

## Rural schools the centre of local communities

- **Poorer families and non-car owners will suffer from closure.**

Wales Green Party have criticized WAG definition of any rural primary school with fewer than 90 pupils as "small", and therefore in the firing line to be closed on efficiency grounds. While this may be acceptable in urban areas, it is a totally unreasonable definition for large parts of rural Wales.

To compound the problem, if a unitary authority decides to build a new school for more than 90 pupils, WAG funds the entire cost. If the Council decides to refurbish & maintain schools of fewer than 90 pupils, then the cost falls on the Council. This means that there is a very strong financial incentive to close small schools. Closing local schools also disenfranchises parents in rural areas who do not have a car.

Leila Kiersch, Wales Green Party campaigner and Ceredigion resident, said: "Schools are the centre of rural local communities. We need to maintain a net-

work of small, community based schools, rather than moving to large area based schools.

Larger schools with increased catchment sizes are far more reliant on buses and taxis and poorer families and non-car owners will be disenfranchised.

"Maintaining small village schools has many benefits. Walking to school improves the health of children and their parents. Rural communities in Ceredigion, Gwynedd and across Wales are facing major threats of closure of shops, Post Offices, and reduced bus services and so on. The Council should not be increasing this pressure on rural communities by closing schools as well."

"To help keep small schools open we can federate them with 3/4 small schools having one head teacher and sharing staff which would also bring some cost savings."

## Failure to consult over incinerator criticised

- **Greens call for more ambitious targets for recycling and composting**

Cardiff Council's claims that the Splott Incinerator planning application was subject to a 'thorough' consultation have been heavily criticised by the Green Party. Matt Townsend from the Cardiff Green Party explained: "The Council is claiming this was a 'thorough' consultation but all they did was notify the Councillors, seventeen local residents, put up 6 notices near the site and stick an advert in the local paper. The previous rejected application had received negative responses from hundreds of people, including myself, through letters and petitions. None of us were informed that another application had been made, and when that

application was successful it was a shock to us all." The Green Party is opposed to incineration and asks Cardiff Council to set more ambitious targets for recycling, composting and to introduce new technologies such as anaerobic digestion as methods of disposing of waste. The Green Party has major concerns about increased road traffic and effects on air quality in Adamsdown. The incinerator will burn 350,000 tonnes of rubbish a year including waste brought from all over South Wales. More than 250 lorries each day will be coming in to the Splott and Adamsdown area along roads including Newport Road and Tyndall Street.

## Badger cull to continue despite court ruling

- **Expert opinion shows cull not the best way to control bovine TB.**

In July 2010 the Badger Trust won an appeal against the Welsh Assembly Government demonstrating a lack of evidence that a cull of badgers would adequately address the problem of Bovine TB.

Leila Kiersch, from Ceredigion Green Party said: "The Court of Appeal is put the Welsh Assembly Government on the spot over its data to justify the badger killing, but they are flying in the face of evidence and carrying on regardless."

"The weight of expert opinion continues to show that a badger cull is not the best way to control bovine TB in cattle herds. The Assembly's own studies have shown that a cull would be no more effective than a vaccination programme."

It seems the height of folly for the Welsh Assembly Government to be proceeding with the badger cull just at the time when a badger vaccine is starting to be used near Stroud in England after a 10 year £11



million government funded development programme.

"The fight against bovine TB is incredibly important and agriculture continues to be the back bone of the Welsh rural economy and it needs to be supported however an ineffectual costly badger cull will not help either."

## Swansea - Wales first 'City of Sanctuary'

- **People in need of safety can find friendship and support**

Earlier this year Swansea became the first city in Wales, and only the second in the UK, to be officially recognised as a 'City of Sanctuary'.

City of Sanctuary is a movement to build a culture of hospitality for people seeking sanctuary in the UK. The aim is to create a network of towns and cities throughout the country that are proud to be places of safety for people who have fled from violence or persecution, and which include people seeking sanctuary fully in the life of their communities.

Swansea Green Party's Keith Ross, a member of the Swansea City of Sanctuary Steering Group, said, "City of Sanctuary status recognises the achievement of the ordinary people of Swansea, who have made

their city a place where people in need of safety can find friendship, rebuild their lives, and give something back to their new home.

"This is a tremendous achievement for the people of Swansea, and an inspiring example of what can be achieved when people come together and work with their local council to create the society that they want to leave in.

"Of course, achieving official recognition is far from being the end of this process. Since May we have increased our activities and begun working on a number of projects to broaden and deepen the culture of sanctuary in Swansea."

## Call for University expansion in the Valleys to create jobs

John Matthews, Assembly candidate and Aberystwyth non resident has called for any further expansion of Glamorgan University to be undertaken in Pontypridd and the Valleys to help create centre of media excellence and much needed employment in the Valleys.

He said: "The development of Glamorgan University is critical to the job creation and redevelopment of the Valleys and the state-of-the-art media facilities offered by the ATRIUM facilities are very much welcomed but the facility should have been located here in the Valleys where the jobs are needed. I do not believe that further expansion of Glamorgan University should be undertaken in Cardiff."

## Scrapping emergency tugs off

### Welsh coasts 'totally irresponsible'

Following news that a salvage tug stationed off the Welsh coast is to be scrapped to save £32 million, Greens have expressed concern that this would leave the South West Wales coast without emergency assistance if oil/gas tankers get into trouble.

Chris Simpson, Green Party candidate for Ceredigion, said "Scrapping these tugs is completely irresponsible. People living along the Cleddau have been concerned about the safety implications of the gas tankers entering a narrow waterway. While the chances of a serious incident involving one of the tankers is small you must always plan for the worst case scenario. We all remember the damage caused when Sea Empress ran aground off Milford Haven and the tugs are not only equipped to assist large tankers but also provide significant support in pollution control."

## Royal Mail privatisation would be 'disastrous' for Wales

The Wales Green Party have criticised plans to privatise Royal Mail, expressing concern over delivery services in rural parts of Wales.

John Matthews, Assembly Candidate, said: "The proposed bill to sell up to 90% of Royal Mail allows for Universal Service Provision to be stopped after 18 months, meaning large swathes of Wales could be without a daily postal service as a private firm focuses on lucrative urban deliveries. The guarantee of a daily service is a cornerstone of rural communities and it's removal would leave them isolated threatening rural post offices who rely on mail services for business. Working conditions for posties have also been deteriorating over recent years and this will continue under privatisation as cost-cutting managers force fewer employees to deliver more post more quickly"

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