



A Green Thought

News and Ideas from Winchester Green Party

County Elections – Thursday 2nd May Your Green Party Candidates:

Winchester Eastgate Dr. Michael Wilks



Dr Michael Wilks has lived in Winchester for the last 7 years, and has held major roles in the British Medical Association and European medical organisation. He has attended two recent UN climate change (COP) conferences to argue for more attention to be given to the health impact of global warming.

Winchester Westgate David Walker-Nix



David works as a senior engineer for a satellite manufacturing company and his wife is a staff nurse at the RCH. They have three children at Weeke Primary. Having lived in and loved Winchester for the past 14 years, he is keen to retain its special heritage and countryside setting. To hold on to these things requires commitment to sustainability and Dave is particularly passionate about encouraging practical and sustainable energy supplies for the community, especially including greater use of solar panels.

Winchester Green Party as yet has no representation on the City or County Councils – but that does not mean we have been inactive on local issues:

Barton Farm: We are left with trying to make the best of things at Barton Farm. There are many unresolved issues, especially to do with transport. One apparent absurdity is the diverted Andover Road, which threads a fairly busy radial access route through the shopping and social centre of the new development. No plausible

explanation of this idea has yet been presented to the public (if the idea is to slow the radial traffic down, then that could equally have been achieved along the existing route) and its likely effects have not been analysed. In particular, no traffic model has been produced to determine what diversionary effects the scheme will have. There must be consequences for roads through Harestock, Kings Worthy and Easton Lane, but their extent is simply unknown.

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Better still, come to a meeting: held always on the first Wednesday of the month, Hyde Tavern, 7.30 to 9.30pm.

If you have views on anything written in this newsletter or would like to know more about your local Green Party group contact us via our website: www.winchestergreenparty.org.uk

But the biggest transport effect of Barton Farm will come from the development itself. Even the developer's own traffic evidence suggests an increase of 10% in traffic on the already overloaded Carfax junction and corresponding increases in traffic and pollution in the centre of Winchester can be inferred.

We have asked, within our air pollution complaint (see below), that the European Commission should require Winchester Council to take action to counter this specific traffic generation.

Abbotts Barton Housing: In the Autumn of 2010, Winchester Green Party met with the then City Council Allotments Officer to discuss the possibility of helping to set up a Community Area on the plot of land adjacent to the cadet hut in Hillier Way. He showed interest in the idea but commented that it was probably polluted from the times when it was used as a BMX cycle race track and had had dredged silt from the Itchen deposited on it, and would need clearing. He would investigate the feasibility of the Council doing that but we heard no more.

We initiated the discussion because the land had been allowed to become derelict and misused. Its continuing neglect is the more reprehensible at a time when Abbotts Barton residents are faced with yet more new development and loss of open space.

During the recent consultation for this proposed development, an overwhelming majority of local residents favoured this area, known as "L4", as where new housing should go, with the cadet hut being incorporated in the new community centre. The preliminary published scheme ignores this, and Conservative Counsellors are expressing doubts whether planning permission would be possible.

Winchester Green Party holds that the Council should justify NOT using this brownfield area as part of the Abbotts Barton development scheme for new housing.

Air Pollution in Winchester: At the end of November, Winchester Green Party joined with Winchester Friends of the Earth in submitting a formal complaint to the European Commission, detailing the failure of the City Council, the County Council and the UK Government to take action to bring the

level of air pollution in Winchester within the limits laid down by both EU and UK Law. The



two parties to the complaint handed the document to the Green MEP for the South East, Keith Taylor, at a demonstration in St Peter's car park on North Walls, which included children from local schools.

Our complaint was presented in February, at a joint public meeting of the two parties, at which Keith Taylor explained the significance of the Winchester complaint within the wider campaign. The European Commission has now accepted the complaint as worthy of investigation.



The complaint focuses on the level of Nitrogen oxide (Nox) gases persistently measured at 25% above the safe level in Winchester. These gases are implicated in asthma and other respiratory conditions, particularly in children. The complaint establishes that the problem lies in the level of traffic in the centre of the City and shows that it is within the power of the City and County Councils to reduce it. That they have not done so is a failure of their duty to protect the health of the residents of the City.

Silver Hill: As things look increasingly bleak in high streets everywhere, it is now becoming apparent that Silver Hill is a threat to existing Winchester traders, as they perceive a likely drift of the centre of gravity of Winchester's shopping. It is a pity that no traders turned up at the Inquiry to voice such concerns. Now that a Planning Inspector has rubber-stamped the scheme (the Planning Inspectorate has been bullied to disregard all environmental and social concerns in favour of development) the best hope lies in the

resistance of commercial landholders to what they see as an unfair use of Compulsory Purchase powers and effectively an improper process of tendering. It is possible that the Council's selection of a single developer, without any reference to EU competition rules, will be challengeable in the courts.

Meanwhile it has become apparent that the car park provision of Silver Hill builds in a permanent inability for Winchester to solve its traffic problems. **Our air pollution complaint specifically identifies this problem and asks the European Commission to take action against such additional provision of traffic generators in central Winchester.**

Bushfield Down: While the Church Commissioners (who own this land) and the City Council are thinking what kind of development they would like for the old military camp,



Hampshire County Council is fighting for its retention as a public open space, along with the rest of the down. This hill marks the last piece of downland west of the Itchen Valley, and, along with St Catherine's Hill, is the only upland space still open to and used by, the public.

A local pressure group... has been campaigning to preserve Bushfield Down by trying to get it classified as a "Village Green", this being the only classification available for securing its future as a public open space. **Individual members of Winchester Green Party have been supporting this campaign**, including trying to remove the Down's designation as an *Opportunity Site* during the Local Plan Inquiry. Unfortunately the Inquiry Inspector has ruled that the site should be a general employment area and is therefore now threatened with the very worst kinds of major development. There is a big battle looming here.

Gas and Wind: We all need heating and lighting for our homes. So will our children and grandchildren. Sources of energy come in two forms – self-renewing (sun, wind and water) and finite (oil, gas, nuclear and coal). If we use more than our fair share of the finite kind, we are knowingly leaving a problem for our successors. This is why Green Party policies favour the development of self-renewing forms of energy.

Recently, Hampshire County Council adopted a policy of no wind turbines on HCC land, despite **protests from Winchester Green Party** and others. There is probably a range of views in Winchester Green Party concerning the landscape impact of wind turbines – some like them as features and some do not. But all, we presume, would see the necessity for all communities to work towards reduction of fossil fuel burning and towards sustainable sourcing of energy needs. One has to ask "*If not wind turbines, what else should we do?*" If Winchester District is to meet even its short-term carbon reduction requirements, it would require the renewable input of 6 wind-farms, OR the removal of 40,000 cars from the 50,000 households. There are no easy choices.



Also recently, Island Gas PLC got a Petroleum Exploration Licence to prospect for fracking opportunities around Sparsholt, Littleton and Avington. Other licences have been granted for



the wider Hampshire area, including Eastleigh, Botley, Chilbolton and Hedge End. **Winchester Green Party** has drawn attention to the negative consequences, particularly the effect on drinking water supplies of the diesel and chemicals which will be injected into the soil, and the methane which would be emitted to air. This is a dirty and dangerous technology on our doorstep.

Solar Photovoltaic Update: 18 months ago our campaign to provide independent advice and help people understand the advantages of generating their own electricity was very successful. Despite the chaos caused by the Government's illegal interference we managed to help 17 households get plugged in. This success was replicated elsewhere in the country, proving too much for the present Government and ending in their reducing the Feed-in Tariff.

All is not lost: due to international awareness of PV and further industrialisation of manufacture, the cost of installation has dropped considerably. Here are some examples (savings figures from the Energy Saving Trust), as a guide to what is currently available for a house with a south facing tiled roof, with reasonable access, using mid-price components.

2.5Kw (area 19m²) system costs £4500
saving £470 p/a for 20 years

4Kw (area 29m²) system costs £6500
saving £750 p/a for 20 years

Winchester Green Party can help provide further clarification to people who may be interested in this form of renewable energy. Just contact Rob Parker: 01962 890160 or email:rxepparker@yahoo.co.uk.

The costs of installation quoted above have been provided by local firm, Eclipse Technology Systems (email info@et-systems.co.uk). If you decide to proceed with Solar PV through this firm, give this copy of the Winchester Green Party GT7 to Matt and he will reduce your invoice by £100.

Allotments: Given that we are all supposed to be eating more fruit and veg, we are shocked at the state of horticulture in this Country. Of total

farmland, only a quarter is arable, the rest is pasture. Of that quarter, 80% is down to cereal and oilseeds. Of the remainder, only 3% is down to horticulture. No wonder we are importing so much of our fruit and veg.

Against this backdrop, it does seem worrying that at the local level here in Winchester, there are still nearly 200 individuals and families on the waiting list for an allotment with the local Allotment Society alone, especially at Park Road and Edington Road. We now see that in the Stanmore area, the Council's new proposals which are not yet on public view, are likely to include loss of some allotments

Green Economics:

Politicians, bureaucrats, media and economists are almost entirely in agreement – we need to stimulate economic growth (though there is no consensus at all on the means to obtain the desired end). Maybe it is time to question the consensus. In fact it was questioned 40 years ago by Donna Meadows in her great work '*The Limits to Growth*', who pointed out, quite reasonably, that a planet of finite resources cannot consume those resources forever. It has become fashionable to talk about *Limits to Growth* as if it were the work of doomsayers, but in fact a review of this work in 2008 demonstrated that Meadows' predictions have aligned remarkably well with events since she made them. We must now acknowledge that, given perhaps a few fluctuations, the period of post-war growth is likely to be at an end. We must move from an economics that depends entirely on a supposition of indefinite growth to one that embraces the principle of sustainability as the central theme. Winchester Green Party is planning a conference on this issue on the 18th May.



<http://winchester.greenparty.org.uk/>



<https://twitter.com/TheGreenParty>

If you have views on anything written in this newsletter, or would like to know more about your local Green Party group, contact us via our website: www.winchester.greenparty.org.uk