

MINUTES of the meeting of Torridge Green Party held on Saturday 16th September 2023 at the Pannier Pantry in Bideford.

PRESENT Lorraine Drake, Keith Funnell, Peter Hames, Peter Christie, Huw Thomas, Wendy LoVel, Tracey Beresford, Rosemary Gent, Ruth Funnell

1. **APOLOGIES** Cathrine Simmons, John Puddy, Gillian Stevens, Colin Jones

2. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST JULY** These were agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a) **X Links:** Ruth asked when the X Links application was going to be brought to the Planning Committee. Peter Christie replied that the application had gone to national level because it is a major infrastructure proposal. TDC will have control over the site at Alverdiscott. Peter Jollands (Landcross and Littleham councillor) has suggested that there be a green corridor along the pipeline. Ruth suggested this would be greenwash as laying the pipe under the seabed for such a long distance would cause huge disturbance to its ecosystem.

4. REPORTS

a) **Treasurer:** In Cathrine's absence, Ruth said that the money raise at our Green Gathering in July was almost the same as the cost of sponsoring a barrel of beer at the Shamfest so our Bank Balance remained virtually unchanged.

b) **Press:** Peter Hames said there was little to report beyond that fact that the Gazette has dropped its letters page. He said he would like to stop being Press Officer because of the pressure on his time from his Councillor and Mayoral roles. Tracey Beresford said she was willing to compose letters and on line releases if she was supplied with suggestions. Ruth suggested we put together a mailing list for releases of all the relevant media outlets.

c) **Membership:** Rosemary reported that our membership stands at 95. She now has a list of people who have recently left the party, thanks to Marcus.

d) **Webmaster:** Colin had emailed Ruth to say that traffic had been quiet during the summer months. He would welcome postings if people could email them.

5. FEEDBACK FROM OUR COUNCILLORS

a) **Peter Hames:** Peter reported that Donna Sibley presented a revised carbon plan to Council. This looks at Torridge DC owned properties and transport to recommend carbon reduction strategies.

There will be a workshop on the four year Strategic Plan and Peter is trying to inject green revisions. They are still looking at the Local Plan and are having a meeting with NDDH to reconcile differences. A cycle path in Victoria Park was voted down by 5 to 4. He hopes that drinking fountains can replace some of people's plastic bottle use. A bio-diversity plan has been produced.

Northam TC has been agreed to purchase an electric flatbed vehicle. It will be charged using the solar power generated by the panels at Northam Village Hall. Peter helped to plant hedging at Appledore Primary School to provide wildlife habitat. A Level students at Bideford College are forming a Climate Group with is encouraging.

b) Peter Christie: Following the row about Travellers parking their vehicles in Victoria Park when the Funfair was on, it was pointed out to Councillors that there are no official Travellers' Sites in Torrridge or North Devon. A recent planning appeal at Fremington saw the developers challenging NDC and TDC's claim that the Councils had other building land identified to meet the government's five year land supply. The Inspector found in favour of the Councils which should prevent any more speculative planning applications on land not currently in the Joint Local Plan.

South West Water have put out a waste water plan for the Taw and Torrridge.

Bideford's Tidy Town group has looked at the overflowing Biffa Bins in town and these have been dealt with. Some land at Londonderry is owned by the Bridge Trust who plan to plant a community orchard there.

The Bridge Trust has donated £218,000 to groups in Torrridge. The decisions are made in July each year and can be accessed in detail online.

c) Mayor of Northam: Peter H said, in this role, he took flowers to a 100 year old ex music teacher and met the Lithuanian Ambassador at Appledore Shipyard where they are recycling a ship for the country.

d) Huw Thomas: The External Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed the withdrawal of CC funding from the four Link Centres which cost £350,000. DCC did not send a representative. It is a statutory requirement that the County Council provide mental health services such as the Link Centres. Since the Pandemic they have re opened but have no mechanism for referrals. There has been an increase in Devon in suicide and emergency admissions for self harm. Clients have to talk online to a mental health professional before seeing someone face to face.

Active Travel Group has looked at a proposal to link to Appledore on the X Link pipeline route. Meanwhile, Cheryl Cottle-Hunkin is actively lobbying for the Mobile Library to continue.

e) Wendy Love: Her motion on free car parking for Charity Events on the grounds that the boost in income would outweigh the lost car parking revenue will be discussed at the next meeting. There are suggestions that more measuring of river pollution by River Champions is not useful as sufficient evidence has been gathered. The need now is for action.

f) Rosemary Gent: Preliminary discussions have begun on updating the Parish Plan. There is to be a speed monitoring group at Landcross but currently there is no speed limit through Littleham. There are plans for another Climate/Biodiversity day next Spring as the last was such a success.

Persimmon have applied to override the TPO orders on the proposed Clovelly Road Development and to offset them elsewhere. They want to remove most of the trees based on a report by their own arboriculturalist.

g) Lorraine Drake: Putford has lost its Parish Clerk but hope that, once Bradworthy chooses its replacement, one of the unsuccessful applicants may be suitable. There is a conflict between the need for more woodland and the culm grass habitat. DWT want to preserve the latter and five hectares of woodland already on Common Moor is being destroyed to make way for the Culm grass and to make “pathways” for the fritillary butterfly when pathways already exist.

h) Colin Jones: Colin reported that Dolton is busy organising an Energy Event with 361, Mole Energy and Mitchell and Dickinson. Colin appeared on Spotlight as part of the two hundredth Speed Watch Group set up in Devon.

6. GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATE SELECTION

Keith said the issue is do we stand a candidate in order to benefit from the free leaflet, TV time and funding for the national party or do we avoid the risk of Green votes enabling the re-election of Geoffrey Cox. It does depend strongly on the strength of the Lib Dem candidate. Apparently their initial choice will not be standing and has not been replaced yet. Keith will be in touch with Judy Mac, the Elections Officer for West Devon to organise a “Call for nominations”.

7 CUTS TO BUS SERVICES

Ruth had a call from a resident drawing attention to the cuts to bus services that began on 3rd September which mean services between Bideford and Torrington cease at 5.30 pm. She also noted that both trains and buses to Exeter have become unreliable and the buses less frequent with serious consequences for Exeter College students and people travelling for work. Huw said it can be reported to the Traffic Commissioners and he will raise it on the External Overview Committee. Ruth suggested that people should write to their County Councillors as DCC is responsible for public transport subsidies.

8 AUTUMN CONFERENCE

It was noted that this take place this year from 6th to 8th October in Brighton. Ruth asked anyone who took part in Zoom meetings to report back to the next meeting.

9 SHAMFEST 22ND AND 23RD SEPTEMBER

The Green Party is sponsoring “Beast” from Exmoor Ales. Posters have been put up around the area.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Appledore Quay: Wendy said Appledore Quay is classed as a highway so there was concern as Devon CC would be responsible for any parking charges.

b) Make Votes Matter: Tracey drew attention to the Zoom meeting of Make Votes Matter on Tuesday which was in the latest Green Info. Keith asked if they would

give advice about who to vote for in the General Election. Tracey thought not because they avoid being party political but Compass might.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This will be on Saturday, 18th November at 2.30 pm at the Pannier Pantry in Bideford.