

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF Torridge Green Party held on Saturday 1st July at 2.30 p.m. at the Pannier Pantry in Bideford

PRESENT Miranda Cox, Tracey Beresford, Lynne Daniels (West Devon), Wendy Lo-Vel, Huw Thomas, Peter Christie, Rosemary Gent, Keith Funnell, Sue Clarke, Rosalind Hillman and Ruth Funnell

1. APOLOGIES John Puddy, Gillian Stevens, Tony Pratt, Cathrine Simmons, John Simmons, Will Douglas-Mann, Gill Douglas Mann, Lorraine Drake, Colin Jones, Peter Hames

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH MAY 2023

These were accepted as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising not already on the Agenda

4. REPORTS

a) **Treasurer:** The balance in the Torridge GP account remains at £2397.24.

b) **Press:** In the absence of Peter Hames, Keith reported that there was an excellent letter in the Gazette about proportional representation from Ricky Knight. Peter Christie drew attention to the magazine available to all local councillors which showed considerable Green Party success in by-elections around the country including a stunning result in Stroud.

c) **Membership:** Rosemary said there had been no new members since the last meeting so her list still stands at 104. She is waiting for Marcus to help her establish how many people have left the party so the true figure could be slightly lower.

d) **Webmaster:** Colin had reported that there was little activity on the website and Facebook page and he would welcome material to post.

5. FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLORS

Bideford Town Council: Peter Christie reported that they had co-opted two new members, Keith Dines (Ind) and Kevin Hind (Con). He has resurrected the Tidy Town Group with TDC which, among other things, looks at solutions to absentee landlord issues.

Bideford Town Council has a new Town Clerk. Peter Hames is challenging the use of nicotinamides and excessive grass cutting.

Torridge District Council: Peter Hames is now Vice Chair of Planning and Peter Christie is a member. An re-application for twenty two houses on the edge of Bradworthy has been turned down. There will be a meeting about the new local plan with North Devon and Peter Christie will be pressing to lift the ban on land based wind turbines and also pushing that planning applicants have to show that they can meet the 30% affordable housing (houses usually bought by Housing

Associations to rent) requirement before making the planning application to stop the current practice of the builders claiming they cannot afford to meet the requirement once building is underway. Ricky Knight and Mark Howarth Booth from North Devon Council will also be on the local plan committee giving a strong Green representation.

Devon County Council and all the district councils have formed a consortium to buy cheaper energy but it is not clear how much of this energy would be green.

Torrige is asking the County Council what actions are being taken to address the chronic shortage of NHS dentists in Devon and also what is happening to the funding for new build at North Devon District Hospital.

X Links Morocco Pipeline: Archaeologists are already digging on Phil Pennington's farm and at a site in East the Water to check that no vital sites will be disturbed in bringing the power ashore. There are plans to create a temporary road from Abbotsham Cliffs to Alverdiscott to install cabling. There are plans also for a depot at the top of Manteo Way for trucks and kit. Bideford was chosen because there is capacity in the National Grid here. The cabling will run buried under the sea bed from Morocco to North Devon. Points made by members were the unsustainability of bringing the power so far when there must be demand for it in North Africa or even Spain and Portugal which would save a thousand miles of cables and disturbance to the ecosystem of the sea bed.

Littleham and Landcross: Rosemary Gent reported that the Parish Council had a stall at the Littleham Fete (today) asking residents priorities for the proposed Parish Plan. The Parish Council will be co-opting two new members this month to bring it up to its full numbers.

Rosemary expressed concern that the Persimmon development on Clovelly Road plans to remove all the trees between the roundabout and the Affinity Shopping Centre even where they have TPOs. An arboriculturalist has said it is only necessary to take out the ash trees suffering from die back and to lift the canopy on some of the others. Remove everything ignores the need for climate mitigation and biodiversity. Peter C will check on what is happening.

Northam Town (and TDC): Wendy reported that, as a new Councillor, she had attended numerous training sessions and several meetings. She is raising the issue of sewage discharge and farming run off into the river and would like to form a similar group to "River Champions" in south Devon. The group could monitor the state of the rivers and co-ordinate with other groups active in this area.

Peter Christie said there was a group formed with North Devon ten years ago which found there are 100s of private licences to dump waste into rivers and none of these are monitored. Devon Live has an Interactive Map showing spills. Rosalind Hillman made the point that when she recently bought her property with a septic tank it was a requirement that it be upgraded by the householder to better treat the fluid run off and yet companies have no such requirement.

Keith pointed out that since privatisation of water, the companies view more houses as more customers where the publicly owned system would comment on planning applications if they needed more capacity in the sewage system.

There is now a “Dirty Water Campaign” which is buying shares in SW Water in order to be able to attend their AGM. Ruth asked if Wendy could forward her email to Councillors on this issue and Huw offered to turn it into a piece for Facebook.

Wendy had also found that she was going to be given two iPads, one by the Town Council and one by TDC. When she queried the need for this, at first she was told “confidentiality” but then it was agreed that it was OK to have just one Ipad for both Councillor roles.

Wendy said that Northam Parish Hall has solar panels and electric vehicle charging points and it has now been agreed to trial an electric vehicle, replacing a diesel one.

Wendy and Peter Hames have jointly queried the high cost of parking demanded for “events” in town which seems to ignore the benefits from events of extra footfall and use of parking.

6. GENERAL ELECTION

Lynne Daniels (West Devon GP) explained that the sudden death of Neil Jameson had left Torridge and West Devon without a Prospective Parliamentary Candidate. It was agreed to have a process for re-selection as a constituency rather than use the Devon wide process that had been proposed last time. Ruth suggested that when members are emailed to call for nominations an explanation of why we are standing a Green candidate should be attached. Greater funding for the national party and more party political broadcasts: the number allocated is dependent on the number of candidates the party puts up nationally. Also the free delivery to every house in the constituency of the candidate’s leaflet. The amount of active campaigning can be decided nearer the General Election.

The call for nominations will be co-ordinated between the Torridge and West Devon election agents.

7. FORTHCOMING GREEN EVENTS

a) Carla Denyer visit: Carla will be visiting Barnstaple on Thursday 13th July. Ruth will circulate full details to members when she has them.

b) Green Gathering on Sunday 23rd July at 3 pm: As Cathrine is awaiting an urgent hip operation, this will be held instead at Fairlight, Torridge View, Torrington. There will be a “Sale Table” to raise some funds and a bring and share spread.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Huw said he is planning a Beer Festival at Polyfields in East the Water provisionally from 22nd to 24th September. He is currently in discussions about the detail. Keith wondered if it was too short a time scale and would be better in the spring of next

year. The meeting were generally supportive of the idea and the possibility of some spin off publicity for the Green Party.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was agreed for Saturday 16th September at 2.30 pm at the Pannier Pantry again.