

# TORRIDGE GREEN PARTY

## GREEN INFO

### JANUARY 2025

**New Year Bring and Share Lunch** We met for a sociable lunch on 4<sup>th</sup> January and it was very enjoyable. Many thanks to Cathrine Simmons for opening her home for us.

**Leaflet in Bideford** We will be leafleting in the County Council ward of Bideford North (which confusingly includes Bideford East). The aim will be to raise the profile of the Green Party. Hopefully it could lead to new members. We have chosen the ward where we have a candidate (Huw Thomas) if the County Council Elections go ahead in May. See below for more about this last point. We will meet at the Kingsley Statue at 10 am on Saturday February 15<sup>th</sup> when we will give volunteers a bunch of leaflets which should be deliverable in one to one and a half hours. If you can help it would be wonderful.

**County Council Elections** You may have seen that the Government published a proposal to restructure local government by abolishing the current two tier system of District and County Councils and replacing it with a Unitary authority and a Mayor. This proposal came out on 16<sup>th</sup> December and County Councils were given the option to decide to “postpone” elections due in May 25 but had three weeks to make this decision, three weeks that included the Christmas period. Devon along with a significant number of other County Councils duly voted to request postponement. This is very undemocratic as it will leave the existing County Council to make decisions which their replacement might not have agreed with.

There has also been no time to discuss what is the first major shake up of local government since 1974. On that occasion there had been a report – The Maude report – which had looked at the issue in depth before any bill for change was drawn up. To find out more detail you can find a helpful summary at <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/is-my-council-going-to-be-abolished?>

We are concerned in Torridge and North Devon that local government from Exeter would not be local at all. Also it is difficult to imagine one person representing the whole of Devon as a Mayor. It is not the same as representing a city. Even the Green Party in Exeter forgot to ask our Torridge Councillors to sign a letter to the press! Sums up the problem really.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page and in the local and national press for developments, especially whether the Government does or does not agree to postpone County Council elections.

**Climate and Nature Bill** This Bill comes back for its second reading on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January. So far 108 MPs have promised to be present but Geoffrey Cox's name is not yet on the list. Please write to him at The House of Commons asking him to attend this vital Bill reading. Meanwhile Cathrine Simmons and myself are trying to arrange a face to face meeting with him beforehand.

**Torridge Tree Planting at Londonderry Estate** TDC are planting 1000 trees on the Gatefield Amenity Grassland on the Londonderry Estate in Bideford and the Northam Burrows Rangers have put out a call for volunteers to help. The dates are Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January and Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January from 10 am to 3 pm. No experience necessary. To book your place contact 01237 479708 or northamburrows@torridge.gov.uk.

**Big Garden Birdwatch** This takes place on 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> January , organised by the RSPB, and is a vital way of keeping track of how our birdlife is thriving or not. To join, just go to Birdwatch 25 online and it will lead you to details of how to record the bird activity either in your garden or a favourite place you like to go to.

**North Devon Climate Forum** The next meeting will be on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February from 11 until 1 p.m. at Barnstaple Library in room 3b. The subject is "Climate Change, Food Production and Nature. Where do we go from Here?" All welcome.

**XR Open Meeting** XR are meeting this Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> January, from 2 pm until 4 pm at Barnstaple Library in room 3b. Go along to learn what is planned for 2025.

**Next meeting of Torridge Green Party** will be on Saturday February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Pannier Pantry on the junction of Bideford Quay and Bridgeland Street. All welcome.

Ruth Funnell  
Secretary of Torridge Green Party