

MINUTES of the meeting of Torridge Green Party held on Saturday 13th April 2024 at 2.30 pm at the Pannier Pantry, Bridgeland Street, Bideford.

PRESENT Peter Hames, Wendy Lo-Vel, John Puddy, Huw Thomas, Cathrine Simmons, Keith Funnell, Ruth Funnell,

1. APOLOGIES Gillian Stevens, Lorraine Drake, Will and Gill Douglas-Mann, Brian Garman, Colin Jones

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON March 9th 2024

These were agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

a) **General Election Candidate:** Ruth reported that Judy Mac is having to take a back seat for the moment as her husband is ill and she has had a minor stroke as a result of the stress. Ruth will contact her before the next meeting to find out how she is.

4. REPORTS

a) **Treasurer:** Cathrine reported that the current balance is now £2,600 79p. This includes Wendy's donation and a donation via Stripe which is a form of money payment. The party is grateful for these donations in the run up to a General Election.

b) **Webmaster:** In Colin's absence, Tracey said the Facebook page has been lively. Posts are very welcome. It was agreed that it would be good to get photos of Greens campaigning for Bideford North, including a shot with both the candidates.

c) **Press Officer:** On April 14th at a full Torridge Council meeting Huw's motion on supporting PR voting for District elections was lost by 14 to 12 – a very close result.. Huw has written on this subject to the NDJ pointing out how, with several candidates for a local seat, the elected candidate can obtain as few as 10% of the vote and the turn out is low.

d) **Membership:** Ruth reported that we have one new member, Jack Gordon, who is now our Bideford North candidate for Town Council.

5. FEEDBACK FROM COUNCILLORS

a) **Peter Hames:** Northam Town Council is proposing a check on its ethical policies. They have joined the North Devon Railway Alliance committee which aims to re-open the line between Bideford and Barnstaple. The Town has planted a hedge at Burroughs Farm Appledore and laid a hedge at Anchor Park in Appledore..

The Climate Committee has now been integrated into the Environment Committee and all other committees are now required to take climate into consideration.

The District Council has noted that air pollution nationally is four times the recommended safe level.

There is a major update proposed for Holsworthy Swimming Pool to carry out necessary repairs and improve its carbon footprint.

Torrige owned buildings are being assessed for carbon footprint.

The Bideford Methodist Church has been sold to the Town Council for £1 and they are proposing to put it on the market. It has the potential to be a very useful community facility and even a venue for Town and District Council meetings.

There was a meeting at Petroc with Chris Fuller, the Economic Officer, talking about regeneration and a Green move forward.

The Planning Committee (which Huw also attends) have noted that there is an increase in local needs application by rural councillors pushing for more housing in rural areas. But there are problems with lack of public transport, a failure to enforce Section 106 agreements and the problem of the Right to Buy. In Winkleigh the Neighbourhood Plan is in conflict with itself over the latest building site.

The County Council, together with Cornwall, has produced an adaptation plan to mitigate climate change which is to be circulated to all Parish Councils to incorporate into their emergency plans to adapt to climate change.

b) Huw Thomas: Huw said SW Water came to a three hour meeting at Caddesdown but allowed a very short period for questions though they promised to answer written questions. So far there have been no replies to these. Keith was very supportive of Huw's proposal that SW Water should not be allowed to advise on planning applications as they have a commercial interest in more housing leading to more customers..

It is proposed to relocate rubbish collection vehicles to East the Water which is not popular with some residents.

c) Wendy Lo-Vel: Wendy said everything had already been covered.

6 BI-ELECTIONS

Keith explained the delay in printing the election leaflet due to illness of the printer. It should be ready by late Tuesday and we hope to deliver from 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday evening. If people cannot make that date we can give them leaflets to put round in their own time as soon as they are able. Will, Gill and Lorraine did turn up to deliver this morning and took the "Don't forget to vote" A5 around instead.

It is proposed to have a Table on the corner of Mill Street on 20th and 27th April. The first would be a photo opportunity with the two candidates and, hopefully lots of GP members. The second will include delivery of the A5 Don't forget to vote flyer to those properties that have not already had it.

7. FARMING COMMUNITY

Following the proposals at the previous meeting, it was noted that farmers are beginning to directly suffer the effects of climate change with sodden soils and destroyed crops this winter. It was agreed to have a presence at the Woolsery and Holsworthy Shows this summer. They happen on the last Tuesday of July and in early August.

8. SAFEGUARDING

Mark Howarth Booth contact us after North Devon had a Safeguarding issue. Our regional officer advised that all local parties should be up to speed with the Green Party Policy which is on the website. It is too long to print out so a link will be put on our Facebook page.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Proposed bus link between Torrington and South Molton via Umberleigh Station: Ruth said "Right to Travel" a group organised by Gerry Sables is proposing this route and has held meetings in South Molton, Chittlehampton and Torrington. Both S, Molton and Torrington will be losing the dedicated student bus that took students to Exeter College and back which will create problems particularly on the homeward journey when the public bus fills with passengers for Crediton and only runs every two hours. People also have to reach S. Molton hospital for NHS appointments. The train link would obviously be very valuable and reduce car use.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was agreed for Saturday 18th May at 2.30 at The Pannier Pantry, Bridgeland Street, Bideford.