

# BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE GREEN PARTY

## GREEN VIEW - MAY 2018

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### PNR Regulars



Green Mondays are a regular event at Preston New Road, demonstrating an ongoing Green Party presence.

Continuing too are the White Wednesdays, a women's Call for Calm, including a peace walk to the PNR site and a silent vigil. This is facilitated by the police, making it a safe and comfortable action for newcomers. You can find out more details here-

[Women's Peace Walk Every Wednesday](#)

And, of course, 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.

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# PNR Action Update



Green Mondays continue, as do White Wednesdays. But April marked the start of an amazing show of community resistance.

Under the banner UNITED RESISTANCE, from the beginning of April to the end of June, a variety of groups/organisations are 'adopting' a week and organising peaceful protests and actions, to coincide with the period when Cuadrilla think they'll begin fracking. This start seems now in doubt as we understand Cuadrilla's finances will be investigated before any final permission for fracking is granted.

Here is the schedule from the half-way point – Green member support will be particularly welcome in weeks 7 and 11.

Week 7: Uniting the Roses 14-18 May including (18<sup>th</sup>) a guest speaker from Argentina - Fernando Cabrera. [See Other News below for details.](#)

Week 8: Camps United 21-25 May

Week 9: International Week 28 May-2 June

Week 10: Unions Week 4-8 June

Week 11: Green Party Week 11-15 June

Week 12: PNR Week 18-22 June

Week 13: RTP & Finale Week 25-29 June including (26<sup>th</sup>) Manchester to PNR bike ride and the start of a Block around the Clock mass action camp.



# Vegan and Green Fair Report



The Green Vegan and Green Festival on 10<sup>th</sup> March was a great success, and even achieved a mention in the Observer, as did our own Roddy Hanson!

Thanks to Roddy for organising the event, and also to those who helped man the Green Party stall.

*"A weekend outing to Blackpool in 2018 offers much of what it always did: seagulls, slot machines, big-screen sport, family meal deals, "traditional fish and chips", pirate rides, poncho vendors, palm-readers and pound shops. But there are other, newer diversions, too. On a grey Saturday morning in low season, at St Thomas' church, north of the city centre, the [Blackpool Vegan and Green festival](#) is humming with people. Something of the church's evangelical spirit is alive here, too."*

*"With almond milk and vegan ranges now available in supermarkets, it's a testament to soaring public curiosity that people are being drawn to once specialist events in such numbers. "It's jam-packed isn't it!" says Michelle Makita, with a laugh, from the Little Blue Hen vegan soap stall. Over the course of the day, hundreds of people stream in; visitors from across Blackpool, the north-west, even Spain. There is an African superfoods stand, a Glaswegian jerk pie company, Turkish gözleme flatbreads, cakes, curries, wraps, sushi, vegan candles, vegan pet food, shlocky T-shirts and accessories ("Zombies eat flesh, go vegan"). Darting around in a high-vis jacket, organiser [Roddy Hanson](#) squeezes past the prams, teenagers, bearded veterans in earth-tone baja tops, normies and newbies."*

*"Grabbing some air and calm when the lunch rush has finally subsided (at about 4pm), Hanson is a mine of information about vegan history and culture and has seen a tightly bound, activism-driven outsider community become an accepted phenomenon in a matter of a few years. "When I went vegan in the 1980s, it was primarily two groups: hippies and punks. Some people who come to our events think it's going to be wall-to-wall people with pink hair and piercings, but the whole culture has changed – it's a very broad cross-section."*

Cont.



*“He has been vegan for 30 years, a veteran of animal rights activism, but this convivial, family-day-out approach to winning converts is more his speed. “I’ve never been the sort of person who wants to stand outside fur shops and get into arguments with people. It’s more positive this way and you can choose to engage with it if you want, rather than be confrontational. I’ve been involved in anti-circus demos where fights have broken out with some of the protesters and the circus staff; that kind of thing was a lot bigger in the 80s. Now it’s based around vegan groups and fairs, which didn’t really exist then.”*

Read the full article here -  
[The unstoppable rise of veganism](#)



## Local Greens Working for the Community

Ian Roberts



It's probably at risk of bringing a blush to Ian's cheeks to say that few could work harder in St Annes for their community. Over the last years he has not only worked hard, but achieved bringing some important projects to fruition. His most recent success was in spearheading the new Splash! initiative, which will bring a new attraction and facility for both residents and visitors.

# Gearing up to make a seafront Splash!

By **Tony Durkin**  
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St Annes seafront is set to feature an exciting new family attraction in time for the peak summer holiday season.

Work will start on April 30 on the Splash! water play area – a joint project between the Promenade Gardens Friends and Fylde Council to transform a long derelict former paddling pool.

The water play area, called Splash!, is intended for youngsters aged between three and 12.

The Friends group has been working on the project

in partnership with Fylde Council for the last two years, during which £250,000 funding has been gathered from various sources.

Splash! will be free to use and include water sprays, bucket drops, water domes and a small section for paddling.

Fylde Council tourism and leisure chairman Coun Cheryl Little said: "It will be a mini family adventure park all on its own for residents and visitors alike come rain or shine."

Friends group chairman Ian Roberts (pictured) said: "Consultation exercises with visitors and local people has established considerable enthusiasm for this project."



An artist's impression of the Splash! play area

This Prom Gardens Friends Splash! initiative is a prime example of how Ian can work with people from other parties when they have a shared objective of improving the town's attractions. Ian says, modestly,

*"The idea was originally Sue Fazackerley's with some support from Cheryl Little, I even managed to get some funding from Ed Nash in his role as a Lancashire County Councillor - Conservatives all - but I don't let that get in the way of my commitment and here we are just 2 years since forming the Friends and a few months away from the project's completion."*

Cont.

Ian has shown commitment to positive co-operation, in true Green fashion, on other projects too - another example - he worked with and supported an initiative sponsored by the Town Council's Vince Settle to improve the bridleways on Lytham Moss.

As Chairman of the Friends of Hope Street Park Ian continues to work with Fylde Council to make improvements there. A new "Wild Walk" was planted last year with some lovely 3 metre tall trees bought from Maple Farm (readers will know this !). Ian is currently discussing replacing some dangerous fencing in the park with the Council and the Friends group will be making a significant financial contribution towards this.

With his St Anne's In Bloom Committee member hat on Ian is working with Fylde Council to have 8 original artworks installed in the Peace and Happiness Garden on the Prom in July, portraits celebrating entertainers who have been associated with the area, and he liaises with the St Anne's Music and Arts Festival team who are supporting his idea of holding an evening of entertainment at the Palace Rooms to highlight the various artists.

Ian will most definitely be embarrassed to have recalled this example of his public-spiritedness, an act of such unselfishness it made the BBC news.

[Couple donate £21K doorstep cash to St Annes park revamp](#)



Ian has been involved with the fight against fracking from the start, as member and chair of Residents Action on Fylde Fracking. Like many, Ian started with an open mind as to what impact fracking might have on the community, but soon came to realise the threat fracking poses, not only in the Fylde but everywhere. He has made a significant contribution not only by strongly opposing plans to harm the Fylde, but in trying to ensure through his involvement with community police liaison (on fracking protest particularly) that protest could be carried out peacefully and with minimal violent confrontation.



# Fracking News

Once again, just as [Greens are leading the battle against fracking](#) on the front line, so, too, are our hard-working representatives in UK and Scottish parliaments.

[As resistance at Preston New Road](#) was about to enter its seventeenth month a question in Parliament from [Green Party MP Caroline Lucas](#) revealed a flaw in Cuadrilla's claims that they were on the brink of fracking.

*"To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Written Ministerial Statement of 25 January 2018 on energy policy, HCWS428, if he will ask the Infrastructure and Projects Authority to assess the financial resilience of Cuadrilla Resources Ltd, including its ability to fund decommissioning costs, as part of the Government's consideration of that company's application for consent to fracture its first horizontal well at Preston New Road, Lancashire; and if he will make a statement."*

The reply came from minister Claire Perry -

*"As a matter of policy, and as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 25 January 2018, my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State will seek an independent assessment of a company's financial resilience before Hydraulic Fracture Consent is granted. If or when an application for Hydraulic Fracture Consent is received from Cuadrilla, the Secretary of State will ask for an assessment of the company's financial resilience."*

The reply stated that not only would the company's viability be investigated, but that apparently Cuadrilla had not yet applied for the final fracking consent they need for PNR, although they claim to have completed drilling the necessary horizontal well.

This was followed by speculation that Cuadrilla's CEO was in China seeking support for Cuadrilla's ailing Australian 47% backer AJ Lucas, and questions as to whether the financial assessment would include looking at the finances of Cuadrilla's other major backer Riverstone, operating out of New York but commonly thought of as financially based in the offshore haven of the Caymans.

Cuadrilla face yet [another hurdle at Preston New Road](#). Friends of the Earth are mounting a legal challenge against the Environment Agency's decision last December to grant further changes to Cuadrilla's permit. They applied in March for a judicial review in the High Court. They also sent a letter asking Business Secretary Greg Clark seeking assurance that fracking permission will not be granted while the challenge is considered. FoE's challenge appears principally based on the grounds that the EA failed to conduct a best available technique assessment when considering Cuadrilla's application.

Would-be frackers Third Energy at [Kirby Misperton](#) received a setback in January, when Business Secretary Greg Clark said they would not receive a fracking permit until satisfactory financial checks were completed. This followed extensive delays in publishing financial reports for 2016, when the company recorded a multi-million pound loss. The company was clearly not confident about the outcome of a financial review, as in February they started pulling equipment out of the site. Campaigners also started dismantling the protection camp, in a sign of optimism that Third Energy's admission that fracking would be delayed for at least six months was an underestimate, if indeed they are allowed to start fracking at all.

[Caroline Lucas](#) pushed this in Parliament, asking -

*"What financial benchmarks his Department plans to use to inform its consideration, based on an assessment by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, of the financial resilience of (a) Third Energy UK Gas Limited and (b) other companies proposing to carry out hydraulic fracturing operations."*

Cont.

Replying for Greg Clark, Energy Minister Claire Perry told Caroline :

*"As set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 25 January 2018, my rt. hon. Friend the Secretary of State has asked the Infrastructure and Projects Authority to assess the financial resilience of Third Energy UK Gas Ltd, including its ability to fund decommissioning costs. That process is still ongoing. The Department will respond further, as appropriate, in due course."*

**A legal challenge by INEOS** (and Reach Coal Seam Gas) against a Scottish government fracking ban, which has just begun in court May 8, has raised the question – is there a ban or not? The QC acting for the Government told the hearing that the companies were mistaken to think that a ban was in place. Effectively there may be a moratorium, but a ban has to be finalised.

This immediately led to Labour criticism of the SNP, claiming they had been misled by SNP hype. But it was not Labour who first raised the question of the existence of a ban. Once again it was a **Green Party member of the Scottish Parliament, MSP Mark Ruskell**, who had taken the lead. Back last October, Mark challenged SNP energy minister Paul Wheelhouse saying the government had not introduced a ban, but merely extended the moratorium.

The minister said he was "taken aback" and suggested Mark had not been listening. *"I give reassurance - I tried to make it crystal clear in my statement - that there is, in effect, a ban on unconventional oil and gas activities in Scotland."* A week later, a series of ministers told the SNP conference there was a ban.

Ban or moratorium apart, Friends of the Earth were granted leave to enter the legal debate as a third party and will strongly dispute the validity of INEOS and Reach's attempt to overturn Scottish democracy, and a decision which was taken after overwhelming public support.

**The public inquiry into Roseacre Wood planning permission refusal** took place in April, and we shall have to wait to see whether the (new) Planning Inspector now finds Cuadrilla's revise traffic plan acceptable. If he did, very few would agree with him.

This is, of course, the second inquiry into the refusal by Lancashire County Council. The first was recommended again for refusal by the planning inspector, but once again, as happened with Preston New Road, the then Communities Secretary overrode the community – and now planning inspectorate – decision by forcing a re-examination of the traffic issues and declaring he was mindful to approve the application.

You will find a full account of the planning inquiry – including an insightful comment on the behaviour and demeanour of the inspector – on Counterbalance. The final week's summing up, and Counterbalance's own comments are here -

[Roseacre Inquiry Week 3](#)

**Government attempts** to further undermine local democracy on fracking planning came under scrutiny recently. The select Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee is undertaking an examination into a number of issues, primarily focussing on whether the government should remove decision making from local elected authorities entirely and view fracking as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Most of the written evidence (even from fracking companies) suggested the response should be no. The hearings continue.

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The government did not help its case by publishing, just before the deadline for submissions to the Select Committee, a new **draft National Planning Policy Framework** (NPPF). This strengthens the advice to local authorities to look favourably on fracking planning applications, and to include pro-fracking policies in local plans, and should be vigorously opposed. A public consultation closed on 10<sup>th</sup> May.

**In Yorkshire**, a planning inspector threw what could be **a body-blow to fracking** in England. At the public examination of North Yorkshire's new Minerals and Waste Plan, the inspector approved a clause which declared a set-back distance of 500m between fracking operations and homes.

In what may prove to be a very significant statement, inspector Elizabeth Ord said -

*"I am satisfied that there should be a 500m buffer, or whatever you want to call it."*

*"We have a situation with a new industry and a lot of fear about it. I accept that fear should not make planning policy but the precautionary principle is well established and there is justification of treading carefully in the first five years of the plan."*

Some of us might argue that in view of the evidence which continues to emerge of health problems of US residents living near fracking sites, a 1km setback might be even more prudent, but even a 500m buffer would rule out much of the UK's densely-populated land. The industry knows this fully well, and have threatened a legal challenge to the plan if it is adopted.

**Once again, it was Caroline Lucas** who uncovered in parliament a major government failing. Following a Greenpeace investigation, in response to a written question, Energy Minister, Claire Perry, confirmed not only was the prediction of wells to be drilled (which was the basis for the "security of supply" argument) hopelessly optimistic, the government has NO current estimate for the number of wells which might be expected to be drilled and fracked by 2030. The report Greenpeace had uncovered estimated a miserable 155 wells, but Perry now admitted this was also out-of-date but there were no new figures. This March admission was followed by the statement *"The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has not made any estimates of the potential effect on employment from the future development of the shale gas industry."*

This could well be described as totally destroying the government's arguments in favour of fracking.

Friends of the Earth followed this up by producing results from a **study conducted by the Cardiff Business School**, which concluded that about 6,100 medium productivity wells would be needed to cut gas imports by 50% from 2021-2035. Meaning one well would have to be drilled and fracked every day for 15 years to produce enough gas to replace half future UK gas imports, showing further how the government's fracking policy is in disarray, and the industry's ambition unattainable.

All in all the last three months have given grounds for optimism.

It seems now, everywhere fracking is finding communities and councils lining up against the industry. **Natalie Bennett** suggests this could be the year fracking is defeated – with or without Jeremy Corbyn's support - The [anti-fracking campaign is stepping up its game](#).

# Other News Roundup

**May's local council election results** across the country were brilliant, with congratulations due to all the new Green councillors. The Green Party was defending 32 seats at the 2018 local council elections and held 165 seats on 63 different councils across England and Wales Here is the Green Party's report from 4<sup>th</sup> May.

*"With what has been an impressive set of wins for the Greens, so far 39 Green councillors have been elected (a net gain of 8), and Greens have broken through onto an additional 6 councils across England. Our new councillors have taken a total of 10 seats from the Tories and 9 from Labour.*

*In Solihull, Cllr James Burn has retained his seat with the biggest majority ever recorded for the Green at 78% of the vote. James is joined by 4 other Greens elected in Solihull today.*

*In London, Green Party Co-Leader Jonathan Bartley has been elected alongside 4 other Greens in Lambeth. The Greens are now the main opposition on five councils including Lambeth, Norwich, Solihull, Mid-Suffolk and Islington. Elsewhere in London, Green Assembly Members Sian Berry and Caroline Russell have been re-elected as councillors. Amongst others we've also held seats in Epping Forest, Reading, Liverpool, Sheffield, Rochford, Leeds, Wirral and Oxford.*

*One of the most exciting results remains the breakthrough onto Richmond-upon-Thames Council with four new Green Party councillors elected there. Our team of new councillors have also been joined by those elected in Cannock Chase, Peterborough, Solihull, Burnley, Knowsley, Sheffield, Birmingham and Trafford.*

*We have broken onto Trafford Council in Altrincham with Cllrs Geraldine Coggins and Dan Jerrome. And in Sheffield, Councillor Alison Teal has been re-elected with 1393 votes more than Labour, despite only an 8 vote majority in 2015. Alison is joined by new Green Councillors Kaltum Rivers and Martin Phipps.*

*Julie Howell has been elected onto Peterborough Council with a majority of over 400, taking her seat from the Tories in an impressive swing."*

Our own **by-election result** last month in Heyhouses Ward of Fylde Borough Council, did not result in victory, but it was a respectable performance by Ian Roberts, gaining just under 12% of the vote. Hopefully Ian can build on this and will stand again for election in the next FBC full elections in May 2019. By-elections are notoriously difficult to win, with our first past the post system presuming in favour of one party, but the full elections, with three seats up for election (in the Heyhouses case) means that there is a far greater chance of a sound candidate known for his community work receiving a high vote, even if by being supported by "second preference" votes from electors who might otherwise vote on fixed party lines.

We are pleased to report that our member **Anne Fielding** has just been appointed Climate Change Officer for the Lancashire National Union of Teachers.

The responsibilities include -

- Supporting NUT officers, school staff, with advice on sustainability and climate change policy matters.
- Assisting in sharing data regarding international, and local sustainability and climate change events including Earth Hour, Climate Week and Fairtrade Fortnight.
- Putting together a newsletter featuring schools and green projects
- Finding resources re climate change for use in school

Congratulations, Anne. It's work like this which will help shape a better future.

# Last Minute Update!

A strong Green Party presence this coming week would be very welcome!

## **The United Resistance:**

**3 months of Love & Defiance to stop the fracking industry in their tracks.**

Lancs and Yorks Week 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May

Monday      Cake day

Tuesday      Dawn Chorus walk 6.30  
Flags and Banner's Day  
Parade      2.00

Wednesday Women's Walk of Calm 10.30

Thursday      Sunshine Day  
Come and bag your deckchair  
Music  
Refreshments  
Punch and Judy

Friday      Welcome to our Yorkshire Friends  
Argentina Update  
Music  
Entertainment  
Refreshments