

British Politics Seems To Be Going Whizz, Bang, Pop Around Us - But There's Still Time For A Bit Of Conviviality!

Join us on Wednesday December 12th 6:30-8:30 p.m. for a festive nibble (on us) and a bevvvy (buy your own) at Ludlow's Unicorn Pub, 66 Corve Street, Ludlow SY8 1DU. Please do RSVP since it will help us make sure we've laid in enough food.

BUT

Sadly There's A Date Clash And You May Prefer (Thanks to Lightfoot Enterprises):

7:30 pm Wednesday 12th December at Hightown Community Room, Clun, SY7 8JG when there will be a talk on the Wyre Forest Community Land Trust's successful action against the possibility of building holiday lodges in the Wyre Forest.

A Green Party Big Day Out In South Staffordshire

Taking place on Saturday 8th December. A dynamic and successful neighbouring Green Party has already achieved lots and wants to take the next step in electing county councillors next May. Can you help? Some of us will be going so if you want to help do your bit for a Greener West Midlands and have fun doing it the please register here <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TMX6LX7> and RSVP to this email so we can plan joint transport.

Whizz, Bang, Pop of British Politics - Be Prepared

Accordingly, we will be moving to select our prospective parliamentary candidate in case of a snap General Election early in the New Year. We will be doing this under the "short procedures" rules attached rather than the standard ones, which take 70 days and a lot of work. We will shortly be inviting nominations so if you have been a Green Party member for one year and would like to stand you need two seconders from South Shropshire Green Party who must be both fully paid-up members of the Green Party.

Should South Shropshire Be Designated A National Park? Consultation ends on 18 December

A more vexed issue than it might seem and we are very grateful to Nigel Rowley, Parish Councillor for Aston Pipes, new member Christina O'Neill, and Professor John Whitelegg for starting to investigate this issue for SSGP.

While national park status can afford extra protections, which sounds good, it can also be used to enable an expansion of car based tourism, which definitely does not. Nigel Rowley and Christina O'Neill were instrumental in the recent campaign to save Mortimer Forest from inappropriate development.

Christina writes:

"Any extra layer of protection, you would have thought, could only be a good thing but designations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Park, can also be a double edged sword. Undoubtedly there are positives but equally, there can be substantial negatives, as well.

Ludlow Councillor, Andy Boddington has been promoting the idea of a South Shropshire National Park, stretching from Ironbridge to Mortimer Forest.

Michael Gove has launched a review, led by Julian Glover, to look at the future of National Parks and AONBs, which may result in a call for new National Parks.

The Government has also launched a consultation, asking for people's views on National Parks, which can be found here:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/landscapes-review-call-for-evidence/>

Please can as many of you as possible respond to this?

I have attached a sample response in PDF format. There is no need to answer every question and if you look through the questions first and prepare your answers, it should only take about 10 mins to complete the whole thing.

The consultation finishes on 18th December, so we only have a few weeks to respond. It would be really useful if, when you respond, you could e-mail either myself or Nigel a copy of the PDF of your replies".

In addition, Professor John Whitelegg has made these comments:

"During my circa 30 years in Lancaster I was involved in several debates, campaigns and projects in the Lake District

National Park (LDNP). I worked with the LDNP on car-free projects, which were never implemented.

There was and still is a great deal of unease about NP status and this has been voiced very well by the Friends of the Lake District e.g. the debate about a zip wire and the drift towards a kind of Disney World in the Lake District

<https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/current-planning-applications>

National Parks hugely increase car-based tourism which means more traffic, more pollution, road building and more car parks and National Parks get locked into "the only thing that matters is economic growth, tourism and jobs" and this leads to the loss of the very special qualities that led to NP status in the first place: tranquillity and landscape beauty.

We can have "tourism without traffic" but local authorities are not supportive of things like a huge improvement of bus services (Shropshire is particularly bad) and even worse at linking trains to buses and very bad at discouraging car-based access. If we need an example of how to do things really badly we have it in Carding Mill Valley...a huge, ugly car park and no effort at all to encourage access by bus and links with Church Stretton train station.

My point is that like most things in life what looks really good (National Park status) has a large number of unintended negative consequences and these should be openly discussed so that we go down the National Park route with eyes wide open".

So please respond to the Consultation before 18th December and if you receive any replies please send them to this email and we will pass them onto Christina and Nigel.

To close on a really positive note:

We're cheered by a recent influx of new members to join our very valued extant members. As The Green Party's Political Programme highlights: "As other political parties run out of ideas and rely on dated clichés to address the fast changing and fragile modern world", we take pride in being the only British political party that works for a better quality of life for all achieved within this planet's ecological limits.

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you for all we have done together.

Onwards to an achievement-filled 2019!