Malvern Greens).

There was a generous vote of thanks to John for leading the branch through the past four years of rising success, and new Chair, Jan Dyer, was unanimously elected for the forthcoming twelve months, following her nomination by John.

The full list of office holders elected for 2013-14 is as follows:

Chair: *Jan Dyer*

Minute Secretary: *Isabel Jones*

Treasurer: *Jan Dyer*

Election Agent: *Julian Roskams*

Membership Secretary: *Mel Platt*

Fundraising Co-ordinator: *Will Jenkins*

Campaigns Co-ordinator: *Anna Stenning*

Press Officer: *Julian Roskams*

Communications Officers (E-Newsletter): *John Raine and Julian Roskams*



New Chair - Jan Dyer

Councillors

County: *Clive Smith (Link ward)*

District: *John Raine, Julian Roskams (both West ward), Clive Smith (Link ward)*

Town: *Julian Roskams (Dysons ward), Clive Smith (Link ward), Anna Stenning (???? ward)*

Parish: *Malcolm Victory (Wells PC)*

Treasurer Jan Dyer presented the accounts for 2011-12 showing a closing balance of £287, slightly less than the opening balance for the year (but this being before the proceeds from January's ceilidh that raised a net figure in the order of £500). The accounts were approved by the meeting and will now be submitted for independent audit.

Green Justice – What might it mean?

Following the AGM John Raine introduced the first of our 2013 'policy forums' with a discussion on 'Green Justice' (criminal justice being John's academic specialism). He began by summarising the Party's 2010 manifesto position on criminal justice, which he considered to represent a well thought through set of principles and policies – and ones that closely mirrored his own perspectives on how society should think about and respond to crime.

"...To deal with crime we have to address why it occurs and what to do when it does. On the causes of crime we must first recognise that there is more crime in more unequal societies, and that by making our society more equal we will also make it safer.... We must also act on the fact that over half of all crime is caused one way or another by misuse of Class A drugs. Radical reform of our drug laws will massively cut crime.... Simply expensively imprisoning offenders, often without any remedial work, is worse than useless. The victim must come first, though, we would introduce a system of restorative justice where the onus is on the offender to restore the position of the victim as far as possible..."
(Green Party General Election Manifesto 2010, p24)



John suggested three aims and priorities for Green Justice as:

- *Crime Reduction* – particularly through more emphasis on 'designing out' crime in new housing developments and through more 'community development' initiatives that promote better personal and community safety, for example by more visible police patrols at the local level. Also through instituting stronger local accountability of policing to local communities and reinventing a more localised court system to respond to local crime problems ;
- *Reparation for victims and the community* – rethinking and reshaping the sentencing framework for judges and magistrates so that the key element in many more sentences is directed towards putting right the harm done to individual victims and/or to local communities (both emotional and physical) and 'paying back' as far as possible for the damage and upset created;
- *Rehabilitation of offenders to crime-free ways* - through greater emphasis on constructive and 'problem-solving' mentoring work with offenders to minimise the risks of their reoffending. Professional and volunteer mentors could make a significant difference in assisting offenders to address the kinds of circumstances that so often play a part in determining whether or not individuals desist from crime, for example, obtaining and holding down a job, developing personal skills, aptitudes and self-esteem, obtaining



appropriate housing and keeping healthy (including freedom from drug and alcohol problems), and sustaining positive social relationships etc.).

Prison, John argued, should, in the 21st century, be reserved only for those who were judged a serious risk to public protection, rather than being the automatic sanction of all of the most serious criminal offences. And prisons should be provided as a locally as possible to facilitate visiting by the families and friends of in-mates - so raising the chances of relationships surviving the sentences. More constructive community and victim-benefiting penalties should be routinely used for the majority offenders, in preference to fines (the penalty burden of which as likely as not is borne by offenders' families as by offenders themselves, or which, in an era of mass credit, all too easily seem hardly different from any other item on the credit card or, for some, perhaps a reason for further criminality – stealing to pay the fine. While the Coalition Government's so-called 'rehabilitation revolution' and to reducing the high levels of imprisonment we have seen under New Labours, are generally to be welcomed, the problem, John highlighted, is that the changes are motivated more by an economic goal of saving public spending (on prisons) than by sound criminological and moral reasons. This, John argued, is evident in the Ministry of Justice's choice in favour of large-scale 'offender management' contracts with the big national/international private security firms (and driven by 'payment by results' principles) rather than investment in more decentralised and public provision through a revitalised local probation service. 'Befriending and supporting' offenders is what the probation service had originally been established to do and, in John's view, this remains as relevant and important a role as ever. There is ample research evidence to show that key to reducing recidivism (i.e. repeat criminality) for many

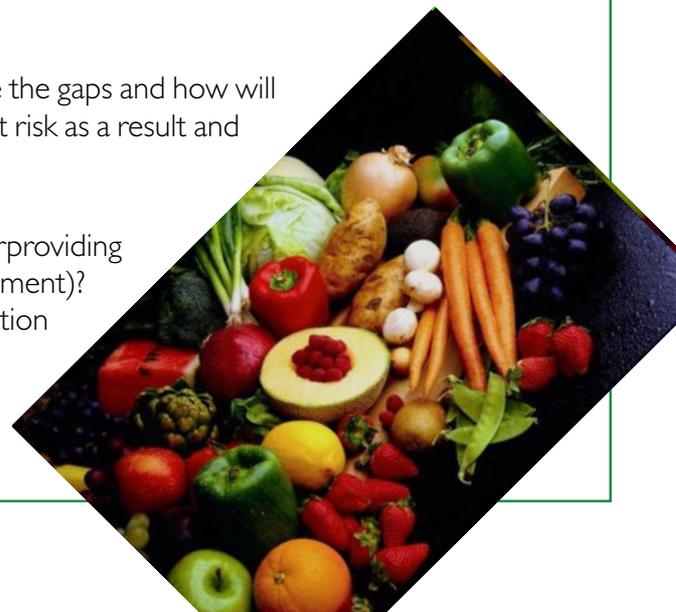


- addressing issues such as obtaining paid work, accessing housing, staying healthy (including addressing any drug and alcohol problems), developing life skills and building self-esteem, and resolving relationship difficulties). A 'green justice' framework, John concluded, is one that, above all, is 'constructive' in its approach to offending, 'localist' in its organisation and modes of working, and one that actively seeks to ensure 'justice for all' (victims as well as offenders – not one before the other).

Policy Initiatives

In the next 12 months we would like as a local party to develop and take forward some policy initiatives. Here are just a few ideas. Let us know what you think of these suggestions - and if you have anything that you would like to see us work on. then please let us know!

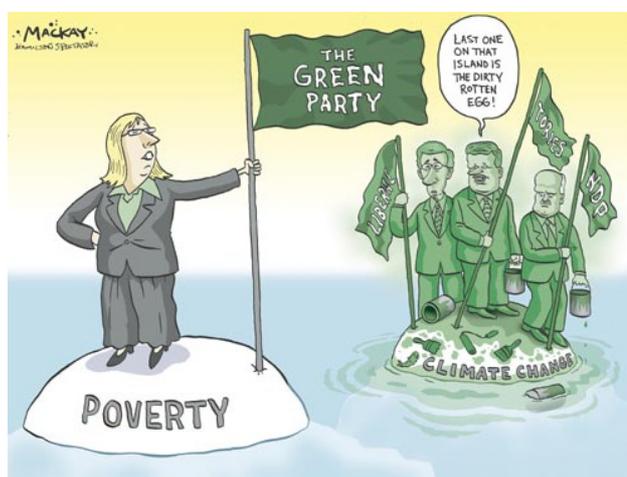
- Transport connectivity and alternatives to car use (building on work done already on this) - what can be done?
- Local health service provision and social care - where are the gaps and how will the change from PCTs to CCGs affect matters? Who is at risk as a result and how can we help them?
- Allotments - supply and development. Why are we underproviding compared to other comparable towns (Richard's statement)? How can we maximise on land share initiative by Transition Malvern Hills?
- Local food networks - how can these be promoted?



- Building social capital and community resilience - includes Green Party communications as part of this. What organisations should we be working with if we aren't already? How can we work together more effectively? What are the most valued community spaces - indoor and outdoor?
- How do we support sustainable enterprise in the area? Focus on social enterprises and cooperatives
- Speaker wanted: Someone to speak on either side of the debate on the proposition that 'in the light of an expensive and inefficient rail network, we should re-nationalise the railways' for public debate this summer
- How can we make MH recycling and waste collection more sustainable?
- Explore (with Transition?) how social justice and environmental justice are mutually sustaining (this seems to be tricky message to get across). Some of our potential supporters still seem suspicious of moving beyond traditional political parties.
- Consider how the various campaigns for home energy efficiency and renewable energy in the region are performing, can be improved and promoted.

County Council Elections

Thursday 2nd May –County Council election-day - is looming! As indicated above, we have two targeted seats to contest in Malvern: Link ward (where of course we have a sitting (Green) councillor, Clive Smith), and Trinity ward (where we stand a superb chance with Councillors John Raine and Julian Roskams already representing the ward on the district and town councils). We will be building on a lot of hard work and achievement in the ward over the past four years. The recent distribution to all households in Trinity ward was an early step this year in our election build up. Further mail drops are planned for early March and late April ahead of voting day.



But what about other wards in the county elections? Would anyone like to stand as a Green Party candidate in another of the County's wards in Malvern or in other parts of the Malvern Hills division? If so, please contact Election Agent, Julian Roskams (jdr@eticapress.com) as soon as possible so that we can plan accordingly. While our resources will be stretched just fighting the two target wards, it will be good of we can also give voters in as many other wards as possible an opportunity to vote Green. So please consider if you might stand as a 'paper candidate' in a ward of your choice.

Green Gazette Distributed!

A very big thank you to everyone who helped us distribute our recent issue of Green Gazette in Trinity ward. This is a large ward and we simply could not have got round all the streets within the three week 'window' we allowed ourselves without your help. It has been a very clear indication of the renewed vibrancy of our branch that so many of you volunteered your services. Thank you!



Contacts

Chair and Treasurer: Jan Dyer
E: greenleafjan@gmail.com

Membership/Supporters Secretary: Mel Platt
E: hounds142@yahoo.co.uk • T: 01684 560922

Elections Agent/Press Officer: Julian Roskams
E: jdr@eticapress.com • T: 01684 565739

Elections Nominations Agent: Richard Perkins
E: rsperkins@freeuk.com • T: 01684 568989

Minutes Secretary: Isabel Jones
E: isabel.jones486@btinternet.com • T: 07854 522114

Fundraising Co-ordinator: Will Coleman
E: colemanjenkins@btinternet.com • T: 01684 578009

Campaigns Co-ordinator: Anna Stenning
E: anna.stenning@gmail.com • T: 01684 578009

As well as the E-Newsletter, keep up to date by visiting the Branch's website:
<http://www.greenparty.org.uk/localsites/malvern hills.html>

We also have a Facebook page:
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Malvern-Hills-Green-Party/171627822885633>

