



A Green Thought

News and Ideas from Winchester Green Party



Now Everyone Talks About Air Pollution

With Friends of the Earth, our co-complainants on the City Council's air-quality law-breaking, the Green Party marched through Winchester on Dec 11th to protest about the Council's continuing lack of action. The *Tombstone* demo was designed to highlight the pollution mortality in the Winchester District, which government figures put at 51 early deaths per year.

Winchester Green Party has been campaigning on this issue for 6 years and this was the third and biggest demonstration so far. This time it was good to see members of other political parties attend and also to see letters of concern on the issue from LibDem and Labour campaigners.



The ruling Conservatives, however, have yet to take the problem seriously. In the BBC South Today programme on the event, the then Transport portfolio holder, Councillor James Byrnes stated:

"I'm led to believe that in Oxford where they have almost completely pedestrianised their centre; since when their air quality problems have got worse."

This statement is simply untrue and Councillor Byrnes has admitted it, but not apologised for putting out such misleading information, which will have crept into public consciousness in the way of Trumpian 'alternative facts'.

County Election – 4th May

The Green Party is contesting all seats in the County Council elections this year, and intends to have a strong presence particularly in your division, Winchester Eastgate, where our lead campaigner, Andrew Wainwright, will stand.



Our particular focus in this campaign will be on how to tackle the growing crisis in the NHS and care in the community in Hampshire – unblocking the bed-blocks.



We want to hear from you!

Andrew Wainwright wants your views on a variety of local issues and would greatly appreciate people taking time to complete a short survey. The form can be found at this QR or:



<https://goo.gl/forms/qt59VtbxG4Jspwel1>



Poverty in Winchester

In 2010 43 people owned as much money as the poorest half of the world's population; now just 8 individuals are in that position. This staggering trend in inequality can be seen across almost all countries with the UK and the US amongst the worst. Winchester's reputation as one of the richest areas in the country (average house price £486,083) hides



glaring inequalities. Indicators include the prevalence of Houses of Multiple Occupation in Winchester for people unable to afford rents of flats; parts of Winchester are in the 10% most deprived areas in England for housing and services. The child poverty in St Luke's ward is 19.7% (England average 20.6%). Winchester's Food Bank provided 15,000 person-days of food in one year to 5% of the population.



Crisis in the NHS and Care in the Community

National Picture: NHS head, Simon Stevens, Trust managers, nurses, doctors and heads of social services are all pointing to a crisis in the NHS. The Government places its hands over its ears and denies that there is a problem. At a recent local meeting Steve Brine repeated the untruth that the NHS has been given all the money it needs.

The government seems wilfully blind to two truths – 1) there is not enough money to provide the basic healthcare that society expects of the providers – demands rise but funding stagnates; 2) the efficient running of the NHS depends critically on functioning social services, where funding is being ruthlessly cut back by the dogma of austerity.

The UK spends significantly less of its GDP on healthcare than comparable European countries. Spending on public services, including Care in the Community will be 22% lower in 2017 than it was in 2010, but the demands for support in the community from vulnerable members of the population are increasing, so that hospital wards are packed with people who don't need to be there, but who cannot be sent home for lack of proper support.

With this level of pressure it is unrealistic to expect a "7-day service" to be any kind of answer. GPs are

already overloaded and cannot create additional capacity. The Green Party has consistently argued not only that more central funding is required, but that better integrated social, primary, acute and mental health care is essential.

STPs – SeTuP to Fail?: A £30bn funding gap has been identified by the NHS chief executive and the Government is providing £8bn to stimulate efficiency savings which it is assumed will cover the remaining £22bn. These savings, well beyond anything achieved before, are to be devised by 44 "Sustainability and Transformation Plans" (STPs).

Hampshire STP: Not Fit for Purpose: The local STP includes useful ideas to improve the NHS but the restricting focus on sustainability (cover-up terminology for cuts of services, staff and one fifth of NHS estates - surgeries, health centres, hospitals etc.) hinders the success of existing projects.

The creation of STPs is an attempt to regain a level of collaboration that has been lost since the 2012 Health and Social Care Act. However, the pressure on individual trusts to deliver better clinical results within a restricted budget continues to force health care providers to compete against each other. The local STP is badly designed from top down with little or no engagement with the public and clinicians. The timescale within the STP is unachievable. Above all, it fails to address the current bed-blocking crisis caused by cuts to social care creating a funding gap of £1.9bn by the end of 2017. The government refuses to address the real issues and instead imposes just another reorganisation of the NHS.

Take Action: Sign the Petition and Join the March: <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/give-us-a-real-say-on-the-hampshire-and-the-isle-of-wight-stp-2>
Save our NHS: National Demonstration: Saturday 4th March, 12pm Tavistock Square, London.

