



High Peak Green Party

for the common good

January 2018

Dear High Peak Green Party members,

Happy New Year! It's just over a year since a local Green Party was established in High Peak and it's been a busy time. We had a County Council election, a General Election, and a Borough Council by-election. In the County Council election, we stood candidates in all divisions, canvassing and leafletting in Buxton West, where Buxton members had been concentrating efforts for newsletter delivery in the preceding year. A decision was taken at a members meeting to not stand a candidate in the General Election, but that didn't mean that we took a rest! We worked to ensure that Green issues, particularly climate change, got a mention in our constituency, even though they were largely ignored at national level. A Borough Council by-election for the Limestone Peak ward was called for 9th November. Despite the short notice, we managed to create four different leaflets and deliver them throughout the ward.

Green Party members in Glossop worked together with Glossop Labour Party to organise a successful conference to discuss sustainable energy and transport initiatives for Glossopdale. We hope to build on this in the year ahead.

A Green Manifesto for High Peak

In 2018, there are no scheduled elections, but we'll have plenty to do preparing for the borough council elections in 2019. Our first steps will be to select target wards in different areas across the borough, where local members can start to work on building up the Green vote. We've already started work on a local manifesto to bring Green ideas to the responsibilities of High Peak Borough Council:

- **Housing**

There is a national housing crisis because successive governments have failed to ensure housing supply matches demand. Policies of successive governments have encouraged speculation in the housing market. Houses have become a commodity rather than a place where people make their home, and buying is now out of the reach for an increasing number of young people. In addition, council housing stocks were sold off, leaving those who cannot buy at the mercy of the private rental sector. Even with a decent landlord, long term private renting is not a good experience. Government has failed to regulate to provide security of tenure or even to ensure that rented accommodation is fit for human habitation.

The borough council has responsibility for housing and for planning house building. More needs to be done to ensure that the houses built are where they are needed; that there is the infrastructure in terms of public transport, health care schools to support new builds; and that houses are built to high energy efficiency standards. We know that housing law as well as cuts in local authority budgets restrict the council's freedom to act, so imaginative local solutions are needed. High Peak Green Party are looking into community-land trusts and community-led housing as a way of getting a housing policy that meets local needs.

For more information, see <http://locality.org.uk/projects/communityled-housing/communityled-housing> and <http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk>

• Waste and recycling

Green Party policy on waste and recycling calls for radical reduction of waste by a move to a circular economy, in which products are not designed with built in obsolescence and where, at the end of the useful life of the product, the components can be reused for the creation of new products.

In the meantime, urgent action is needed to reduce the amount of waste generated and to ensure that recycling and composting is maximised. In the last year, the plastic plague really hit the headlines but the measures proposed by the government are too little and the time scale too long. Legislation is needed to stop the use of plastic packaging and to provide disincentives to unnecessary packaging (for example of fruit and vegetables).

Unnecessary packaging in supermarkets is undermining efforts to reduce waste and increasing our council tax. We'll be investigating how the council can work with supermarkets to reduce packaging and to provide customers with the possibility to discard packaging in the store.

The COP23 UN Climate Conference

Three members of High Peak Green Party joined a delegation to the UN climate conference in Bonn in November 2017. Things certainly didn't seem positive as we set out. Donald Trump had announced the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and it was clear that commitments by signatories to the Paris agreement would not limit temperature increase to 1.5°C. But there was a very positive message from summit of local and regional leaders (www.cities-and-regions.org) that brought together leaders from different political positions who are taking positive action on climate change. The summit involved the Global Covenant of Mayors (www.globalcovenantofmayors.org), which includes cities and regions from all over the world including 51 UK local authorities, and the Climate Alliance (<http://www.climatealliance.org/home.html>), a Europe wide association of local governments dedicated to taking action to combat Climate Change and to undertake the required adaptations of which Oxford is a member. This year we propose to work with other interested groups (for example, Transition groups) to investigate how High Peak could participate in the Climate Alliance.

Can you help?

Our next meeting is:

Monday 29th January, 7.30pm
Beehive Inn 67 Albion Road, SK22 3EY New Mills.

Come along for a discussion on housing policy.

We accept that not everyone can or wants to attend meetings. You'll be glad to know there's plenty more to be done! Just drop us an email (coordinator@highpeak.greenparty.org.uk) or call 07511 043124 (Jane) 0747 1912678 (Peter) if you can help with any of these:

- Write articles for our blog and for the newsletters that we distribute to High Peak residents.
- Help with the distribution of newsletters in your area.
- Join a working group for developing our local manifesto.
- Join a working group to research the possibility of High Peak joining the Climate Alliance.
- Donate to High Peak Green Party.

Producing newsletters and running campaigns costs money. If you can, please make a donation:

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