

## LUDLOW CAMPAIGN FOR FAIRNESS

Ludlow Campaign for Fairness (LCFF) is a non-party organization concerned with the redress of the more extreme inequalities in our society. It is increasingly evident that there are major differences in quality of life, education, employment opportunities, financial rewards and housing, between generations and between different social groups. These differences are getting worse. They are exacerbated by the explicit policy of "austerity". In an age of food banks, massive cuts to public services and a desperate housing crisis, it has been evident for years that austerity hits the poor more than the rich, the young more than the old; the slogan that "we are all in this together" is clearly nonsense. Unfortunately, all the major political parties have subscribed to this doctrine. It is being applied in a society where there are grotesque disparities in income. Directors of FTSE 100 companies now receive an average income of close to £5 million which is 183x the average wage of their employees. The poor pay proportionately more in taxes than the rich, while international corporations get away with minuscule tax bills. The ethical justification of the existing order---that wealth "trickles down"--- has proved hollow: wealth is trickling up

As Wilkinson and Pickett have demonstrated, gross inequality is not only wrong in itself but brings a host of problems in its train, social, psychological and physical. Ultimately it threatens serious societal breakdown. It negates democracy through the creation of a super-class whose wealth enables it to wield excessive power at all levels.

LCFF came together as an informal group following an influential talk on these themes by Sir Michael Day. There is some overlap in membership with CTAL and the group which produced Ludlow under Pressure, though we are no more a religious than a party political organization.

Over the last couple of years we have organized a series of lectures by distinguished visiting speakers on the NHS, the decline of public trust, the governance of companies and the dominance of "Mammon". We also lobbied Shropshire County Council to protest about their quasi- commercial arm IP&E which was subsequently disbanded.

Recently, there has been increasing enthusiasm for campaigning on local issues and as a result action groups have been formed to campaign on inter-generational justice, housing and the economy including cuts to the local budget. We also intend to work closely with groups campaigning for local health services.

Nevertheless, we are convinced that while resources are choked off at national level due to the policy of austerity, there is a limit to what can be achieved locally. We believe that austerity is an ideological choice rather than an economic necessity. Remains important to challenge the dominant narrative at national level.