



A Green Thought

News and Ideas from Winchester Green Party



County Election – The Green Alternative

In the County Council election on May 4th Andrew Wainwright is standing for the Green Party in the Winchester Eastgate ward. Andrew, who has lived in Winchester for over 20 years, works as an IT director. He says:

'We believe that having a healthy environment and sound public services are essential to our well-being. We need an economy that works for everyone at the local level; an economy which is based on measures of quality of life – providing decent jobs for Hampshire residents, and transport that's safe, clean, affordable and accessible for all.'



'Our current use of energy has placed us on an unsafe path and has environmental and social impacts across the county. We need to re-assess our energy needs and move forward to a sustainable, carbon-neutral energy future. We need to promote reduction and reuse ahead of recycling of resources to reduce waste and pollution.'

'We need to protect the care services that

Hampshire County Council provides. Rather than slashing funding, we're fighting to make sure that the Government prioritises local services, not just in Hampshire but throughout the country. Having Greens on Hampshire County Council will make a positive difference. It will make life better.'



Asking You What You Want

Central Winchester Regeneration

Following the Silverhill debacle there was much to look forward to in the recent Community Planning Weekend. It did not disappoint – it felt like views were being genuinely sought and the report back from the consultants was a refreshing change from the usual City Council consultation, where anything that does not match the pre-existing ambitions of the Council are ignored or blatantly misrepresented – remember the Council's infamous *Step Change* conclusion from the Local Plan consultation?

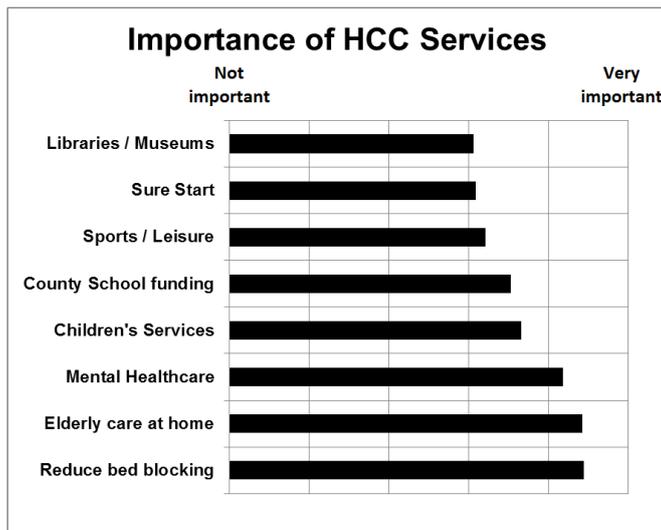
We will have to wait to see whether the Council will keep faith with this process or revert to its old ways. It was noteworthy that several people commented at the Planning Weekend that it was a pity the same process was not being undertaken for Station Approach.

Despite the farce of the earlier station area competition, the Council has come back with an almost identical brief, based on absurd assumptions about demand for huge new office space in the area and with the same disgraceful commitment to shoving extra car parking in Gladstone Street, an area already suffering from very significant traffic congestion and pollution. Here we go again!

Asking You What You Want

A Green Party Survey

In recent weeks we have been carrying out a household survey to try and find out what issues are of concern locally. The process continues and in this and subsequent issues of Green Thought we will try to analyse the results.



The County Council election is a good time to see how people prioritise Council services. All services are seen as important, including the Sure Start programme which the Council abandoned last year.

But the major concerns, unsurprisingly, relate to the health service and the social services (the Council has a responsibility for both here). In our previous Green Thought we drew attention to the well-known link between an overstretched NHS and austerity-impooverished social services. Tory Councils are at last beginning to see the link – it is time they told some truths to their friends in government.



Why is a Green Vote Different?

In the electoral arithmetic of Hampshire one or two gains from the Tories by LibDem or Labour would not bring about a material change in Tory power in the County. So why vote Green?

Control: There is a growing feeling of powerlessness and growing mistrust of those who govern us. The Brexit promise of *'bringing back control'* was hollow – the real power remains in the same hands, is subject to the same corporate lobbying and works for the same moneyed and landed interests.

Participation: The Green Party works from the opposite direction. It doesn't talk about control at all but about fairness and co-operation. A fair society encourages fair contribution. Government at both central and local levels assumes a natural right to govern. The Green Party assumes only the natural right to participate.

Principle: The Green Party is the only political grouping that realises that natural and human capital is limited by resources, but that a wonderful sufficiency is possible if our demands on it are moderate and shared fairly.

Influence: The Green Party works from the grass roots. Caroline Lucas, as the only Green MP and Green councillors everywhere have shown that if the Party can get into a position to be noticed, it is influential way beyond its numerical representation - reason, conviction and consistency can prevail with a lone voice even in unfriendly chambers. Electing one Green councillor does not bring power to force change, but it does bring the influence of new thinking to the otherwise superficial and sterile debates in a local council.

Vote for What You Believe

Not Against What You Fear

Fear of the worst should not persuade us never to have hope of great change for the better. We simply ask people to put their hope into what they believe. And it is possible - the Green Party does have councillors elsewhere. We can do it in Hampshire.

