



Giving Edinburgh Back!

Convenor of the Green Group of Councillors in Edinburgh, STEVE BURGESS, heralds a potential Green breakthrough this May.

Five years ago we were in uncharted territory. Robin Harper had been in Parliament since 1999 but Greens in local government had remained the sole preserve of our colleagues south of the border.

That was never something which could continue. While parliamentarians, naturally, command greater media and public focus (which is why parliamentary presence is so important) it is not too much of a cliché to say that green politics is local politics. Many of the things that motivate us to take action are those that councils can (or should) do.

That is why it was so important that, with your tremendous support, I was elected in 2007, along with Maggie Chapman and Alison Johnstone.

There was a lot of learning to do, of course, and being a group of only three among 58 councillors has had its frustrations. But, we have made an impact, as a principled group:

- Standing up against closures of schools and community services.
- Supporting public services run by public providers
- Piloting new ways of engaging communities in local decisions,
- Backing the interests of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users
- Speaking up for local shops against predatory chain stores.
- Defending local parks and green spaces.

And so much more! People have been impressed with the breadth of our work and our interests. I believe they are in the mood to elect more Greens.

That's where we all have a role to play. We will have a full "slate" of 17 candidates this May and there are at least seven wards where there is an excellent chance of Greens being elected. Our candidates have been working hard in these wards, sometimes for years. In lots of ways we are so much further forward than we were this time five years ago. Lots of people have contributed to that effort.

Over the next 3 months we need to accelerate to the line. Get those ward newspapers out; make sure everyone reads our candidate leaflets; help out on election day; assist our candidates with canvassing. Make a donation to the campaign.

We have an exciting prospectus for the voters of Edinburgh. As politics becomes ever more concentrated on a narrow centre-right perspective Greens won't hesitate to highlight corporate greed, we will put community interests above profit-takers, we will promote local and social enterprises. We will show that a sustainable economy is one which creates meaningful jobs and we will back investment that heads off problems in the future.

We want to give Edinburgh back to its citizens – and not just the citizens of today but their children and grand-children too.

Please help us make that happen.



The Council election 2012 and how you can help

- Get involved in a local team and help deliver Ward Newspapers between now and 21 March; and election leaflets in April
- Join one of our teams canvassing voters
- Give a donation to the campaign fund

Any many other ways! Contact volunteer@edinburghgreens.org.uk for more.

Fundraising update

We rely on the help of members and supporters to compete with massive political machines. Over the next few months we aim to raise at least £10,000 to fund our campaign in Edinburgh. If we are successful then this money will help pay for leaflets, materials, campaign organization and many other things besides.

You can help us in many ways. Perhaps the easiest thing is to sign up for a monthly standing order (see www.edinburghgreens.org.uk). A small amount each month allows us to plan well ahead and make best use of your donation. Of course, we also warmly welcome donations in response to our appeals or if you go to the fundraising section on www.edinburghgreens.org.uk.

Karine Polwart and Friends raising funds for Edinburgh Greens



Award-winning singer-songwriter, Karine Polwart, brings her band to her first Edinburgh show for two years. And it is all to raise funds for Edinburgh and Midlothian branches of the Green Party.

A similar event in 2010 was a massive sell-out success, so don't miss it! Do please tell friends, neighbours, colleagues too.

Wednesday 28 March at 7.30pm (doors open at 6.45pm). Venue: Greyfriars Kirk. Tickets from £8 upwards from www.thebooth.co.uk or Andy Saunders 07967 021708

Edinburgh Branch Annual General Meeting

Notification and Agenda

The Edinburgh Branch AGM will take place on Thursday 23 February 2012 at 7.30pm at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh. All members are warmly invited.

We aim to deal with formal business quickly and efficiently to leave plenty of time for a presentation – “Community Energy in Edinburgh” and for us to chat informally over light refreshments.

Agenda

Light refreshments served and throughout

PART 1	5 Any Motions to be discussed (see below)
1 Welcome	6 AOB
2 Minutes of last meeting	
3 Reports: Branch Committee; MSP; Councillors; Local Teams; Accounts	PART 2
4 Election of new office bearers (see below)	Community Energy in Edinburgh. A presentation and discussion

Office-bearers

Nominations for the following posts on the branch committee are now open.

- Female co-convenor
- Male co-convenor
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Membership secretary
- Elections officer
- Fundraising officer
- External communications officer
- Policy Officer
- Campaigns officer
- Up to 4 ordinary members

If you want to nominate yourself or get more details about what is involved please contact Edinburgh@scottishgreens.org.uk. You can also nominate yourself, in person, at the AGM.

Motions

If you have any other motions please send them to Edinburgh@scottishgreens.org.uk. The final deadline for motions is the start of the meeting but it would be very helpful to get them by a week before (16 February).

Reports

To make good use of time we will be collecting all reports in writing but only reporting verbally on those from our elected politicians (councillors and MSP) – although we will, of course, take questions on reports. These reports will be in the Edinburgh members' area of the national website (www.scottishgreens.org.uk) a few days before the AGM. If you do not have access to the website contact membershipsecretary@scottishgreens.org.uk to get your password. If you do not have web access let us know (details on last page) and we'll get copies to you.

In your area

Here's some of what our local teams have been up to.

Our **Leith** team, led by Chas Booth, joined with community campaigners and Alison Johnstone to protest about the closure of Leith Waterworld. Chas also played a key role in the nail-biting contest to secure funding for the UK's first urban community-owned wind turbine (come to the branch AGM to hear more!)

Southside Newington team held another successful ceilidh last October, bringing together a heady mix of local people and curious tourists, to enjoy a lively evening of Scottish dancing. And we raised a welcome £500 for party funds. Green councillor for the area, Steve Burgess has also been canvassing the opinion of local

people on possible building restoration projects.

Fountainbridge and Craiglockhart's candidate, Gavin Corbett, has joined a group of local people pressing for a radical rethink of plans to develop the former brewery site in Fountainbridge. Meanwhile Gavin continues to push for safer car-parking in the area.

In **Meadows and Morningside** sitting councillor Alison Johnstone has been busy handing over the reins to new Green candidate, Melanie Main. Melanie has been campaigning on development in the Craighouse area and on the future of Boroughmuir High School, where former Green MSP, Robin

There are local Green teams active across the city. If you do not have one in your area why not contact us about setting one up?



Harper taught for 30 years!

Our **Leith Walk** councillor and candidate, Maggie Chapman, has been promoting the next round of Leith Decides, a pioneering scheme to give the local community a say over how money is spent in their area. Maggie also continues to be a vocal opponent of Leith Biomass.

In **Inverleith**, candidate Nigel Bagshaw has been a leading figure in the successful campaign to protect Inverleith Park from development of luxury homes; and been pushing for greater use of 20mph zones in the area.

From your Green MSP

Lothian Green MSP, Alison Johnstone, updates

Community and campaigns

Local planning issues are bread and butter work whether as MSP or councillor. High profile work recently has included Craighouse in the south west of Edinburgh, Caltongate revisited and James Gillespie's High School. We have been supporting campaigns in all areas with advice, questions and motions/amendments as appropriate. I have also been working closely with the Splashback Campaign against the closure of Leith Waterworld and focusing on the protection of public assets under threat across Lothian.

On the national stage, I attended a photocall and met with Equal Marriage campaigners. With fellow MSP Patrick Harvie and other party members, I joined public sector strikers across Scotland back in November on the march to

Holyrood. I took part in the protest against the severe cuts to funding for cycling and walking projects in the Scottish Government's draft budget, joining a bike rally outside St. Andrew's House.

I recently visited young apprentices at the UK's first wind turbine engineering course. And recent meetings include: Scottish Social Enterprise, Educational Institute of Scotland, Visit Scotland, the Law Society, Carillion, Breakthrough Breast Cancer and the Church of Scotland to discuss educational issues.

In Parliament

In Parliament I've taken part in debates on the impact of the Westminster Coalition's Autumn Budget Statement, the legacy of the Commonwealth Games, the educational attainment of looked-after children, and in Members'



debates on prescription medicine waste, and nuclear power.

In December I opposed the Government's 'Limits on Carbon Units Order' which would allow Scotland to buy carbon credits rather than take action here to meet climate change targets.

I've lodged motions on subjects including UK Anti-slavery Day, the legacy of Nobel Peace Prize recipient Wangari Maathai, a single use bag tax, along with a motion, oral and written questions on fracking. I have asked questions on cuts to the active travel budget and on fish stocks, the involvement of Dow chemicals in Commonwealth Games sponsorship, and youth unemployment.

Selecting our council candidates

In this mailing you will find details of how to vote for candidates for this May's council elections in Edinburgh. In 8 of the 17 wards, candidates have already been selected, in most cases for some time. And we have been and will

be targeting 7 of those 8 wards fairly intensively.

That leaves 9 wards to be selected. They are listed below. We will have candidates in each of these areas although we do not expect active campaigns there in

the same way as our seven target wards.

But it is still vital that all candidates go into the election knowing that they have the backing of local members. So do please use your vote!

Wards with candidates already (* = target ward)		Wards still to be selected
City Centre *	Julita Mazurek	Almond
Forth	Kate Joester	Colinton / Fairmilehead
Fountainbridge / Craiglockhart *	Gavin Corbett	Corstorphine / Murrayfield
Inverleith *	Nigel Bagshaw	Craigtinny / Duddingston
Leith *	Chas Booth	Liberton / Gilmerton
Leith Walk *	Maggie Chapman	Drumbrae / Gyle
Meadows / Morningside *	Melanie Main	Pentland Hills
Southside / Newington *	Steve Burgess	Portobello / Craigmillar
		Sighthill / Gorgie

Green event points finger of blame for economic woes

Edinburgh Green Party recently hosted a public talk on the financial crisis by David Malone, blogger on financial affairs and author of 'The Debt Generation'. Almost 100 people attended, more than expected on a cold December evening.

David's overarching theme was that we have been comprehensively misled about the causes of the crash, and that the proposals to deal with it are similarly incorrect. So, the banks knew that that they were selling credit that could not be repaid and

sowing the seeds of the crisis. David went on to argue that Governments need not have simply bowed to bankers' demands for bail-out. The very wealthiest people, the bondholders, would have lost money, but the vast majority of people would be covered by the existing compensation arrangements. A unique chance to correct the excesses of the banks was lost.

Instead, we are all paying the consequences.

David Malone's blog is <http://www.golemxiv.co.uk/>

Welcome to West Lothian members

Over the last couple of months our ranks in Edinburgh have been swelled by a number of members living in West Lothian. Members there felt they had had problems achieving enough critical mass for a separate branch so have opted to come under the wing of

Edinburgh for a while. So a big welcome to West Lothian-based members. We look forward to working with you, over the next couple of years, to increase numbers and visibility out west and supporting you to becoming a branch in your own right again.

Dates for your diary

- **Branch AGM:** 23 February at 7.30pm, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace
- **Branch Monthly meeting:** 22 March, at 7.30pm, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace
- **Fundraiser with Karine Polwart and Friends:** 7.30pm, Wed 28 March. Tickets from www.thebooth.co.uk
- **Election Day:** Thurs 3 May

Contact details

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