

MINUTES of the meeting of the Torridge Green Party held on Saturday, 25th February at 3.30 pm at Church Lane House, Church Lane, Torrington.

PRESENT Peter Christie, Gillian Stevens, Tracey Beresford, Cathrine Simmons, John Simmons, Keith Funnell, Rosemary Gent, Ruth Funnell, Colin Jones, Peter Hames, Carl Hawkins (visitor), Huw Thomas

1 APOLOGIES Wendy LoVel

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING These were accepted as a correct record

3 MATTERS ARISING There were no matters arising not already on the Agenda

4 REPORTS

a) Treasurer: Cathrine reported that there was no change in our Bank balance which stands at £2,517.24

b) Press: Peter Hames reported that he has written to the Journal giving the figures for last year about climate change around the world. He plans to raise the subject of leaving engines idling and the pollution levels created. Ruth said she would forward him a document on the issue.

c) Membership: Rosemary reported that we had had no new members since the last meeting but membership does now stand at 100.

d) Webmaster: Colin reported that it had been relatively quiet. He did ask for candidates info so he could post that online. Keith responded that he wanted a 150 word statement and photo. Huw had already sent Keith his and it was taken at Bideford Station, firmly placing him in Bideford East. It was agreed that it would be good if the other photos similarly place candidates in context rather than just being mugshots.

To achieve a greater online presence, Ruth asked if we could post on local Facebook groups but Peter C pointed out that such groups remove "overtly party political content". Ruth suggested that candidates could post the need to vote, the closing date for postal votes which do not need ID, the need at polling stations for ID and their opening times.

Ruth will contact Daniella to ask if there is any training or other help to increase our use of online for campaigning as this is now so vital at election time.

5 FEEDBACK FROM OUR COUNCILLORS

a) Peter Christie, TDC: The Council has been very quiet for the last month but he has had a lot of emails about the Morocco link mainly concerned that it

will be "industrial" and inappropriate for a rural area. The new Town Clerk for Bideford has suggested that the pipeline should be used to promote hydrogen based industries with power sourced from it.

This Thursday a planning application for another 71 houses, 30% affordable, next to an existing site in Winkleigh will be discussed. The site has removed hedges and Peter is once again arguing that the landowner should ensure any development has a viability assessment as part of the planning application.

The owners of the Clovelly road site have started site clearance. Keith pointed out that they need a felling licence from the Forestry Commission if they are taking down more than two mature trees.

The District is putting up Council Tax by the maximum of 2.99%. Peter noted that the police have increased their money by 6.03% for the fifth year running.

b) Peter Hames, TDC: Peter continues to chair the Climate Emergency Working Group. Janet Williams, the officer responsible, has left and they are now assisted by the Property Manager. The carbon audit of TDC buildings has already been done under Donna Sibley. Peter is concerned about biodiversity and procurement. He has queried the materials to be used on the proposed Maritime Centre. He is pressing for a biodiversity plan for all open spaces. A proposal that "all purchasing by TDC should consider its environmental impact" has been passed.

The Environment Centre for recycling will probably be in East the Water at the top of Manteo Way.

Peter is looking for ways to ensure builders deliver what they promised in their planning applications.

Daniella has put Peter in touch with Bristol Community Energy and a similar group in Exeter to gather information about producing more energy within communities.

c) Northam Town Council: The Council has produced a bee friendly planting scheme for open spaces. A leaflet on climate change will be distributed to homes and the Village Hall will be insulated. Northam Town Council will hopefully buy an electric vehicle to replace an existing obsolete diesel one.

The Active Travel Group has produced its final plan for Bideford, Northam and Barnstaple which is going to the County Council for approval.

The County Council is planning to install bicycle racks in Northam Square and on Appledore Quay.

Peter Christie mentioned that Steve Crowther and others want to reopen the Bideford to Barnstaple railway line. It was suggested by the meeting that an electric tram might be more practical and less disruptive to the Tarka Trail.

d) Littleham and Landcross: Rosemary reported that there will be a

biodiversity event at Littleham Village Hall from 10 to 12 midday and 2.00 to 4.30 pm on Saturday, 11th March This will offer activities for families and information on local environment and wildlife plus help for people to measure and reduce their carbon footprint. Some small saplings plus eight larger trees have been planted around the parish including one to replace a copper beech that had become unsafe. The PC has joined the Parish Paths Partnership and Ros from DCC met with the Council plus Abbotsham PC to look at advise on mapping and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways under the scheme..

Rosemary drew attention to the NALC on line where Paul Behrens from Leiden University did an excellent summing up of the IPCC report on climate change and the issues and actions that need to be addressed at both national and local level..

Colin said they are campaigning for "20 is plenty" in Dolton which Bideford TC has already voted for. So far, DCC is lukewarm.

6 DISTRICT AND TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The TDC briefing for candidates will be on 20th March from 6 - 8 pm. Nomination papers will be accepted between 10 am on 21st March at 4 pm on 4th April but it is wise to get them in at least three days before the deadline in case errors need correcting. Only two proposers are needed, keeping the change from the covid period.

The last date for voter registration is Monday, 17th April. Applications for postal votes have to be in by 18th. Proxy votes can be applied for up until 25th April. Postal votes will be sent out from Thursday 13th April which is when we will have to have got our first leaflets around.

Edward Gaskell seems the best bet as our printer. Peter Christie reminded the meeting that a "sorry I missed you" leaflet is invaluable.

Candidates for far are:

- Rosemary in Monkleigh and Putford
- Huw in Bideford East
- Wendy LoVel in, hopefully, Northam
- Keith in Torrington
- Peter Christie in Bideford North
- Peter Hames in Appledore

We still need a candidate for Hartland.

7. PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE SELECTION

Catherine said she had written to Ewan, the guy managing the process, asking him to delay the vote as it was impossible to arrange the hustings at such short notice especially over the half term period when people were away. This will happen.

Huw said he found the two candidates' biographies very divergent with a lot more detail in Neil Jameson's one than in Lyn Daniel's. Keith/Catherine will contact the organiser to suggest that candidates need clearer parameters to draw up their applications.

8 GREEN PARTY POLICY ON ZOOM

Rosemary gave a brief feedback on Green Party European and Marine/Coastal Environmental policy which she had watched on zoom.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cathrine reported that Norfolk County Council has a massive hedge planting scheme to restore some of the hedge boundaries removed in the last fifty years. They have also planted thousands of saplings.

SW Water is doing a public consultation on line on its "Water Resources Management Plan" which would be worth responding to at southwestwater.co.uk