



# Malvern Hills Green Party E-Newsletter

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March 2013

And so to Easter, but here we are still in the grip of wintery weather! Welcome to the March E-Newsletter of the Malvern Hills Green Party. The main preoccupation this month has been preparing for the County Council elections on May 2<sup>nd</sup> – just five weeks away! We have a great group of candidates – Anna Stenning; Bob Dowler; Clive Smith, Jan Dyer; John Raine; Julian Roskams; Will Jenkins; and Peter Sandland-Nielsen. And Malvern is a 'target-to-win' area for West Midlands Green Party. This means we are able to call on regional support, particularly in relation to our two most winnable seats – Link and Trinity Divisions. Our campaign leaflets are being prepared and the nomination forms are being completed – we will be ready to go just as soon as the notice of poll is officially announced.



But we do need as many volunteers to help distribute the leaflets – so please contact Julian Roskams or John Raine as soon as possible so that we can include you in the distribution plans. Just a couple of hours of your time to post leaflets through letter boxes is all we are asking for – and, the more volunteers we can muster, the easier the job becomes for all of us! We plan a leaflet delivery in early April (once the candidacy is announced) and then a follow-up one in the last week of the month – just ahead of polling day – on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. To help, please email John or Julian on [j.w.raine@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.w.raine@bham.ac.uk) or [jdr@eticapress.com](mailto:jdr@eticapress.com) (or phone 07786 198332 or 01684 565739). Many thanks in anticipation.

## Up-and-Coming Events

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March – *Councillors' Surgery at Elim Café, West Malvern, 11.00–1.00pm*

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April – *Malvern Hills Green Party Monthly Meeting, 8.00pm, Great Malvern Hotel*

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April – *Councillors' Surgery at Malvern Vale Community Centre, 11.00–1.00pm*

## Another successful quiz night



Our recent Green Party Quiz Night proved to be another excellent event – not such a big attendance as previously, probably because of the wet and cold weather. But more than twenty of us had a lot of fun grappling with Quiz Master Roskams' testing questions and particularly in the final 'Lights, Camera, Action' round, when participants had to act out clips from famous plays and films. Almost £100 was raised for branch funds. The next quiz night will be in September (date to be decided).

## Malvern Hills Communities Fair – September 21st

**A** date for your diaries! Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>. Transition Malvern Hills and Malvern Hills Repair Café are organising a Green Fair in Malvern – the Malvern Hills Communities Fair!

The aim of this one-day event is to raise awareness of and celebrate local environmental initiatives, particularly the efforts of those individuals, voluntary groups and businesses who are contributing to the sustainability of the Malvern Hills communities.

Malvern Hills Communities Fair will take place at The Malvern Cube. There will be themed areas based on different environmental issues such as waste, energy, transport and food and a variety of different workshops, presentations, children's activities and entertainment will take place throughout the day. Stalls will be available for a small charge.

We would welcome more volunteers to join us on the organising committee as we want to ensure that this will be an event that Malvern will remember!

If you could spare some time to get involved, please call Jan on 01684 892581 or email [mhcommunitiesfair@gmail.com](mailto:mhcommunitiesfair@gmail.com).

## County Council Election Special

Our campaign to win County Council seats on May 2<sup>nd</sup> is particularly focusing on four key priorities as follows:

### *1. Investing More in Young People:*

**I**nvesting in children and young people – in their early years, in their education and social development and towards adult life – is the most important thing our County Council can do. Doing more for young people will help to develop stronger, more caring and inter-generational, communities, which, in turn will help to minimise problems of anti-social behaviour and crime in our society. I believe we should invest far more in the provision of affordable child-care. We should also ensure that each new housing development (including Malvern Vale) has its own community nursery and primary school (the assembly halls of which can also serve as facilities for youth clubs and other community activities in the evenings). We should also commit more resources to youth services provision, and not simply leave it to the voluntary and independent sector to do the best it can with less resources, as has been the pattern in recent years. And as a positive start, the County Council should abandon its plans to build houses on the land adjacent to the Malvern Cube (the Youth Centre) so that the young people can continue to benefit from the surrounding space for outside activities.



### *2. Improving Social Care and Support:*

**W**ith more of us living longer, the County Council's role in planning and overseeing adult social care and support provision is also vital. At present too few people, and particularly elderly and vulnerable people living alone, know where to turn for help when they need it. A key problem is that interaction between the different agencies - social services, housing associations, health care, and other community services - are just not reliable enough to ensure that information is transmitted to appropriate place and in a timely manner. The organisational fragmentation between different tiers of local government, other agencies and voluntary sector providers does not help. A single local authority, like the County Council, needs to take more of the lead and co-

ordinate the provision of more 'joined-up' forms of support; ensuring that key tasks, such as installing necessary aids and adaptations in peoples' homes, are undertaken quickly, and before accidents happen.

### 3. *Managing Waste and Recycling Better*

It is a nonsense that one tier of our local government (the district) is responsible for collecting the rubbish and recycling and the other (the county) for its disposal. Such a split only encourages short-term, fragmented thinking, and inefficiency. For example, the County Council's support for the expensive 'EnviroSort' plant for mechanical separation of (co-mingled) recycling materials has not only resulted in lower grade recycling products but also led the District to switch to 'wheelie bin' collection (to comply with an EU requirement for separate glass collection). Moreover, the County Council has now endorsed the building of an incinerator (energy-from-waste plant) at Hartlebury as the alternative to 'landfill'. Quite apart from concerns about noxious emissions and traffic implications, there is, on the basis of much experience elsewhere, a risk of perversely disincentivising recycling here and diverting more recyclable materials to the incinerator simply to keep the hungry plant operating efficiently. We Greens will be pressing for a review of these plans and for a more joined-up and holistic approach to waste management in Worcestershire – because this will be better both for the environment and for tax-payers.



### 4. *Developing Community Transport*

We cannot go on as we have been, withdrawing subsidies from lesser-patronised rural bus services and making access more and more difficult for those without personal transport (which includes increasing numbers of elderly people). Nor can we carry on tinkering with minor engineering projects at road junctions in vain attempts to solve traffic congestion, associated air pollution and wasted time. The new housing planned for north east of Malvern and south of Worcester will only make things a lot worse. With only limited government money available for road schemes, and with fuel prices set to escalate as global oil supplies dwindle, we must begin to think differently and identify more creative solutions to ensure everyone can travel when they need and where they want to. We already have good rail infrastructure – with links to Worcester, Hereford, Birmingham and London – and the County Council should work harder with Network Rail and the train operators to timetable more services, and open more station halts, to serve more people. The County should also invest more in community-based car-clubs so that those needing to make their journeys less frequently can do so by borrowing an appropriate sized vehicle from the pool when they need it, rather than having to maintain their own. Electric bikes can similarly be shared efficiently at community club level. Arranging and funding such car and bike clubs should be a planning obligation on all larger new housing developments.

#### *How will we afford such priorities?*

We also, of course, need to give careful consideration to the question of how we afford such service developments, particularly at a time of continuing financial austerity in the public sector. Our response on this is to suggest that now is the time to save money by simplifying our local government – by 'calling time' on the District level in Worcestershire. Removing the district tier of local government would realise several million pounds which could more usefully be invested in better services for young people, the elderly, recycling, developing better community transport and much more besides. We believe that decisions directly affecting local people are best made as locally as possible. Accordingly, we would like to see more community-level services devolved to town and



parish councils (including decisions on minor local planning applications). Meanwhile, functions that require more strategic level planning and organising (such as waste management, social care and highways and transport provision), are better handled in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities of Worcester City and Wychavon (as a single South Worcestershire unitary council) or, alternatively, by the County Council for the whole of Worcestershire. A combination of more decentralisation to town and parish councils and more 'joined-up' strategic planning and leadership of public services represents not only the best form of local government for Worcestershire in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but also the best route to achieving the progress and change that matters most.

**Your feedback...?** How do these priorities and the underpinning arguments seem to you? Let us know what you think by emailing Julian or John at [jdr@eticapress.com](mailto:jdr@eticapress.com) or [j.w.raine@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.w.raine@bham.ac.uk)

Finally, a reminder as to why people should be encouraged to vote 'Green' in the County Council elections on May 2<sup>nd</sup>...

Voting 'Green' means much more than voting to protect the environment – important though that is, especially in our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. For the Green Party is also the party of 'social justice'; we are committed to fairness and justice for all, and to ensuring well-being, prosperity and personal fulfilment for everyone. Our vision is of a caring, inclusive and democratic society in which everyone is able to do valuable work, pursue their interests, and enjoy being part of a supportive community.

While the larger traditional political parties – Conservatives, Lib-Dem and Labour - have been in decline and have turned many people off their politics because of broken promises, U-turns, sleaze and worse, the Green Party has been growing in significance and influence. As well as the election of our first Green MP (Caroline Lucas) in 2010, the Party has two MEPs, two Members of the London Assembly, some 134 other councillors on principal councils across England and Wales, and many more at parish/town council level.

In the Malvern area, we have a Green County Councillor (Clive Smith), three Green District Councillors (John Raine, Julian Roskams and Clive Smith), and four Green Town/Parish Councillors (Julian Roskams, Clive Smith, Anna Stenning and Malcolm Victory). Voting for our Green candidates on May 2<sup>nd</sup> will be helping to add to that tally!!



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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>



**Green Party**