

**Minutes of the Members' Meeting
Carmarthenshire Green Party
held online via Zoom Tuesday 24 May 2022**

Present

Rob Davies (Chair)
James Ryan (Communications Officer)
Rachael Sweeting (Treasurer)
Sarah Skilton
Jo Rosney Lee
Bev(erley) Draig (Members' Secretary and Minute Taker)

The Minutes of the previous Members' Meeting held on 23 April 2022 had been previously circulated and agreed.

1. Apologies

Steve Brown
John Gaffney
Jo Lambert
Stella and Paul Westmacott
Geoff Campbell
Renske Van Der Baan

2. Matters arising

These were covered within the Agenda

3. Results and Implications of recent Carmarthenshire County Council Elections

Rob gave an outline of the voting for himself and Bar Rowlands who had stood as Green Party County Council paper candidates in the wards of Kidwelly/St Ishmael and Carmarthen Town North and South respectively. Rob had received 201 votes (6%) and Bar 256 (4%). Rob thought this was encouraging since there had been no actual on the ground campaigning.

General discussion about how we should increase our local Green Party presence in the next few years followed. Points raised were:

- a. We should encourage and support GP members to stand as Community/Town Councillors as a way of serving the local communities represented, increase personal and Green Party profile in those wards and find out what really matters to those local communities. There were many unopposed elections to Community Councils and so there were opportunities eg for co option. Becoming a Community Councillor was often the first stage to becoming a County Councillor. **Action: Rob to send to Bev the link to a CCC election presentation he received as a candidate.**
- b. There was even one unopposed election to the County Council in Laugharne Township.
- c. If several potential target wards for the 2027 County Council elections could be identified in the near future, GP volunteers could do 60 Second surveys in those wards prior to a candidate being identified. Such surveys would highlight what local issues there were in those wards and Green Party coordinated community activities set up around those local issues.
- d. Lack of willing volunteers is likely to adversely affect the above since it was currently difficult to get many members to even attend local party meetings.
- e. There was near unanimous agreement that the disadvantages of fielding paper candidates far outweighed any benefits and that anyone standing for election needs to be seen by the local community to

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be putting in some effort and be prepared to be elected. Sarah recounted that a Labour “paper candidate” in a Council election was actually elected, much to his great surprise.

4. Results and Implications of the Local England and Wales Council Elections

Rob summarised the key points made in the recent webinar chaired by Sian Berry, which examined the election results in England and Wales. Rob was particularly disappointed that there was little analysis of the Welsh results but Bev said that there was a separate webinar scheduled from the Wales Green Party on 31 May 2022 that sought to do this. She said that the 8 new Green Councillors elected in Wales formed a North to South band in the East of Wales that did not have a significant Plaid Cymru presence. With such a predominance of Plaid Cymru in Carmarthenshire, etc, it made it hard to make inroads in our area. **Action: Bev to include the link to the Wales webinar in the next email to Members in case they had missed the invitation email as well as the link to the England and Wales analysis.** (Note: no link has been sent out to Wales members for the recorded webinar as at 7 June).

Rob said that the most interesting part of the analysis of the mainly English results was the demographic identified as the most likely to actually vote Green. Those who were very politically motivated with a very strong environmental bias were more likely to vote tactically to try to ensure that a Tory did not win and that meant they were unlikely to vote Green. Floating female voters with a strong interest in Climate Change and the Environment but less politically motivated than the first group were the most likely to vote Green. New Green Councillors in the so called Red Wall areas in the North and Midlands took votes off of both Labour and Tories from more working class voters ie protest votes.

Young voters were seen as a key demographic to target (see Agenda item 6. below).

Obviously, the local council election results in England and Wales are seen by GPEW as a springboard for getting our second Green MP elected, Carla Denyer, our Co-Leader. See 5. below.

5. Discussion of future activities and events for the local Party

Activities with direct local community engagement were discussed in 3. above.

It was agreed that having a future public event involving like minded community groups in, for example, the Nurture Centre in the centre of Carmarthen, would need significant planning but would help networking with such groups. However, their members were likely Green voters anyway.

An event with a speaker that provoked discussion around a topic of wider local public interest was thought to be worth exploring. Speakers on four potential topics would be investigated ie (i) Public Transport in Carmarthenshire, (ii) Climate Change Risks and Management in Carmarthenshire, particularly on the Coast (iii) Carmarthenshire County Council's Climate Action Plan (although (ii) would be part of that) and (iv) the state of the Care Sector within Carmarthenshire.

Action: Bev would contact the Campaign for Better School and Public Transport in Carmarthenshire to ask if they could provide a future speaker re (i)

Action: Rob would approach local Universities and Natural Resources Wales for potential expert speakers re (ii)

Action: Bev would try to get contacts within CCC about (ii) and (iii)

Action: Rob would seek out contacts for speakers dealing with the Care Sector (iv)

In the short term, it was agreed that we should encourage local members to help out with campaigning for Carla Denyer to become the Green MP for Bristol West. An email callout for volunteers to help out on the weekend of 25 and 26 June had been made by GPEW.

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6. Engaging young people in Carmarthenshire

It was agreed that this was vital and Bev had already established that there were 5 campuses of Coleg Sir Gar within Carmarthenshire. Coleg Sir Gar is a further and higher education college. The University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD) also had a campus in Carmarthen and Bev had found out that the Freshers' Day for the next Academic Year was on Wednesday 14 September.

There was discussion about how to find out what young local members we had but Bev felt this was hard to do via Action Network. Sarah suggested finding out if we had any Student GP members in Carmarthenshire and Rachael said that there are bound to be GP members attending UWTSD who weren't Carmarthenshire GP members.

Rob's partner knew a young TV journalist in the area and he would seek his general advice about engaging with young people. James would value any media contacts as he has had great difficulty in getting local media contacts.

Action: Bev would contact Flyn McDonald, the Coleg Sir Gar Student Union's Environment Officer, to ask him how we could engage with the students there.

Action: Rob would similarly try to contact UWTSD's Student Union to ask about opportunities for us during the Freshers' event.

Action: Bev would try to use Action Network reports to find out if we had any local Student GP members

Action: Rob would speak to his local journalist contact.

7. Committee administration

Rachael had just received her new Debit Card and that of Rob (which she will forward to him). However, Sarah was still receiving bank statements that she will forward to Rachael.

Rob and Rachael were yet to use their official emails via webmail and so Bev has been using their personal emails. Rob was about to do so and Sarah would help Rachael.

Bev would delay showing Rob and Rachael around the Action Network system for the timebeing.

8. Any other business

None

9. Dates, venues and formats of next meetings

Bev had had difficulty in getting a date booked for the next hybrid meeting in the Nurture Centre and would like to try and book dates ahead. She has already asked the Centre for potential dates in September, October and November.

Next Members' Meeting - Saturday 2 July 2022

Hybrid format at the Nurture Centre Carmarthen

12pm to 1 pm Social get together in the cafe area

1pm to 2pm – Meeting in the Main Hall and online

Provisional Date for following Members' Meeting

Tuesday 2 August 2022 at 7pm via Zoom