



GREEN VIEW

HITCHIN GREEN PARTY NEWSLETTER

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CHURCHGATE UPDATE

Walsworth Green Party candidate Mario May has criticised the proposed Churchgate redevelopment plan. "This unpopular scheme has already cost millions of pounds in consultancy fees," Mario said. "Very few locals actually want it and the scheme now stands condemned by the English Heritage Urban Panel Review. The Council even refused to put someone forward to argue the case for this development in Hitchin before this respected body."

In the current economic climate it is anticipated that NHDC's expectations of a retail bonanza would not happen - financial estimates have escalated significantly and are no longer accurate. **The Green Party is the only political party who opposed this from the very start and spoke up on behalf of local residents.** The governing parties did not listen and have wasted time and money when a sensible refurbishment of the area around Churchgate could have been arrived at which is more in line with what local residents and retailers want.

In May 2011 the Churchgate scheme was featured in the satirical magazine Private Eye's 'Rotten Boroughs' section. The investigation featured allegations that Simons will be given a 250-year lease and will not have to pay any rent until its yearly profits exceed 23 per cent.



Mario May: "Very few locals actually want it"

English Heritage snubbed by NHDC

English Heritage (the Government's statutory adviser on the historic environment) last year held an enquiry into the NHDC/Simons scheme to build a large retail development in Hitchin's historic centre.

They are reported as having "regretted not being able to meet representatives of NHDC to hear the case for this kind of development", but imagined they would in all likelihood not have been convinced by the proposals. Furthermore, the Simons scheme appears "to have been generated by a wish to impose on Hitchin a standard and, frankly, alien retail development".

CUTS THREATEN HITCHIN HOSPITAL

Hitchin people are beginning to see the first effects of the Coalition's austerity programme with the announcement by the County's Primary Care Trust (PCT) that it was looking to close Hitchin Hospital this spring. It is becoming clear that the Coalition government is planning to hand over large chunks of our NHS to multinational corporations. Privatisation has already happened at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital in Cambridgeshire: from this month the entire hospital will be managed by a private company whose aim will be to make financial profit. Under government plans NHS hospitals will be able to devote 49% of their beds to private paying patients. This could be the beginning of the end for our NHS. The Green Party is strongly against privatisation. Mario would like to hear your views on this important issue.

Have Your Say:

Please express your opposition to NHS privatisations by signing the petition at:

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/22670>.

YOUR LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

We welcome the purchase of Purwell Ninesprings Nature Reserve by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust ("HMWT"). This is an important part of creating a wildlife corridor linking this with Purwell Meadows, Walsworth Common and Burymead Springs, along the River Purwell. If you are interested in supporting wildlife in and around Hitchin, please contact HMWT on 01727 858 901 or <http://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/NatureReserves/Local/purwell>



RAIL FARES

This January rail fares rose by an inflation-busting 6%. An annual season ticket to London now costs a ridiculous £3,368 and if you want to use the tube too you'll have to pay a whopping £4,460! We think you'll agree this is completely unacceptable and we will be campaigning for improved services. If you have any concerns about rail services please contact Mario.

Helping your community

If you have some spare time, please come along to the litter pick on Walsworth Common and help to make a real difference to keep the common clean and tidy. This takes place on the 3rd Saturday of every month. Please meet at 9.30am in the Walsworth Common Car Park. Bags and picking equipment will be supplied.

GREEN GROUPS IN HITCHIN

If you are interested in meeting like-minded people in your area, there is something for everyone ...

• Transition Town groups

The Transition Towns movement is about positive, community-led action that focuses on building local networks and reducing our dependency on oil. There is a group in Hitchin (contact Chris Honey: chrishoney_design@yahoo.co.uk for more information) and a fully-fledged Transition Town Letchworth - www.ttletchworth.org.

• Friends of the Earth

FOE is a campaigning organisation that aims to raise awareness and affect government policy. There is a very active North Herts Friends of the Earth group: www.nhertsfoe.co.uk

• Triangle Community Garden

Situated within walking distance of Hitchin town centre and more than just a garden – they organise workshops, courses and events: www.trianglegarden.org

• North Herts. & Stevenage Green Party

That's us! Our contact details are below.

The Green Party — working for Walsworth

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you:

- * Have an issue we could help with;
- * Would like to know more about your local Green Party;
- * Could help with delivering leaflets in your road in future.

Mario May: 01462 484518

Rosemary Bland: 01462 671837

or email: nhandsgreenparty@hotmail.co.uk

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

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



Mario May: "We must preserve Hitchin's unique character"