

Guildhall

GreenLight



The Newsletter of York Green Party

Spring 2013

Reclaim Our NHS

York Green Party chair Denise Craghill joined Green Party members and over 500 concerned residents from all over Yorkshire in a lively and colourful protest in York on 6th April against the Lib Dem-Tory Coalition's attack on the National Health Service.

The new Health & Social Care Act has opened the door to privatisation, allowing NHS hospitals to allocate up to 49% of care to private patients (as opposed to 2% previously). This will lead to a two-tier health service where less well off patients will suffer.

The Act removed the Government's legal duty to provide health care for all and paved the way for new local 'commissioning groups' to take control of buying hospital and other types of healthcare for patients. This means that the new Vale of York Commissioning Group will be under huge pressure to buy the cheapest possible care from private providers, who are lining up to make big profits from the changes.

Speakers represented hospital doctors, GPs, health service trade unionists, local campaigners and politicians. The Green Party's lead candidate for the European election, Cllr Andrew Cooper from Kirklees, said, 'The Green Party is 100% behind a publicly funded, publicly managed and publicly delivered National Health Service focused on prevention of illness, the promotion of good health and the treatment of those in need whatever their income or background. We believe the only shareholders who should benefit from the NHS are the public who fund it.'

Dr Jillian Creasy, a GP who is leader of the Green Group on Sheffield City Council, said the pressure on the NHS was already causing problems with care and urged people to support their new commissioning groups in striving to keep contracts public, to lobby politicians about their concerns and to exercise their right under to register with their GP their preference to be offered care only from NHS providers. [See www.keepournhspublic.com for more information on what you can do.](http://www.keepournhspublic.com)



Guildhall Annual Ward Meeting

Mon. 29th April 2013 - 7.00pm surgery, 7.30pm meeting

Bedern Hall (Bartlegarth, off S Andrewgate YO1 7AL – or access via Bedern arch off Goodramgate).

Council cuts mean 'Your Ward' newsletters are no longer produced, so please note the details of your annual meeting for Guildhall ward, when you can discuss your ward priorities and bring up any local issues you would like your councillors to deal with.



Protecting York's Future

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Greens challenge Labour on privatisation

The Council intends to move many services out of its direct control, including elderly people's homes, libraries & archives, the running of our leisure centres and swimming pools, caring for looked-after children, the re-ablement service, warden call and community equipment & loans, cleaning and security for council buildings and the provision of public toilets!



Labour torpedoed a Green amendment at the council's budget meeting by refusing to allow further debate

The Green budget amendment in February would have halted moves to put the staffing of York's Elderly People's Homes outside the Council. Despite saying they would stand by the results of a public consultation which showed a clear preference for keeping staffing in-house, Labour now seem to have changed their minds. Details of new proposals are due to be published for approval at a Cabinet meeting on 4th June.

The Green amendment would also have stopped the plans to transfer our Libraries and Archives into a "social enterprise" outside direct council control.

Contact us!

Please use the form if you would like to get in touch.

Name

Address

Tel

E-mail

- I would like to raise a local issue
- Please send me information about the Greens

Any additional info

Please send to: York Green Party, 22 Holgate Road, York YO24 4AB

Or call us on 636239 or e-mail: yorkoffice@greenparty.org.uk

A final decision on going ahead with this is also planned for 4th June. The Council is working with the Government's Cabinet Office on further details of a business plan, funding and accountability arrangements. Further consultation has been promised during April but no more details published so far. We understand that 'focus groups' are taking place but these don't seem to be widely publicised. E-mail the Head of Libraries & Archives, Fiona Williams, if you would like to be involved libraries@york.gov.uk, write to her at West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6AG and see the blog www.explorefuture.org.uk

Cllr D'Agorne said 'Once services are put outside the council, elected representatives have less influence on what happens to them. It is hard to guarantee service quality. Wages and pensions for dedicated staff get poorer which helps to drive down wage levels across the city. This has already happened to staff in the re-ablement service one year after externalisation.'

Hedgemageddon

March this year heralded council chainsaws and JCB diggers removing shrubs and hedges around the city that have provided shelter to birds and other wildlife for many years. For example some Guildhall residents were shocked by the complete removal of shrubs and bushes from the St Maurice's Cemetery site (adjacent to the Bile Beans sign, on the corner of Monkgate).

Guildhall ward coordinator, Denise Craghill said 'I think what has upset people most has been the complete lack of any local consultation and the Council's unconvincing insistence in response to questions from Green councillors and others that it is all routine maintenance. We know the Council has to save money but surely residents and Friends Groups could have been properly involved, perhaps with different outcomes?'

News in Brief

- The Council has approved plans for re-paving Kings Square, fortunately taking into account most public concerns. All three mature trees will remain & the platform area be refurbished. Future café areas – if any – will be along the edge of Colliergate.
- The Council has decided against charging for removing garden waste, but starting this year, there will be no collections between Nov and March. We want to see separate food waste collections & more composting.
- The Gardening Club at the Groves Secret Garden is in full swing again. Sessions 25th Apr, 9th May and 23rd May, 5pm till dusk. Open to all. Tel Charlotte on 01904 659570 if you're not sure where it is!