

Green View

Hitchin Walsworth
Summer 2016



Thank you for your votes



Thanks to everyone who took the time to vote in the recent North Hertfordshire District Council elections. The results put Richard Cano in third place. Richard, together with your local Green Party team, continue to work hard and hope to improve on the results in forthcoming elections. However, only 2,078 people voted in Walsworth ward. This represents less than 35% of those who are eligible to vote. Richard would like to hear from those residents who did not vote to try to find out what could encourage them to the ballot box in future.

What can a Green Party Councillor achieve?

Oscar Gillespie is the fourth Green Party Councillor in Cambridge after being elected for Market Ward in 2015. The motions which Oscar has succeeded in passing have:

- >> Had the Council commit to providing more support for refugees, and to work with the national City of Sanctuary network to improve local awareness of the needs of refugees;
- >> Had the Council call on the Government to retain the Human Rights Act;
- >> Had the Council raise serious concerns about TTIP and its effect on local authorities, calling for an impact assessment.

Oscar also worked with Fossil Free Cambridgeshire to bring a motion to Council calling for complete divestment from fossil fuels and a commitment to a low-carbon future. He has spoken out against Government attacks on the environment, such as scrapping the zero carbon homes standard, solar feed-in tariff cuts, the damage caused by neonicotinoids and fracking, and subsidies for oil, coal and animal agriculture. These are just some of the highlights that having a Green Councillor can bring.

Contacting Richard

Tel: 07717 295 859

email: richcano@hotmail.co.uk or info@northherts.greenparty.org.uk

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

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

Homelessness



We have been looking into the issue of homelessness in North Hertfordshire. Following a recent visit to Stevenage Haven, a hostel for the homeless, we learned about their expansion. Their previous building was able to sleep 18 persons sharing dormitories, but now, with the help of a £1.3M grant, a brand new hostel has been created within the property next door. This has provided 40 single en-suite rooms with improved facilities, including a dining room giving three meals a day. In 2014, the Haven took over North Herts Sanctuary in Hitchin which takes up to 17 homeless people at any one time.

The definition

The legal definition of homelessness is lack of a secure place to live or “not being able to stay” in your current accommodation. To get Council help you need to fulfil other criteria, such as having children. Even those that meet all the criteria are often only homed temporarily.

National statistics

It is hard to accurately record the exact number of homeless people and rough sleepers across Hertfordshire as many homeless people do not show on the stats at all. However, sources show that homelessness has risen, with approximately a 30% rise in rough sleeping from last year. People staying at hostels or those who are ‘sofa surfing’ are the hidden homeless in our society.

The Green Party’s Policy

The Green Party points to the inadequate and inequitable state of UK housing provision being caused by the lack of equal access to resources, particularly land, the inability of the free market to meet needs and insufficient investment in public housing. In addition, there are too many empty dwellings.

Green Party Housing Policy gives four over-arching aims:

- to ensure everyone (including single people and childless couples) is provided with affordable, secure and comfortable housing;
- to minimise the impact of housing on the natural environment;
- to allow a local response to local needs; and
- to break the stranglehold a few large developers have over housing provision.

A key point is the stabilisation of property prices and rents, so that rent only takes up to 35% of median take-home pay. This would be brought about by the gradual introduction of a Land Value Tax that would reduce speculative profits, and the introduction of rent controls.

The Green Party would aim to end rough sleeping within their first term of office.