



# Green Leaf

GREEN PARTY NEWSLETTER FOR  
HOWLANDS & HOLLYBUSH WARD



Winter 2009

## Do we want WGC to become an urban sprawl?

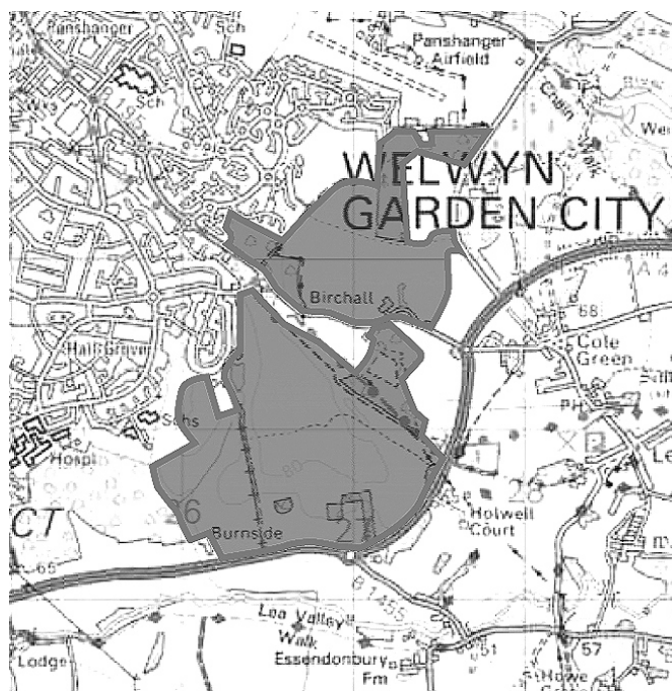
### Danger! New proposal submitted.

Developers have submitted a proposal for 4,260 houses on the south east quarter of Welwyn Garden City. This is caused by New Labour's ruthless demand for massive housing developments in the already congested south east of England. The proposal would take the form of a series of six 'villages', with 'parkland' in between.

Villages and parkland sounds harmless enough – but these housing estates would cover over a huge expanse of greenbelt countryside familiar to you – see map. This is the only agricultural land left near to Welwyn Garden City.

From the air, England is beginning to look as if it's riddled with urban cancers – sprawling tentacles eating into our once spacious countryside.

And this particular housing development would be bang up against the Commons Nature Reserve, destroying its function as a sanctuary for wildlife and a beautiful place for people to walk, enjoy the views and feel in tune with nature.



### How Things Can Change

An open letter from Peter Oakenfull, the warden of the Commons Local Nature Reserve.

*It was only a few months ago that an article about the tranquillity of The Commons appeared in this newsletter. A lesson to be learnt: the sweep of a pen on a map can change our countryside in an instant.*

*Commonswood Nature Watch, the voluntary group working in partnership with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in managing the reserve and the wildlife at the Commons, have had a rude awakening. For ten years we have had peace of mind following its designation as a Local Nature Reserve by The Council and Natural England in 1998. Following this, funding of £70,000 over 10 years from DEFRA through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, you would have expected a secure future for its wildlife. Not so! The Reserve land itself is not under threat from the Lafarge housing proposal, but its wildlife is. Birds such as, Grey Partridge, Skylark, Yellowhammer, Linnet and Reed Bunting are all red listed for suffering serious national declines in their numbers over many years. They would disappear! We have been managing the habitat specifically for these species and monitoring their populations since 1996 with great success. It would be scandalous to allow them to vanish from the reserve and surrounding landscape. IT WILL HAPPEN if the adjacent farmland is swallowed up under houses and roads and the landfill site turned into a park.*

*These local populations of birds along with the harvest mouse, water shrew and many other species will not be able to survive in isolated populations. At present, I can think of at least six badger setts and several species of bats that will be affected within the proposed boundary of the Cole Green Landfill Site and the Birchall area of Panshanger. It is not possible to detail all the effects on individual species in this short newsletter so a comprehensive report will be produced and made available. Please support Jill Weston and The Green Party in the fight to stop this development.*

**Turn the page to see how to fight this.....**



Commonswood resident. Harvest mouse?

## Two ways you can help fight this:

1. Come to a **PUBLIC MEETING** on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009 at 7.45 for 8 pm at The Commons Baptist Church Hall, WGC. Learn more from ecology and biodiversity experts, hear what the Council has to say and draw your own conclusions.

2. **SUPPORT JILL WESTON**, your Green Party representative, who continues to fight for the needs of our local community. You can support her by helping in the election campaign – see details **BELOW**– by voting for her in the County Council elections next June or by giving financial support to help pay for leaflets – any amount of money, however small, is much-needed and appreciated.

We are not being **NIMBYs (Not In My Back Yard)** by expressing our concern for potentially irresponsible housing developments. The Green Party understands that everyone needs and has a right to a home – but it's **social housing** that's really needed. There are more than a **million** households on council house waiting lists in the UK and these are the people who should be catered for first.

Instead of forcing more economic growth on the already congested home counties, we should be building homes in and regenerating the North of England and the Midlands, where there is more brownfield land and where unemployment is much higher. That way, growth would happen more evenly and fairly.

What's more, with repossessions predicted to hit 75,000 next year, the Green Party's 'right to rent' policy makes complete sense – struggling home-owners would have the right to sell their home to the council and continue to live there as tenants.

### Green Party Solutions to the Credit Crunch

With the global economy in the 'bust' mode of the Boom & Bust cycle, we can only expect endless cycles of boom and bust from the 3 main parties.

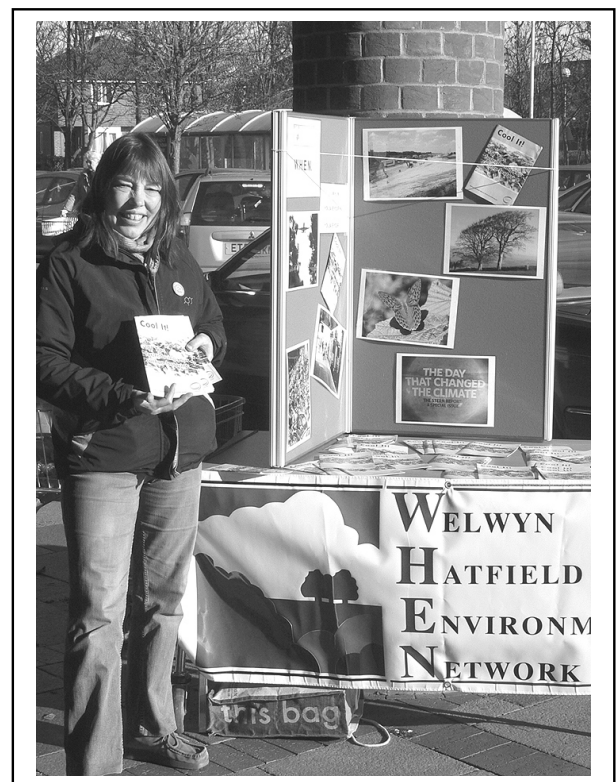
The Greens are the only Party who will give us a much improved quality of life. Green Party common sense policies tackle the root causes of this crisis, while at the same time dealing with the problem of climate change and energy shortages. Jill Weston wants:

- Massive investments (£30 billion) in clean, renewable energy and home insulation, to be paid for by a 'windfall tax' on the energy companies. BP, Shell and Centrica together made £1000 profit every second over the first six months of 2008!
- The creation of thousands of new jobs in the green sector with a scheme to insulate every home in the country and produce clean, renewable energy in every local community. There would also be many more new jobs in recycling and repairing goods, and in local food production.
- Re-regulation of the financial system. Banking would be stopped from indulging in high-risk speculation and returned to its proper role of dealing prudently with people's savings.
- To minimise corporate tax evasion by clamping down on tax havens.
- To build a new alliance between environmentalists,

### FANTASTIC FOXY FAMILY IN LOCAL GARDEN!



A family of foxes – mum, dad and five cubs – made their home in a local resident's garden last summer. Here are two of the cubs looking very content.



Jill Weston at the stall outside Morrisons

Green Party activists and supporters were out at Morrisons last November, reminding shoppers that they can help in the fight to stop climate change. The shoppers were given a free booklet with 101 tips for saving on carbon emissions, energy and fuel. In these credit crunch times, shoppers were pleased to know that all these savings will mean savings in the pocket too.

Contact: 01707-331643,

[www.welwynhattfield.greenparty.org.uk](http://www.welwynhattfield.greenparty.org.uk)

**ONE WORLD. ONE CHANCE.**

Vote Green Party 