

# Green View

Hitchin Walsworth  
Winter 2016



## Save Our Buses

Richard Cano and members of the North Hertfordshire & Stevenage Green Party team showed their support for the Save Our Buses Campaign in Hitchin Town Centre on 21 November. A huge thanks to everyone who stopped to sign the Petition. Over 400 signatures were collected and presented to Parliament, proving how important the bus services are to people in and around Hitchin.

### Why is the Council wrong to cut bus services?

Hertfordshire County Council underestimates the damaging effects the proposed cuts to bus services will have on people's lives. The cuts will affect bus passengers from all walks of life, including young and old people, disabled and injured people, those that rely on buses as part of their daily life – to go to work, school, college, hospitals, doctors and health centres, and a whole host of shopping, leisure and social activities.

The consultation process showed little effort to conduct an effective publicity campaign to raise awareness of it or make it accessible to those who need buses most.

A comprehensive public transport network is the mark of a civilised, fair and sustainable society. It is therefore of interest to all, not just service users, and not just now, but for future generations.

In addition, a decline of bus services appears to contradict those many County Council policy objectives described in the Local Transport Plan aimed at reducing dependency on the car.

For those without access to a car, whether that is because they choose not to own one, or who cannot drive or afford a car, a bus service is key to a decent quality of life: with fewer buses, or none whatsoever, some people may have considerable difficulty in accessing essential services and living a full life.

We would like to hear from you if you've been affected by cuts to local buses.

### Contacting Richard

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have an issue we could help with or would like to know more about your local Green Party.

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Visit our website at <http://northherts.greenparty.org.uk>

Facebook: **North Hertfordshire & Stevenage Green Party**

## Our Countryside

In the last few months, the North Hertfordshire & Stevenage Green Party have been carrying out a survey of Walsworth residents' views on local issues. The preliminary results of this survey show that 90% of people in Walsworth say protecting wildlife, the environment and the countryside is 'very important' or 'important' to them.

Walsworth is at least half countryside, with two Local Nature Reserves (Purwell Meadows and Purwell Ninesprings), and Walsworth Common. A Local Nature Reserve ('LNR') is considered of lower status and less protected than, for example, Site of Special Scientific Interest ('SSSI'). The LNRs are around the River Purwell and other streams. The river comes from Hertfordshire's great chalk aquifer<sup>1</sup>, which gives exceptionally high-quality water, one of Hertfordshire's assets. There are only about 200 chalk streams in the world so the LNRs provide valuable and rare habitats, with several protected species.

All three of these green open areas are flood plains listed on the Environment Agency website. In spite of this we are liable to drought, and in summer some local rivers dry out completely. The whole county of Hertfordshire is listed as being "under water stress" – hence the recent mandatory fitting of household water meters. Paradoxically at other times of year heavy rainfall can mean surface water flooding on roads and streets as drains struggle to cope.

The rest of the non-built on land in Walsworth is mainly front and back gardens, and it's here that we can all make an immediate difference to wildlife. Some ideas are:

- ! **Opening up animal access ways**
- ! **Completing mini-projects (eg. nest boxes/sites or toad/hedgehog homes)**
- ! **Bee-friendly planting**
- ! **Learning more about "gardening for wildlife"**

Following these survey results, our next step is deciding where we can work with local residents and groups to be most effective. If you have any ideas or you would like to get involved in helping to improve our local environment, please contact us at [info@northherts.greenparty.org.uk](mailto:info@northherts.greenparty.org.uk) or 07717 295 859.

## The Green Party – for the Common Good

Printed on **100% recycled paper** by Hillingdon Greenprint, of 58 Beech Avenue, Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 8UQ.

Promoted by Richard Cano, c/o 15 Hampden Road, Hitchin, SG4 0LD, on behalf of himself.

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<sup>1</sup>An aquifer is an underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock, rock fractures or unconsolidated materials (gravel, sand or silt) from which groundwater can be extracted using a water well.