

# *A Green Thought*

News and Ideas from Winchester Green Party



## **Government Shirking its Responsibility on Air Pollution**

**The Supreme Court has ruled that the Government has been breaking the law on air pollution.**

At a conservative estimate over 50,000 early deaths a year come from air pollution, most of which is traffic generated. The UK government clearly believes this death toll is a price worth paying.

### **Manipulating the Data**

The Green Party has previously reported that DEFRA had had a consultation on how to address air pollution and concluded that the best way to solve the problem was to stop measuring it (yes really!).

DEFRA then came back with a consultation on its 'plan', where essentially it concluded that apart from London there will be no problem with air pollution in the UK.

It has come to this conclusion by a process of magic modelling. Essentially it smooths the observed levels of pollution over wide areas. The high pollution peaks near roads where people live are averaged out over wider areas away from roads, where few people live and, of course, come out with marvellously lower levels.

On top of this, they predict that vehicle emissions will be much lower very soon. These are the emissions that vehicle manufacturers have been telling us are real, but which we now know from the VW scandal are fraudulent.

We hope that nobody will be fooled by this nonsense, least of all the Supreme Court, though it is not clear what sanctions can be imposed on government.

What is becoming clear is that the UK government has been secretly and successfully negotiating to water down vehicle emissions regulation.



### **Council Shirks its Responsibility too**

Particulate pollution alone in Winchester is at a level that around 1.7 years of life expectancy will be lost by those residents constantly exposed to it.

The Council clearly believes that this health toll is a price worth paying.

A FoIA request to the City Council recently elicited the fact that the Council has no plans to do anything about air pollution. Worse than nothing it is actively promoting developments and car parking policy that will have the effect of making the problem worse in Winchester.

The problem is already getting worse in that it is now apparent that the Air Quality Monitoring Area is insufficiently large. Pollution levels along the Romsey Road are comparable with those in heavily polluted St George's Street – this will signify that monitoring will need to be extended along the Romsey Road. Anyone who knows the Westgate area will have observed that traffic congestion has become a very frequent phenomenon in the last year.

# A Green Thought

## Fracking – More Promises Broken

Remember how, before the Election, Amber Rudd the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (sic) promised that no fracking would take place in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or areas where drinking water was at risk?

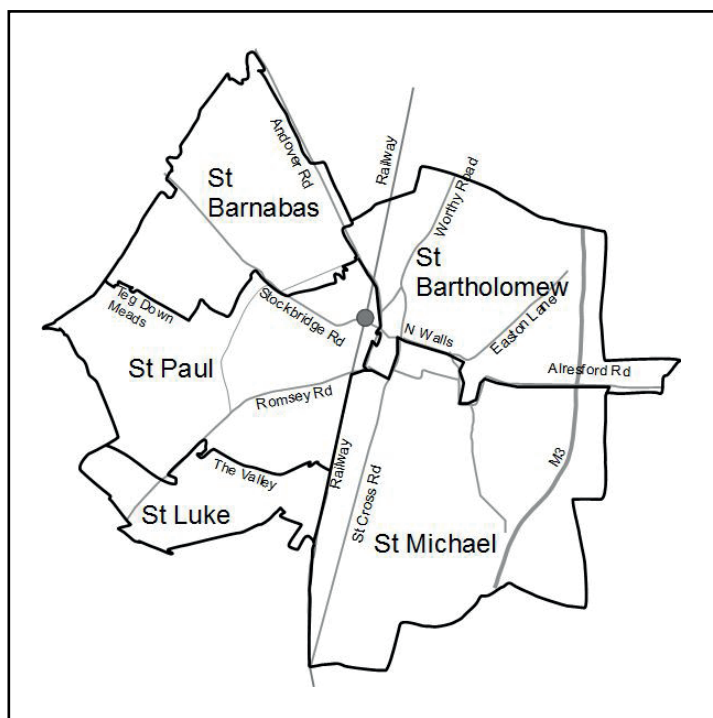
Now, safely elected Ms Rudd has reneged on this promise. And of course we now know we can trust her in nothing – guarantees of protection for landscape or habitat, or the quality of our lives, our water or our air are as worthless as her word.

And as for the Government's cant assurances of localism in decision-making, fracking is one more example of central government's bullying (to add to nuclear power, housing allocations, Infrastructure Commission etc.) – we are to be given no voice at all in the matter.



In October, Winchester Green Party joined Winchester FoE outside Barclays bank to protest about its ownership of a fracking company Third Energy.

## Winchester Boundaries to Change



The Green Party are hoping to stand a full complement of candidates in each of the five wards.

It is expected that the electoral constituency boundaries will have changed for next year's local elections.

The six wards of the City of Winchester will be reconfigured into five, losing St. John's ward entirely.

St Bartholomew's loses the Brooks and Eastgate area to St Michael's, but expands into the current St John's ward - everything north of Bridge Street and Alresford Road.

It is understood that the system of rotation of councillors will remain the same for these City wards, i.e. one councillor elected for a 4-year term in each year for three years, with County Council elections in the fourth year. Because the wards are newly defined the system has to be started from scratch. All current councillors will finish their terms next May and there will be three City councillors elected in most wards. The candidate with the highest vote will serve for 4 years, the next most successful candidate for 3 years and so on.