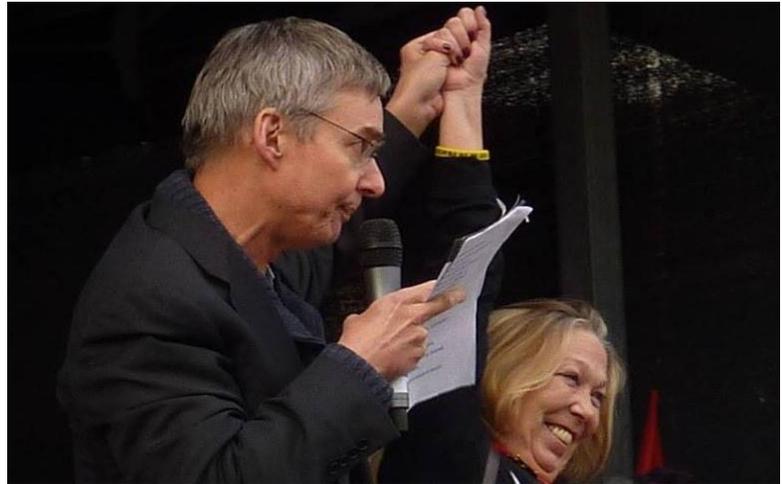


BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE GREEN PARTY

GREEN VIEW - FEBRUARY 2018

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Green Mondays



Green Mondays continue at Preston New Road, demonstrating an ongoing Green Party presence.

Highlights of Green Mondays to come -

- * 5 March, Alasdair Roxburgh, FoE's Director of Communities and Networks.
- * 12 March, Jonathan Bartley, Co-Leader of the Green Party.
- * 26 March, Amelia Womack, Deputy Leader of the Green Party, will be the main speaker.

Another great day to join the fun at PNR will be Friday 16th March - 'jig at the rig' day! Swing into spring and warm up for an exciting summer of action with a massive dance off at the gates of the Preston New Road fracking site. Reclaim the Power will be dropping a live Ceilidh of resistance in the tracks of Lancashire's drilling trucks and mixing it up with the legendary tunes of Pete the Temp, local poetry, a pub quiz and hot food from the community kitchen.

Contacts for more information -

Co-chair - Duncan Royle - Duncan.Royle@greenparty.org.uk
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Secretary - Christine Tootill - christine@alantootill.co.uk
Newsletter Editor - Alan Tootill - alantootill@yahoo.com

Preston New Road Update



Green Mondays continue, as do White Wednesdays. But April marks the start of a show of community resistance, as Cuadrilla prepares to frack.

Under the banner UNITED RESISTANCE, from the beginning of April to the end of June, a variety of groups/organisations will each be 'adopting' a week and organising peaceful protests and actions, to coincide with the period when Cuadrilla think they'll begin fracking.

The first week (starting 2 April) - subtitled 'Love and Defiance' - has been adopted by the 'Women of Nanashire', and other groups, including the women of the 'Call for Calm' White Wednesdays. The week beginning 16th April will be Lancaster week, and the week beginning 4 June will be Green Party week.

Maple Farm Weekend Events

Every Saturday is a Solidarity Saturday at Maple Farm, on Preston New Road, and there are other weekend events at the Community Hub. Check Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/blackpoolfyldegreenparty/>

or

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/210710602798416/>

for details of any special events coming up.



Vegan and Green Fair 10 March



Thanks are due to our member Roddy Hanson for his work in promoting Vegan and Green Fairs in the area, and for securing Green Party participation. A reminder - the first major event is -

Blackpool Vegan and Green Festival

10th March 2018, 10 am to 5 pm

<https://www.facebook.com/BlackpoolVeganGreenFest/>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/128424481216690/>

The event is planned to host around 50 stalls, including 6 caterers, talks and films about veganism and fracking, free food, free guides on how to go vegan, and free vegan recipe booklets. Some 100,000 flyers have been printed to promote the event.

St. Thomas' Church Parish Centre, 135, Counce Street, Blackpool, FY1 3NJ
(10 minutes walk from Blackpool North train station)

The festival will be followed by a party with food from 8 pm until late at Blackpool's only vegan restaurant, bar, and hotel, The King's Hotel, 553, New South Promenade, Blackpool, FY4 1NF
(1 minute walk from Blackpool Pleasure Beach)

For stall bookings, please contact Paul - mail@kingshotelblackpool.co.uk

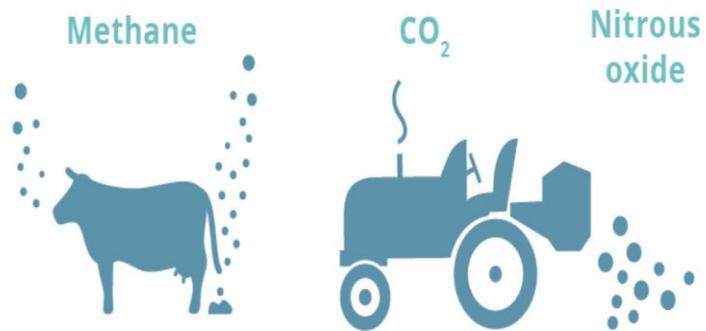
All other enquiries to Roddy - roddy.hanson@googlemail.com

Blackpool and Fylde Green Party is already booked to have a stall at the event, we'll update members nearer the time regarding any specific help needed! We will have a stall for distributing GP literature, selling books and other items, including packs of up-to-date party leaflets.

Roddy is looking for more volunteers for the event, especially for help on the door from 10am until 1pm to team up with another volunteer for that shift.

Why Vegan?

Guest article by Roddy Hanson



Thanks to Roddy for allowing us to republish his article focused on why animal factory farming remains an underestimated issue of Climate Change. The article dates from November 2011 but remains just as valid today.

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas was criticised for supporting Paul McCartney's 'meat free Monday' climate change campaign, but her critics are simply ignorant, because the world's leading authority on climate change, Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, the chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, told the Observer in 2008 that people ought to give up meat one day a week for climate change reasons, and then ought to reduce their meat consumption further:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/sep/07/food.foodanddrink>

As the above Observer article points out, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation has stated that global meat consumption will double by the middle of the century, because the world's growing middle class in for example China, are using their extra income to buy more meat, and FAO said in its now famous book length 2006 report, "Livestock's Long Shadow", which you can read here, that meat production, and dairy production, which it predicted would nearly double by 2050, were the biggest single creators of greenhouse gases, so Caroline Lucas's ignorant critics ought to explain how they intend to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, by for example encouraging people to switch to renewable energy, when what may be the biggest single cause of such emissions is forecast to double, or nearly double over the next 4 decades:

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.htm>

Prince Philip, who, as this Daily Telegraph article shows, decided that vegan food would be the most ecological type of food to serve at a 2009 Windsor Castle summit of the UN Secretary General and the world's religious leaders which was designed to spread green ideas to the planet's religious believers, was the President of the World Wildlife Fund from 1981-1996, so it is not surprising that the WWF argued in a 2009 study that, for climate change reasons, people ought to eat meat no more than 3 times a week, and that they ought to drink soya or rice milk substitutes for cow's milk:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/6488123/Meat-off-the-menu-as-Windsor-Castle-goes-vegan.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1196139/Eat-red-meat-just-times-week-says-World-Wildlife-Fund.html>

Two years later, the WWF commissioned a report from the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health at Aberdeen University which was designed to create a sustainable diet that the WWF could use to lobby the British Government and the British food industry to use as a blueprint for an ideal diet. As you would expect, the proposed diet involves cutting back on meat and dairy consumption:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jan/30/livewell-plate-diet-nutrition>

Friends of the Earth issued a report in 2010 which argued that the Government should change its healthy eating and green advice to encourage people to eat less meat:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/healthy_planet_eating.pdf

Prince Philip's son Charles, who used to be vegetarian, also believes that meat consumption is an environmental problem, as in 2011 he urged Americans, who are particularly big meat consumers, to eat less beef, because the Earth could not cope with the amount of water which is needed to produce it:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/8494171/Prince-Charles-tells-America-to-cut-down-on-steaks-...-for-the-sake-of-the-world.html>

Cont.

Lord Stern, who was a British Government adviser on climate change, also believes that meat consumption is an environmental problem for water, and also climate change reasons. He argued in 2009 that meat eating could eventually become as socially unacceptable as drink driving as a result: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/oct/26/palm-oil-initiative-carbon-emissions>

Later that year, the Government's Sustainable Development Commission released a report which argued that the public ought to cut down on meat and dairy consumption for ecological reasons: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/dec/11/eat-less-meat-dairy-diet>

However, what may be the most important wake up call of all of these warnings from prominent organisations and individuals, was this 2009 report for the American environmental group the Worldwatch Institute, arguing that "Livestock's Long Shadow" was wrong for various reasons to estimate that meat and dairy livestock created only 18% of greenhouse gases. The Worldwatch report claimed that 51% was a better estimate: <http://www.worldwatch.org/files/pdf/Livestock%20and%20Climate%20Change.pdf>

The authors argued that people switching to meat and dairy free diets would be the quickest way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The UN Environment Program was thus right to call in 2010 for the world to adopt a vegan diet to save the planet from climate change, and hunger and fuel poverty: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/jun/02/un-report-meat-free-diet>

All of these warnings over the last 5 years from prominent organisations and individuals about the ecological damage which dairy production does, may partly explain why soya milk sales have massively increased since 2006 in Britain, as this 2011 "Daily Telegraph" article reveals: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/8500956/Soya-milk-goes-mainstream-as-Starbucks-sells-soya-frappuccino.html>

It might be "An Inconvenient Truth", to cite the title of Al Gore's famous documentary about climate change, which says nothing about meat and dairy livestock being a cause of that environmental problem, that people's favourite meat and dairy products are the number one cause of climate change, but there are an ever growing number of meat substitutes which vegan companies like Redwoods and Frys have created for meat eaters who cannot do without the taste of chicken and other meats, and the list of vegan cow's milk substitutes grows ever longer: soya, rice, oat, coconut, hemp, almond, millet, and spelt (a type of wheat) are all now available, though in the latter 4 cases, rarely outside health food shops, and I know from experience that adopting a vegan diet also leads you to try many types of tasty food that you would never have considered as an omnivore, or even as a vegetarian.

While the various prominent organisations and individuals who I have cited have highlighted various ecological reasons for adopting a vegan diet, they have not listed them all. The British vegan campaigning group Viva! have pointed out that farmed animals are not only the number one cause of climate change, but also the number one cause of: species extinction (because of farmers destroying their forest and other habitats), deforestation, desertification (which is primarily caused by grazing animals at the edge of deserts), and water pollution (because most of the world's crops are chemically grown farm animal fodder, because of slurry from factory farms, etc.), and a leading cause of acid rain (because animal manure creates most nitrous oxide and ammonia), and antibiotic resistant superbugs (factory farming packs animals closely together, which rapidly spreads diseases, and leads to factory farmers heavily dosing their animals with antibiotics that people then consume the residue of when they eat those animals).

Viva! also point out that overfishing is emptying the world's oceans, so it is handy that Redwoods have put so much effort into creating fish substitutes for people who wouldn't like to do without the taste of fish. There is now even a vegan caviar made from seaweed, though unlike Redwoods and Frys products, which are widely available in health food shops, it is not easy to find: <http://www.cavi-art.com/>

The title of an important 2007 Viva! report about the ecological impact of non-vegan food, "Diet of Disaster", was thus appropriate.

Roddy Hanson

Flooding, Extreme Weather and Climate Change

A conference report by
John Warnock



Extreme weather event conference

Lancaster 2017

I enjoy my few visits to Lancaster a year, although they always seem to be Green Party related. Some event catches my eye and I make the effort to go along, so I never get to see as much of the town as I would like. As a councillor on Fleetwood Town council for 4 years, one of my duties was to attend Wyre Flood forum 4 times a year, so I was not attending from a zero-knowledge base. The conference started with an introduction to the Greenhouse think tank and former Leader Natalie Bennett explained the work of Green European Foundation (GEF) the co-sponsors of this event. GEF is a Pan-European political organisation funded by the European Parliament and worth looking up on the internet.

Due to climate change, extreme weather events will become more likely and hence instability and uncertainty for the communities affected will increase. This conference addressed how the experience of extreme weather events now can help communities to be better prepared for such events in the future. My personal belief is that due to business as usual policies, we're on a trajectory of adaptation, living with some of the adverse effects of climate change rather than avoiding it.

This conference, took place in a community (Lancaster) that experienced a major power cut caused by the floods of December 2015, (caused by storm Desmond). The conference brought together people from across Europe, including speakers from Lancaster, Paris, and Barcelona, to find out what we can learn from each other. Climate change is going to increase the frequency and severity of extreme weather. Already we are seeing the impacts of this, with unprecedented flooding in the North of England in December 2015, flooding in Spain in 2016, the heat wave in Paris in 2003 and Lancaster got hit for a second time due to heavy rainfall in Summer 2017. The theme being, "How can we learn from these events so that we are better prepared in future?"

The morning session included 3 very good speakers sharing their experiences, responses and things that they have helped to bring for others going forward. Caroline Jackson, (Green Party) Lancaster City councillor started, followed by Sergi Alegre, (Green Party) and Vice Mayor of El Prat de Llobregat had both experienced Flooding. The third speaker, from France, Alice le Roy, former policy adviser to Paris City council talked about the Paris heatwave of 2003, where 3,000 people died in one day. Paris has suffered 3 times since, in 2006, 2010 & 2015 but not on the scale of 2003 due to the responses and action put in place.

Cont.

It took France 2 years to link the heatwave to climate change, and 4 years to implement the 1st draft of their action plan. Although it seems that lessons have been quickly forgotten, as there are plans to build a snow dome on 80 hectares of prime farm land that feeds the city of Paris. Spain has its own heat risk plans in place, but the UK is trying to deliver it as cheaply as possible and leaving it to communities, with community action plans and community flood forums as a volunteer force. This is not a totally bad idea if it gets the right amount of funding from Government.

The afternoon session was a choice of two workshops from 4. The first one for me was a simple choice. Inspired by a George Monbiot's piece on rewilding , (plus I follow the reintroduction of the beaver in Devon) , and during our 2017 general election launch Ruth Norbury spoke well on this subject of rewilding and flood management . Upland management and rewilding as a landscape response, may not be tidy but it is effective at slowing the rate of water flow. Thousands of trees are being planted at the source of the lune and the local farmers, if not all of them are fully on board at least they are having the right conversations, and it is the corporate farms that need to be reined in. My second workshop was about community engagement, and emergency plans - not that exciting to the lay man, but useful to learn there are grants and things out there for communities. Also, I was introduced to a new charity, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) UK, that formed after storm Desmond and seems to be going from strength to strength. CERT has a web site where you can form your own home flood plan and a flood kit check list if you feel you're in a vulnerable area.

Positives for me from this conference;

- 1) the most repeated sentence was, "lead by example, get people involved". For example, a lot is being done by the woodland trust and some small farmers.
- 2) we are learning that it is not just a case of putting up higher and higher flood defences, but that we need to manage the whole eco system.
- 3) Even big meat eating nations like France and Spain are seeing increases in vegetarianism and veganism to combat personal climate impacts.

Footnote

Lancaster has just been hit again by Flooding on 23rd November 2017, with the highest level of rain fall recorded by the Lancaster University weather station. It seems to me that the Lancaster Labour party and the University plans to build at Bailrigg have always seemed mistaken, but mention of this has always been met with the claim of ignoring housing needs. We know this is a high flood risk area as is most of Lancaster. The run offs are increasingly limited, and pressure on drainage systems very high. Yesterday's flooding in Galgate, Bowerham, Scotforth and elsewhere only seem to confirm what a bad idea it is to further erode the capacity of the eco-systems here.

John Warnock
Co-Chair
Blackpool and Fylde Green Party

The Green Party and Me

Alan Tootill



In the first of an occasional series of articles by our members on why they joined the Green Party and why they remain, Alan Tootill reminisces about his time in the Party. For future articles in the newsletter all contributions, long or short, will be welcome.

In trying to answer the questions, why I joined the Party, and why I am a committed life member, I find it embarrassing to say I don't remember exactly why or how I joined.

I only know that it happened as part of a life-change, when my wife Christine and I moved with our family from London to live in rural East Devon. Exactly what prompted us to start attending Green Party meetings in the nearby town of Ottery St Mary, as I say, I don't recall. I do remember, though, that we met an interesting small group of people who had open minds, who appeared intelligent, and concerned, about not only the local and wider environment, but social issues across the spectrum and genuine democracy and equal opportunity.

Maybe I had been searching for a political home. I had what I now think of as a rather conservative attitude during my schooldays, which broadened out during the late 1960s, especially during and after university. I regarded myself then as having politics on the firm left of the centre, but although my father had always voted Labour, and my mother probably as well (it being usual in those days for wives to have little political opinion and follow their husbands, but not say either way – how times have changed!), I confess I never voted at all until the Devon move.

I realised the Green Party had a policy base much broader than environmental protection, one which was unique, and which matched my aspirations for a fairer society. For the first time I felt, too, in a political environment where change was both needed and possible through my personal involvement. I realised that local town councils, and the local District Council, were peopled by individuals, and sadly the more I found, the less I respected many of them, and the system which supported them.

On the District Council the same party – the Conservatives – had been in control since the 1974 local government restructuring. They ruled the roost with little opposition, there was effectively no Labour Party presence locally and an ineffectual rump of LibDems. On the local town council seats were occupied by ageing old-Honitonians (who knew or cared little about the newcomers who had been encouraged to move to the town through extensive housing estate creation on green fields and encroaching on the local AONB), and crusty war veterans. I remember being rebuked by one of these for promoting a candle vigil in opposition to the threatened Iraq War. This hawk told the Town Council exactly what he would like to do with my lit candle. All good for raising my profile as it went well recorded in the local media!

Green issues were largely off the radar. Climate Change – or Global Warming/Ozone layer holes/acid rain issues – had not reached political consciousness, even if already creeping into school textbooks. Frankly the Green Party could make its voice heard clearer on local environmental issues, for example the dumping of sewage into the sea and the resulting widespread failure of bathing water quality to match standards.

Even then it was an uphill battle – the Leader of the District Council poopooed (if that is the right word) our raising that particular issue, and told the local newspaper that the fecal coliforms off his beloved Sidmouth were deposited there by passing sea mammals.

I found myself in an active – if small – group of party activists in a situation where we had lots of issues to tackle, and on these could become a clear and unique political voice locally. Two of us in particular set our sights on the District Council elections, and worked for two solid years before those elections making our presence known in the local media and hence in the local society. The local media, somewhat cool initially, being conservative in attitude (sound familiar?) warmed to us when we started providing good stories and good copy.

We had wide coverage on the bathing water sewage issues. I remember I appeared even in the Daily Express, which claimed I had invented the term “Slime Regis”, which upset the mayor of Lyme Regis greatly at the time, but he could not deny the record of condoms, other toilet debris and the failure of his seawater that we provided full evidence of. In East Devon and West Dorset we had raised the issue, which was also being taken up by Surfers Against Sewage.

This was a time when the water industry was undergoing privatisation. This gave us ample opportunity to raise issues on water usage, including the supposed need for a new reservoir in the beautiful Higher Brookland Valley in East Devon. We focussed on the false data on need, the real need for South West Water to plug its leaks and stop wastage, and gained a lot of support locally and in the media on these issues. We also went to town on the fact that SWW was briefing the District Council in meetings where councillors were failing to declare interests, now, of course, being shareholders of the recently privatised company. They still referred to the water “authority” as an arm of government. We embarrassed them severely over this. The victory, though, came, when we drew media attention to the fact that SWW’s trial drilling in the valley, done surreptitiously and without landowner approval, was causing the side of the valley to fold and fall down. They denied being the cause, of course, but soon after were forced by geology as well as public disapproval to ditch the new reservoir idea.

Apart from environmental issues, we had two other major issues to campaign on. The first was the failure of the District Council to handle a situation whereby a senior Tory member had been involved in skulduggery in promoting his own major planning application. We were the single voice and party pursuing this issue strongly. It ended in a damning Ombudsman report, and finally the ruling party was forced to ditch its member, who was forced off the council. Campaigning on propriety in council affairs won us much public approval, I think, and my Green Party colleague duly replaced the disgraced councillor on the Council as a member for Ottery.

But perhaps the biggest issue raising its head at the time was the Poll Tax. Locally, Labour were almost non-existent, in Honiton consisting of one town councillor who declared himself a Marxist and spent all his time trying to avoid any public spending. On the Poll Tax it was the Green Party who took the lead, and we were very much seen locally as heading up the battle against the tax. We were on the streets, and also in the courts, acting as McKenzie Friends for those summoned for non-payment. My role in this was well known. When it came to my non-payment of the tax my case was sent to Axminster court, rather than my local Honiton court. But, more disgracefully, I was denied the opportunity of a court appearance. I received no notification. The Treasurer and his deputy swore blind I had received no special treatment. They were forced to confess that my case had been singled out for discussion. But they insisted my summons had been posted. I did not believe them, frankly, but I had revenge of a sort, later, when I was elected to the council.

I was busy on the Council for eight years, and spent much of that time supporting my local constituents, both individually when they faced problems with the council, e.g. on housing or rents, and the community by working hard for the creation of a Honiton arts and community centre. The town had recently doubled in population but its amenities were crumbling. We had partial success during my time as a councillor and as Chairman of the Community Centre Association, achieving a site for the building, and grants from the Arts Council, but the project in part stalled through the opposition from political opponents of myself and another councillor who were proponents of the scheme, and from a rump of backward Honitonians who opposed any spending. I retired from the fight, in part to defuse political opposition to the scheme, and the battle rumbled on until 2014 when the Beehive was finally completed – some twenty-three years after I joined as a founding member the committee working for the scheme. I am pleased to say the Beehive has now proved itself as a vibrant community venue with a programme of live events, cinema & space for community activities, exhibitions, workshops, meetings and conferences, but too late for me, my move back to the Fylde, my homeland, was already underway.

Working as a – hopefully – effective councillor meant less time for party work, and in fact the local Green Party suffered a decline, through members leaving, with few new recruits. It was wearing, too, and eventually without Party support I felt I needed a break. For most of the first decade of this century I spent much of my year either in India or Italy, and fell away from activism. Meanwhile the local party grew again without my help!

The fracking issue was responsible for bringing me back in the fold. Christine and I were thinking of a move from Devon, and I had a hankering to return to live near the sea, in the Fylde. My boyhood had been spent here, in Cleveleys, and my parents remained there until their passing, so it was familiar, too, to Christine.

The 2011 news of fracking's stirring up seismic events was a wake-up call to me, as for many others. The more I investigated fracking, the more I realised this was perhaps the single most significant environmental issue to threaten the UK in many decades. I spent most of the next six years working on fracking, including the writing of two volumes on what was going on, and hopefully that work was helpful to some in understanding fracking's issues.

My role in the Green Party now is largely from a desk. I wish I were younger. I see the situation in the Fylde much as it was in East Devon thirty years ago, with a Borough Council ruled by a Tory party with little to control their excesses (and excesses there are, as a reader of Counterbalance will know well), and no effective political party in opposition. I see the potential for an active Green Party to become a vocal opposition, and to take seats on the Borough Council in the foreseeable future. But it will take a lot of dedication and hard work. I can no longer myself commit to that, except in a supportive role.

Finally, I will mention one issue I feel strongly about, having seen this in action and thought about it a lot over the decades, and that is tactical voting. I have never voted for any party other than the Green Party, and never will, in any circumstances. Too often I have seen supporters dissuaded from voting Green by the suggestion that it is a wasted vote, or that a tactical vote will achieve the removal of a greater evil. In my opinion it is always a mistake to fall for this. In the Fylde, for example, at the last general election we had pressure on us to vote Labour. Even when anyone with any political nous would have known Labour had not a snowball's chance in hell of winning the seat. A vote for Labour was a wasted vote. That vote given to the Green Party would have been more effective in promoting our true alternative, demonstrating our electoral support, and nationally promoting the need for a fairer electoral system of representation and the need to end the two-party system. The Green Party is the future, and only by voting for it, with heart and mind, will that future come sooner.

News Roundup In Brief

A by-election is looming in Heyhouses Ward of Fylde Borough Council on April 5th, and we have a fine candidate in Ian Roberts. Ian is well-known for his community project work in the area, and any support that can be offered for his campaign would be welcome. Members will be updated soon with more information.

Our AGM was held in January, and minutes have been circulated to members. The posts of Communication and Campaigns Officer and Young Green representative remain vacant, if anyone feels able to offer help in these areas please contact one of our co-chairs.

North-West Green Party has an **Equality and Diversity Policy**, and we shall be formulating our own version of this. Hopefully a draft version will be available soon for member consultation.

Our Secretary has been in correspondence with Blackpool Transport and Stagecoach regarding our **proposal for an express bus route** between Starr Gate and Preston railway station, and when it is clearer what the outcome of that correspondence is, we hope to mount a campaign on the issue, involving canvassing the public and press coverage.

Stop Press

The diary for the **United Resistance: 3 months of Love & Defiance** at Preston New Road has now been published as follows -

- Week One, 2nd - 8th April: Nana's/Women against Fracking
- Week Two, 9th - 15th April: Labour/Unions
- Week Three, 16th - 22nd April: Lancaster Week
- Week Four, 23rd - 29th April: No Faith in Fracking
- Week Five, 30th April - 6th May: Artists Against Fracking
- Week Six, 7th - 13th May: Save Our Land
- Week Seven, 14th - 20th May: Frack Free Lancashire
- Week Eight, 21st - 27th May: Camps and Health
- Week Nine, 28th May - 3rd June: International Week
- Week Ten, 4th - 10th June: Green Party
- Week Eleven, 11th - 17th June: Reclaim the Power
- Week Twelve 18th - 24th June: Reclaim the Power
- Week Thirteen 25th June - 1st July: Finale Week

The aim of the 3 months is to unite environmental, anti-fracking and other groups across the UK to stop Cuadrilla and ultimately all threat of fracking. On offer is camping accommodation, with free hot evening meals, only 10 minutes away from Blackpool via public or personal transport. All are welcome, and there will be as much tea, coffee and cake as you can consume.

For more details email ruth.owens478@gmail.com or beckydaniels24@gmail.com

Word has it that Magid Magid, Green Party councillor and deputy lord mayor of Sheffield, not to mention TV celebrity (!), will attend PNR on 9th April, and hopefully make an address.

Latest Breaking News

On 12th March Green Monday (with Jonathan Bartley returning) – Andrew Cooper and some of the No Fracking Way walkers will be coming to commemorate the first anniversary of the march.

They have asked if we can lay a plaque by the Oak tree that was planted at Maple Farm last year. We will be getting a metal plaque engraved.

The suggested wording is -

"Here Anti Fracking Campaigners, walking 120 miles from Yorkshire, planted an oak tree with soil from Kirby Misperton in North Yorkshire.

They did so in solidarity with Lancashire campaigners at Preston New Road.

We came in peace for people and our planet. 8-12 March 2017"

Also on 12th March

We now expect that Dale Vince (owner of Ecotricity) will also be coming on 12 March.

We'll update our website

blackpoolfylde.greenparty.org.uk/

With any changes/developments.

Members' Letters in the Press

Here's a small selection of letters printed recently in the Blackpool Gazette. Why not join the members airing their views?

Email to letters@blackpoolgazette.co.uk

OR send them by post to: LETTERS PAGE, Avroe House, Avroe Crescent, Blackpool Business Park, Blackpool, FY4 2DP

To maximise their chance of appearing, keep letters short (300 words maximum) and it is necessary to include your name and address and a contact telephone number.

Act now and we can shake up childcare

February 14th 2018

We all want a childcare system that is more affordable and easy to use, so parents face less stress and can access the nursery hours they need, and one that delivers the best possible start for children.

The childcare system in England isn't working. Great childcare sets up young children for life - helping them to learn, express themselves and get along with other children. It's where they learn the communication skills, and gain the confidence and curiosity that will mean they thrive once they start school. Nursery workers and childminders are doing an incredible job. But right now, our broken childcare system isn't giving families the support they need - at the most important time in their children's lives.

Even though changes have been made, many parents are still finding it tough to make choices about going back to work, with mums who are struggling to make ends meet being hit the hardest. Parents tell us that childcare bills are so high that it's not worth going back to work, and that finding a way to get the support on offer from the government is tricky. We need a childcare system that fits around families' lives and gives parents the choice to go back to work if they want to. It's better for parents, and better for their children.

Please consider signing a Save the Children petition calling on Theresa May to make childcare work for everyone by visiting www.savethechildren.org.uk

By signing the petition, you will help Save the Children raise childcare up the UK government's agenda and show them how many people want a childcare system that gives children the best start and parent's choices.

GARRY RICHARDSON
Catterall Close
Blackpool

More Members' Letters

Fracking's not just a local issue

I am writing in response to the letter from ex-councillor Bernard Whittle (Your Say, November). It is mentioned many of the anti-fracking protesters are not local. This statement shows a lack of understanding of what the protest is about.

While it is true that people living in the vicinity are being adversely affected by Cuadrilla's actions, fracking is a national and international issue. This country is a signatory to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and this is incompatible with further development of fossil fuels.

To describe fracking as a "welcome industry" is absurd. All mining of fossil fuels should be banned. Many countries have imposed a permanent ban on fracking. England is now the only part of the British Isles which allows it.

If we had a stronger government at Westminster, which was able to force the energy industries to invest entirely in renewables, the whole issue would be resolved, and the protesters would go home.

CHRISTINE TOOTILL
Lytham St Annes

We're local and we're not moving!

If Messrs Green, Whittle and Menzies went up to the fracking site they would discover that the majority of the protesters are local people. They would also see for themselves the devastation, noise and fumes caused by this industrial site. Mark Menzies is right to be concerned about the 200 sites that are planned for his constituency.

Local people have been protesting on the roadside since January and we are not giving up. We even go at weekends and give out information, tea and cakes at Maple Farm Community Hub on Saturday mornings. Come and talk to a local, see for yourself, get a true picture not a politically altered view.

MRS A FIELDING
Clarendon Road St Annes

Fracking The UK

A reminder, Alan Tootill's books Fracking the UK, and Fracking the UK 2, together present a unique primer on fracking and its prospects in the UK.

If you need paperback editions, you'll have to buy them from Amazon, I'm afraid, but digital versions are available for FREE download from the following links -

Fracking the UK – the essential primer
mobi format for Kindle tablets, smartphones etc
<http://frackingtheuk.co.uk/frackingtheuk.mobi>
pdf
<http://frackingtheuk.co.uk/frackingtheuk.pdf>

Fracking the UK 2 – an update 2013-2016

mobi
<http://frackingtheuk.co.uk/frackingtheuk2.mobi>
pdf format
<http://frackingtheuk.co.uk/frackingtheuk2.pdf>

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