



# High Peak Green Party

## for the common good

January-February 2017

### High Peak Greens Have Started a Clean Air Campaign

**What is the problem?** The last Labour Government's commitment to reducing carbon emissions, as it was required to do following the Kyoto climate agreement of 1997, led it to actively promote the sale of diesel cars in the early years of this century. This was because diesel cars drove more 'miles to the gallon' and therefore emitted lower CO2 emissions. Unfortunately this was at the expense of far higher levels of air pollutants, compounded by the criminality of large motor manufacturers who deliberately disguised the extent of pollution coming out of their diesel engines.



**Air pollution causes tens of thousands of deaths every year in the UK.** Toxic emissions from motor vehicles, particularly diesel cars, are the principal cause of air pollution, along with emissions from coal based power stations. Whilst the latter are finally being phased out there is not yet any timetable for taking diesel vehicles off the road. The UK's health professionals are in no doubt that this is what needs to be done "A shift away from diesel vehicles is an immediate priority" is the conclusion of a report by the Health Alliance on Climate Change (HACC), a campaigning organisation which brings together health professionals from across the UK.

**Getting rid of diesel vehicles won't be easy.** With a high proportion of cars, buses, HGV's and trains diesel powered. In the meantime local councils have a responsibility to measure air quality and to draw up an action plan (unspecified!) in areas where they identify a problem. High Peak Greens are keen to ensure that the council carries out its responsibilities. To assist them we intend to carry out our own air quality measurements on roads which we think might have a pollution problem. The first test has just been completed on Glossop High Street and we await analysis of the sample that we have collected, using equipment purchased from Friends of the Earth. We are open to suggestions about where else we should carry out tests.

**Please let us have any suggestions you may have.**

For more information take a look at our post:

**We need fresh air and fresh thinking** on the High Peak Green Party blog at <https://highpeakgreenparty.org.uk>.

## Government Health Warning

### **The desperate state of the NHS hit the news over the Christmas holiday.**

Hospitals were overwhelmed and seriously ill and dying patients waited hours on trolleys in corridors. There hadn't been a natural disaster or a terrorist attack. Just an underfunded, understaffed, overstretched service. The NHS in England is being dismantled. We can see it in our own area with the plans to close wards at the Cavendish and Newholme hospitals. Beds are also under threat at Stepping Hill in Stockport, the hospital much of the High Peak depends on for in-patient and emergency care. On December 30th Stepping Hill issued an appeal to people not to go to the A&E department because the service was overwhelmed. That's a desperate move that staff won't have made lightly, since it could discourage people who really need care from coming in.

**Since the Health and Social Care Act** became law in April 2013, the Secretary of State for Health no longer has responsibility to provide a health service. Jeremy Hunt had obviously taken that to heart in his reaction to the crisis by blaming "selfish people" for going unnecessarily to the A&E. Other scapegoats were lazy GPs and old people who are living too long. Nothing to do with him. But NHS staff including senior doctors have been warning of the growing crisis for some time and they completely reject Hunt's attempt to pass the buck. The NHS is in crisis because each year's increase in funding is below inflation, because clinical staffing levels have been cut, and because a sizeable slice of money is going to the market bureaucracy that oversees buying in services from the private sector. The obsessive drive to privatisation has reached our health and it is becoming a commodity to be bought and sold for profit.

**What can we do?** The second reading of the NHS reinstatement bill is scheduled for 24th February. The Bill proposes to fully restore the NHS as an accountable public service by reversing the marketisation in the NHS, by abolishing the purchaser-provider split, ending contracting and re-establishing public bodies and public services accountable to local communities. This is necessary to stop the dismantling of the NHS under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. It is driven by the needs of local communities. Scotland and Wales have already reversed marketisation and restored their NHS without massive upheaval. England can too.

**Write to Andrew Bingham MP ([andrew.bingham.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:andrew.bingham.mp@parliament.uk))** calling on him to support the bill.

**Write to the local paper about the bill** (you can find details on the NHS bill website

<http://www.nhsbill2015.org>). It's important to get the bill known and talked about. Twice now, time wasting by some MPs, who treat parliamentary debate as a schoolboy game, has prevented the bill being debated at its second reading. Possibly, this type of behaviour would be discouraged if more people were aware of the bill.

### **Want to know more about the Green Party?**

**National Party** [www.greenparty.org.uk](http://www.greenparty.org.uk)

**High Peak** [www.highpeakgreenparty.org.uk](http://www.highpeakgreenparty.org.uk)

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