

BRENT GREEN NEWS

The newsletter of Brent Green Party Winter 2008-9

CRISIS ACTION

The world financial crisis and the accelerating pace of Climate Change presents an unprecedented challenge to us all. The Green Party want to see immediate action on several fronts:

Work

As unemployment soars a 'Green New Deal' is needed which would include the creation of thousands of new 'green collar' jobs as we invest in renewable energy and associated skills training. This would help restructure the economy away from its dependence on fossil fuels and tackle the causes of climate change. Germany employs 225,000 people in the renewable energy industry—the U.K. 26,000.

Wages

London Greens are campaigning for a London Living Wage of a minimum of £7.45 per hour because the current minimum wage is not enough to survive in high-cost London. We have already had success in persuading Lewisham Council to look at ways it can support the London Living Wage and we would like Brent Council to do the same.

Warmth

Greens are proposing that free insulation should be provided for every home that needs it. This will cut bills, cut waste, reduce harmful emissions, provide jobs and above all ensure that everyone is warm and protected from cold-induced illness. Green councillors in Kirklees have successfully ensured that 40,000 residents have had free insulation.

Free School Meals

Free school meals should be available to all pupils doing away with complicated form filling and providing at least one hot, healthy meal every day—important as unemployment and prices increase. A recent survey found that half of pupils living below the poverty line were not qualifying for free school meals and Brent was cited as one of the worst affected areas. Free school meals for all are already being tried in some parts of the country.

Further information on our policies can be found on www.greenparty.org.uk

ONE WORLD. ONE CHANCE.

Support Brent Greens



UNITE TO CHALLENGE CLIMATE CHANGE

The local response to Climate Change was strengthened by a crowded public meeting organised by Brent Greens and supported by Brent Friends of the Earth and Brent Trades Council. Many residents took part in the National Climate March on December 6th and both Brent Green Party and Brent FoE have submitted comprehensive responses to the Council's consultation on a local Climate Change Strategy. Brent Greens will continue to make the broad campaign against climate change a priority.



Young people were out in force on the Climate March



The scene outside ASDA a few days after our meeting with the store manager. Poor light conditions and wintry weather will increase the danger to the public.

ASDA PROGRESS

Brent Greens recently held a meeting with the manager of Wembley's ASDA store to present evidence on the dangers posed by lorries parking on the access road to the store's loading bay.

As a result of our campaign ASDA has agreed to undertake a feasibility study to see if it is possible to:

1. Move the gates back sufficiently for a first lorry to use the slip road to go right up to them, with the whole length of the lorry retained within ASDA's boundaries.
2. Request second lorries to drive around waiting for a bay to be free or wait in the store car park.
3. Non-ASDA vans to park alongside ASDA lorries in the bay.

The manager thought that once proposals were approved they could be turned around very fast. We will continue to press for swift action before an accident happens.

Letters to the Editor

SARAH TEATHER LEAPS INTO CRICKLEWOOD WASTE DEVELOPMENT BUBBLE

As a Brent resident living just off the Edgware Rd between Cricklewood and Brent Cross, I and I guess my neighbours, have received some strange correspondence recently including two letters from the Chairman of Bestway wholesalers urging locals to object to a proposed development along the Edgware Rd. Sir Anwar Pervez, OBE, H Pk is apparently concerned about the increased traffic and rubbish that he alleges a new waste transfer station, a proposed part of the development, would cause. I have written to him twice expressing Brent Green Party's sympathy with his worries and asking how Bestway would be cutting back on the waste and traffic that it causes in the vicinity. I have had no reply and no communication from Brent but quite a lot from Barnet council, telling me about meetings in Barnet about the development. Now I learn that Sarah Teather MP will be addressing a meeting on the subject. Perhaps Brent are too preoccupied with their contribution to turning North West London into a vast shopping mall with the Wembley development. I just keep wondering who will have the money to buy the stuff in all these new shops, assuming anyone can fund building them during a recession.

P. Murry, Secretary of Brent Green Party

Letters should be sent via e-mail to mafran@globalnet.co.uk or by post to Martin Francis, Brent Green Party, Box 54785, London NW9 1FL

'CON'SULTATION?

POST OFFICE CLOSURE CONSULTATION -thousands have signed petitions and written letters but the government has allowed most closures to go ahead

HEATHROW EXPANSION CONSULTATION - Individuals, campaign groups and Local Authorities have made their submissions but the government has let it be known they intend to go ahead—unless Ed Milliband gains more cabinet support

When asked about these consultations at the recent Local Democracy Day, and the public's lack of faith in them when the decision seems to have been made already, Gareth Daniel, Brent's Chief Executive, said that Brent never made a decision in advance of a consultation. However, Brent's consultation procedures have been subject to widespread criticism:

ARK ACADEMY—The initial consultation left out the crucial question of whether residents were in favour of city academies in principle, but instead limited discussion to the name of the school, catchment area etc. When local people were able to express an opinion on private sponsorship of schools in the School Places Consultation they decisively rejected it and favoured the Local Authority running schools. Brent Council ignored this.

Brent Green Party have filed an objection to the planning application for the permanent Academy on the basis that vital documents were not available on the Council's website. These included the Transport Assessment, vital when many of the objectors are concerned about traffic congestion and over-crowded buses, and the non-availability of the Council's reasons for claiming that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not necessary for the project which builds on playing fields, includes a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation and will increase traffic congestion and vehicle emissions. The Planning Committee will meet at the Town Hall to discuss the application on Wednesday January 14th at 7pm

WEMBLEY MASTER PLAN—Local residents formed the Wembley Community Association claiming almost no one had received a letter about that the Council's consultation and that two public meetings were poorly publicised. The WCA has been successful in campaigning for an extension to the consultation until January 30th 2009 with a public meeting at the Town Hall on Tuesday 13th January from 7pm.



Photo: (c) 2008 Jason N. Parkinson, All Rights Reserved.
Further information: jasonnparkinson.blogspot.com

PROPOSED CIVIC CENTRE -On 5th Nov, 2008 Shahrar Ali publicly challenged Anna Woda, project director for a new civic centre, on why residents had at no point been asked whether they wanted a new facility, given the impact on the future use of the grade II listed Town Hall and library. Ms Woda replied that the Council had not consulted on this point and did not need to. We have since requested a copy of the feasibility study, commissioned by Brent Council in 2003 at a cost of £75k, which formed the basis for executive decisions but has never been made public.

MORE ISSUES

Seemingly arbitrary decisions on what to consult about, lack of consultation time, confused deadlines, payment for focus group attendance, recording of focus groups, poor documentation and lack of feedback have all been raised by individuals and groups. We are keen to work for fair and transparent consultation in Brent. Poor consultation feeds cynicism and brings local democracy into disrepute.

LOCAL MEETINGS

GREEN ECONOMICS AND THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Brent Green Party Meeting Wednesday 21st January 7.30pm at Dudden Hill Community Centre, Dudden Hill Lane, NW10

NATO OUT OF AFGHANISTAN Brent Stop the War public meeting Tuesday 27th January, 7.30pm Willesden Green Library Centre, NW10

PALESTINE—REPORTING BACK FROM THE STRUGGLE Brent Palestine Solidarity Campaign public meeting Monday February 23rd 7pm Willesden Green Library Centre, NW10

Should you care about the Euro elections?



Dr Shahrar Ali

The European elections on 4 June 2009 are important because your vote could help make life better for everyone in the UK and future generations too. MEPs are returned once every five years and there will be eight for Greater London.

Green MEPs Jean Lambert and Caroline Lucas have already campaigned tirelessly for progressive legislation on climate change, social justice, and the quality of life agenda. But there is still much to do.

By voting Green you can support efforts to limit the number of hours that people have to work and help put an end to our 'long working hours culture' which damages family life. At the same time, we campaign for a decent living wage for all.

Instead of debt-ridden consumption, Greens advocate a New Deal that would see new green jobs in renewable energy and energy efficiency. A Green vote means urgent action on climate change both nationally and internationally.

Time is running out to avert climate disaster. We need to find better ways of working together locally and globally. By electing more Greens to the European Parliament you can further progressive politics.

Dr Shahrar Ali has worked in the European Parliament on GM risk regulation and is a Green Party lead candidate for the London Region.

BRENT GREEN PARTY PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

Brent Green Party has now completed its selection of General Election Candidates. They are:

Tim Wilmott (Hampstead and Kilburn—part Brent and part Camden)

Shahrar Ali (Brent Central—formerly Brent South and Brent East, less three wards)

Martin Francis (Brent North)

Why I joined the Green Party

The state of the planet and the welfare of the folks that live on it is my primary reason for joining the Green Party. I've voted Green most of my adult life for these reasons and more recently this has been solidified by the Green's clear stand against this crazy war in Iraq. I consider myself a moderately centre left person who has become more pragmatic and less idealistic as I have got older. With this in mind I wanted to be involved in an organisation that is working together with those in charge to create real change.

I'm not interested in groups that tell everybody how the world should be but refuse to cooperate with anybody, in the end achieving nothing. Also, while I admire those who have made extensive changes to their own lives to reduce the harm to the planet, I just don't feel that's enough. I see the Green Party as developing ideas for both small and large changes to society to help save the planet (and us on it!)

Johnny Wharton

JOIN BRENT GREENS

Brent Green Party has stepped up its activities in the past year and increased its local profile. We need and welcome new members. You can join on the web on:

www.greenparty.org.uk/join or write to us at the address below or e-mail us at orrbrian@tiscali.co.uk

Minimum membership rates are Single: Waged £31, Low/unwaged £10.50, Student £5 Joint: Waged £41, Low/unwaged £14.

SUPPORT BRENT GREENS

If you don't feel ready to join but would like to help us in any way (campaigning, leafleting, public meetings, writing), we also welcome your participation. Write to us at the address below or e-mail us at: orrbrian@tiscali.co.uk

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