

# Macclesfield

August 2018

# GREEN VOICE



**John Knight** is the Convenor of Cheshire East Green Party and the Greens' Macclesfield spokesperson. Well-known around the town as a commentator and campaigner, he is a regular political contributor to the *Macclesfield Express*.



Originally from Stockport, he and his family have lived in Macclesfield since 2002. Having worked for 31 years for the Trade Union movement, he took early retirement in 2016.

Awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree by the Open University in 2007, he is returning to higher education this autumn to study for a postgraduate certificate in Sustainability and Adaptation at the Centre for Alternative Technology.

John and the Greens would like to hear from you - tell us what you think about what's going on in Macclesfield, Cheshire East (or the country, or the wider world).

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## Local Greens Tackle Litter



Our Residents' Survey tells us that near the top of Macclesfield folk's concerns - just behind the future of our health services - is litter; we agree. Cheshire East actually runs a very good kerbside waste collection service. However, they are maybe not so hot when it comes to dealing with litter dropped on the pavement or in the park.

One Monday evening in June, a team of Green Party volunteers gathered together to clean up South Park, led by local campaigner John Knight. As you can see from the photos, there was quite a lot of rubbish (!), but hopefully South Park should be more pleasant for residents to use as a result.

### LESS PACKAGING, LESS LITTER

#### John Knight and the Greens litter-picking in South Park

But it's not just about cleaning up the rubbish that has already been dropped. We need to look for ways to

reduce the amount of packaging that so much of our everyday goods come wrapped in.

For example, in the UK as a whole, 35 million plastic bottles are bought every day - that's 200 per person every year - and 44% of these are not recycled. This means 16 million plastic bottles every day end up sent to landfill, incinerated or simply dumped.

We should be recycling, reusing and refilling. Cheshire East or the Town Council could introduce a bottle deposit scheme, free public water dispensers and a community refill scheme. We must work to phase out unnecessary single-use plastics. Perhaps, like other areas, Macclesfield could have a "Clean Team" of volunteers who come together to help keep their local areas clean. Please contact John at [John.Knight@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:John.Knight@greenparty.org.uk) if you'd be interested in helping.



# MACCLESFIELD HEALTH SERVICES UNDER SIEGE

Seventy years after the founding of the NHS, doesn't it feel like our town's health service is under siege?

Mental health services in Macclesfield are threatened with closure. We are being asked to choose either to lose residential care for dementia patients or for adults with acute mental health issues. Vulnerable patients and their families and friends may face eighty-mile round trips to Chester, at the opposite end of the county, with no direct public transport links.



**John Knight on Macclesfield's "Save Our NHS" demo in February**

Macclesfield Hospital itself is under attack, accused of being badly run, with skill shortages in crucial areas.

It's all very well for our Member of Parliament to make noises about defending local health services. He is a junior member of the Conservative government, which is responsible for pushing through the stealthy privatisation of our NHS.

## **Can Labour be trusted with the NHS?**

The last Labour government encouraged a massive increase in Private Finance Initiatives, mortgaging chunks of the NHS off to private healthcare companies, builders and banks.

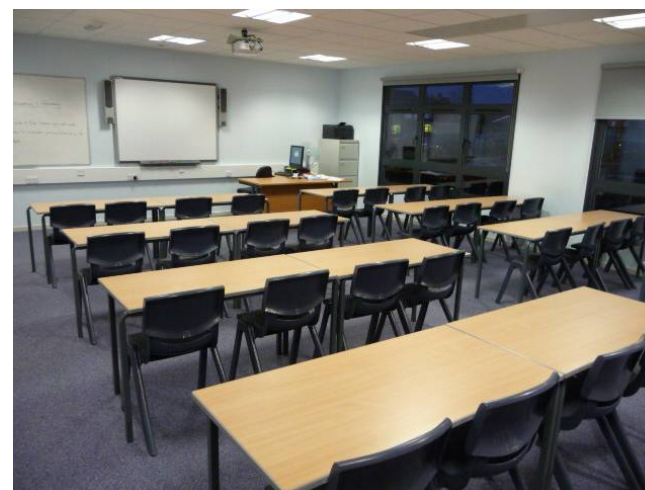
Greens say: defend the NHS as a public service providing healthcare free at the point of delivery; end privatisation of health, integrate health and social care and restore public control and oversight to bodies elected by and answerable to local communities.

**Greens say: our NHS is not for sale!**

# FUNDING OUR SCHOOLS

Art, drama, music and swimming axed or cut back. Crumbling buildings. Not enough teachers. Days out cut. Some afternoons even cut from the school week. Parents being tapped for money to fund basics like textbooks—and not just once in a while, but regularly, week after week.

This is the reality of school life in England today. If you have a child in school, you will know that one or other of these things, perhaps all of them, is happening in their school. It makes no difference whether it is a council school or an academy, a primary or a secondary school.



Why is it happening? Changes to National Insurance and pensions mean schools have to find more money for their staff budgets. But they haven't got more from the government to pay for this, and that means 5% less to spend on each pupil. A new funding formula from this year will give Cheshire schools a bit more, but not enough to make up for past cuts or keep pace with rising costs.

Most of the money for schools comes from the government. Cheshire East Council can make a bit of difference to primary schools. We in the Green Party call on them to make sure our schools are properly supported.