

## **MINUTES of the Meeting of Torridge Green Party (TGP) held at the Pannier Pantry, Bridgeland Street, Bideford on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2025 at 2.00 p.m.**

**PRESENT** Tracey Beresford, Callum, Danny Lee Curtis, Wilfred Curtis, Will + Gill Douglas-Mann, Keith Funnell, Jack Gordon, Peter Hames, Steve Jarvis, Wendy Lo-vel, Michael Piper (speaker), Howard Porter (NDGP), Tony Pratt, Christianne Sayers, Helen Sheard (BSG), Cathrine Simmons, Huw Thomas, Nicholas Wyke.

**1. APOLOGIES** Ruth Funnell, Brian Garman, Colin Jones, Gillian Stevens

**2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup>.** Accepted.

**3. MATTERS ARISING.** The May 2025 Election Report was not included with the meeting papers and this will be rectified.

### **4. REPORTS**

**a) Treasurer.** Cathrine had forwarded the latest bank statement and it shows that our current balance is £2,040.34. The Green Party has asked for a 2 year delay to capitation payments and after some discussion a period of 1 year was agreed. Huw Thomas reported that Shamfest did not need a TGP donation this year which was accepted. Tracey Beresford proposed that a change of bank to the Co-operative (now controlled by Coventry Building Society) should be considered even if it means paying a small bank charge. This will be investigated before the next meeting.

**b) Membership.** Keith reported that we have 14 new members, 4 in Bideford North and the rest spread throughout the TDC area. A press report suggested the GP surge may be linked to the upcoming leadership election with new members wishing to have a vote.

**c) Election Agent.** Keith explained the May 2025 Devon CC results for the benefit of new members and guests present. He also outlined the proposed unitary re-organisation in Devon which will have implications for our own local party structure. In his view one based on the Health Authorities in Devon that most closely met the 'local' argument with 4 centres – Barnstaple, Exeter, Torbay and Plymouth. Howard pointed out that the GP is based on local govt boundaries whereas Labour use constituencies. Keith explained that historically Torridge has much closer links with North Devon than West Devon our constituency partner based in Tavistock. Huw and Nick highlighted the need to submit a consultation response both individually and collectively (subsequent to the meeting Marcus has circulated the link to members on Action Network). Tracey encouraged everyone to request the new unitaries be elected by proportional representation.

### **5 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS**

**a) Torridge District Council (TDC).** Peter Hames referred to the Climate Action Scorecards (TDC are up 15% but at 32% are below the UK average of 39%) and Peter's proposal for a climate survey in Torridge has been approved by the Climate Greoup. He has tabled two unsuccessful motions on support for national wildlife groups objections to the weakening of bio-diversity protection in Part Three of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and more funding to buy electric vans for Torridge. Climate resilience measures are being reviewed at a future meeting by the Climate Emergency Working Group. X-links (renewable energy from Morocco via undersea cable) is not being supported by the Energy Secretary and there are mixed views within our group that need resolving if the project is resurrected. The Maritime Innovation Centre commencement ceremony has just taken place in Appledore. Peter has established a teamwork arrangement with the newly elected Lib Dem fellow councillor for Appledore, Kerry O'Rourke gfor joint surgeries that include DCC councillor McGeough and town councillors. Wendy drew attention to the change in planning regs in pursuit of speedy house building and the extensive information now available on-line ([www.torridge.gov.uk/housingmonitoring](http://www.torridge.gov.uk/housingmonitoring)).

**b) Northam Town Council(NTC).** Peter reported that the recent Westward Ho! by-election was a win for a local independent candidate over Reform. Jeremy Bell the new councillor is very keen to plant an orchard, more tree planting and other wildlife initiatives. NTC now has another electric vehicle.

**c) Bideford Town Council (BTC).** Jack confirmed that the new mayor is Peter Lawrence and his deputy is Linda Hellyer. The Pannier Market is to have a £1.5m refurb with the emphasis on events rather than markets. He is pressing for a rainwater collection scheme from the new roof. Given the steep approach to the Pannier Market, Tony Pratt asked whether there were any plans to revive the town bus. Jack indicated there are none at present. The BTC green grants scheme is now live with grants for bio-diversity etc up to £750..

**6. ELECTION OF CHAIR.** Cathrine Simmons explained that the Electoral Commission pointed out that she could not be both Chair and Treasurer, although the former role was really for meetings. It was agreed that TGP need a separate chair as titular head and Christianne Sayers was duly elected.

## **7. SHAMFEST AND OTHER ACTIVITIES THIS SUMMER**

Huw said that Shamfest this year will be on the evening of Friday 17<sup>th</sup> and all day on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October and he explained to new members how this was a fundraiser for local charities and was now in its third year.

**8. DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS.** The meeting welcomed Michael Piper who gave a succinct and interesting explanation of this recent alternative to the failing capitalist system which is based around neo-liberalism. Much of the focus was on the capitalist need for continual growth in a world with diminishing resources and the reverence paid to GDP. He explained the context for principles of doughnut economics, the brainchild of 'renegade economist' Kate Raworth and expounded the benefits of 'de-growth'. Gill argued for the use of indices other than GDP such as 'well-being' and 'happiness'. Reference was made in the wide ranging discussion to 'The Spirit Level' by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett plus 'The Shock Doctrine' by Naomi Klein. 'De-growth' was considered too negative as a term and there was a need for green economic arguments with positive vocabulary to counter the rise of Reform.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Howard Porter firstly explained the formation of Devon United a collaboration between local parties, with branches working together on issues such as media presentation. His second point was the upcoming NDGC by-elections in Barnstaple with Westacott district ward as well as the Town Council on 31<sup>st</sup> July. The NDGP candidate is Dave Smales and any campaign support from TGP would be most welcome. Finally, a main aim of Devon United is to take on Reform which he saw as the main election challenge in the short term. He invited our members to engage with NDGP by contributing to their regular zoom meetings.

Tony Pratt highlighted the Taw-Torridge Estuary Green Grants of £100 and the River Champions website. He also mentioned the TDC estuary strategy plan which Peter confirmed is to be discussed by TDC shortly. Tony considered it currently light on environmental and climate change issues.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This was agreed for **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September at 2.00 p.m.**