

GREEN NEWS

SPRING 2014
ELECTION
SPECIAL



Meadows
& Morningside

TOLLCROSS - MARCHMONT - GREENHILL - BRUNTSFIELD
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Back Maggie Chapman this May - for a just and welcoming Scotland

**The race is on to elect
Scotland's first ever Green MEP
- Maggie Chapman!**

European elections are rarely anyone's top priority for voting, even more so this year with the big event - the Scottish referendum in September - still to come.

But this year's European elections on 22 May have an extra twist: with a neck-and-neck contest between the Scottish Greens and UKIP. That's a contest between two parties at opposite ends of the political scale. The Scottish Greens who want to see investment in public services like postal services and trains; community control and ordinary workers' interests above bankers' bonuses; and a Scotland which welcomes people who choose to live and work here.



"I believe it's time for Scotland to have its own Green representative in the European Parliament. With your backing, we can make that happen and at the same time keep Scotland a UKIP-free zone."

Or UKIP, bankrolled by the wealthy, mistrusting of 'foreigners' and with no interest in what happens here in Scotland.

It's a race in which every vote will count!

The Choice

On 22 May Scotland chooses six MEPs to sit in the European Parliament, using a fair voting system. The first five seats are expected to go to SNP, Labour and Tories as usual. But with the collapse in Lib Dem support the race for the sixth seat is wide open with only one in ten votes needed to elect that sixth MEP.

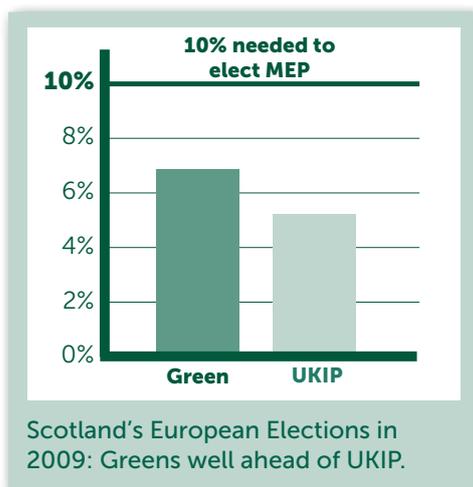
Last time around, in 2009, the Scottish Greens came well ahead of UKIP in the race, within touching distance of winning. For this year's

contest the party has selected current Green councillor Maggie Chapman, who said:

"I'm delighted to be seeking your support for a positive vision of Scotland in the international community: forward-looking, welcoming, with social justice at its heart.

"There are already many Green MEPs in the European Parliament, leading on protecting the environment and tackling climate change, of course. But so much more: pioneering a tax on bankers' bonuses; protecting the rights of workers; standing up to the military muscle of NATO, the arms industry and the nuclear lobbyists.

"Those are my priorities for which I'm seeking your backing on 22 May."



Put ordinary football fans in control say Greens

Green MSPs have launched proposals to give football fans the first right to buy their clubs.

Alison Johnstone, Green MSP for Lothian and sport spokesperson for the Scottish Greens, wants to see changes to the Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Bill. The

to buy shares, not just the football stadiums, as it is the shares which really matter to the clubs.

The Greens also want to boost fans' trusts, so they have first right of refusal if

the club is put up for sale and so they can access funding help.

Alison Johnstone MSP said:

"Too many Scottish football fans have gone through painful cycles of boom and bust at their clubs, where irresponsible owners run up massive debts or simply fail to pay their taxes.

"Edinburgh has two celebrated rival

clubs: Hearts and Hibs.

Hearts fans have most obviously been betrayed by ownership arrangements in the recent past. But few clubs can rest easy, and all would gain by more fan ownership."



Greens' plans are based on the "community right to buy" for rural land introduced 10 years ago and now to be extended to land in towns and cities.

The Greens' intentions are to give football fans rights



Green MSP seeks better deal for private tenants

Green MSP Patrick Harvie has launched a new website to campaign for better standards in privately rented accommodation

He is calling for private tenants across Scotland to share their experiences of renting and he will push for real improvements in the current Scottish Government Housing Bill.

The website covers five main themes that the Greens want to see bolder or faster action on: security of lease, the cost of renting, energy efficiency standards, eviction and harassment and clear information about landlords and letting agents.

Patrick Harvie said: "Private tenants in Scotland deserve a better deal. For many people the rising cost of rent is by far the biggest expense they face."

Edinburgh Green Councillor Maggie Chapman added: "Private renting keeps growing as home ownership becomes less affordable. The worst landlords and agents are getting away with illegal behaviour – enforcement of regulations is clearly an issue – and we need private tenants to have the stability which makes a house into a home."

Green MP: Railways need to be public service

Green MP Caroline Lucas' Bill to bring the rail network back into public hands would save taxpayers more than £1 billion a year and lead to lower fares and better services, the Green MP for Brighton Pavilion has argued.

Under her Private Member's Bill at Westminster the rail network would be brought back into public ownership step by step. When franchises come up for expiry, or private companies break the terms of their franchise agreements, they would revert to the control of a public body.



Green MP Caroline Lucas has proposed that railways are brought back into public ownership

Craighouse: last chance saloon?

Local Greens have welcomed the withdrawal of damaging plans to build 125 new homes on Easter Craiglockhart Hill; but warned of a growing credibility gap for the developers.



Developers, Mountgrange and Sundial had been due to present their plans for the former Napier University site, Craighouse, to the council's planning committee in mid March.

However, after more than a thousand new objections, those plans were withdrawn, with a yet another consultation

on a third set of plans now due to take place after the end of May.

Local Green councillor Melanie Main said: "I'm relieved that the so-called "Scheme Two" plans have been withdrawn. The developers' own figures showed that simply converting the existing historic buildings could turn a profit.

So there was no case for building as many as 125 new homes on the green and open spaces.

"But we've now been going back and forth for almost three years; and the developers' continued failure to produce an acceptable scheme is stretching credibility to breaking point."

Dig-In to open this spring!

ESTD. 2013
Dig-in
BRUNTSFIELD
Community Greengrocer

Dig-In, Bruntsfield's community greengrocer shop, is becoming a reality with the shop opening this Spring.

Residents have raised almost £30,000 in shares and volunteers have been working hard towards opening the doors. One team of volunteers has been dedicated to sourcing supplies including local, seasonal and organic when possible. Their aim is to reconnect people with their food.

Dig in not only stocks a varied selection of fruit and vegetables, but also a selection of non-perishable Scottish produce and a wide range of local shopping to complement the fishmonger, butcher and artisan bakeries nearby.

Dig-In is Scotland's first urban community shop – directly challenging those retailers aiding and abetting the demise of the local economy. 96% of

community shops succeed compared to the normal 50% success rate.

Dig-In chair Cllr Melanie Main is quietly confident for the future: "It has been an incredible journey working with such a dedicated group over the last year. None of us expected just what a huge commitment this would become, but it has been groundbreaking, and community support has been amazing.

"We asked - residents bought shares. We asked - they gave time, energy and expertise to set up Dig-In. Now, the final ask - make Dig-In the local greengrocer, to do your weekly shop, locally on the high street."

Join Dig-In at www.diginbruntsfield.co.uk



Morningside Farmers Market

Morningside Farmers Market is held on the third Saturday of each month.

Cllr Melanie Main who has supported this initiative by Morningside Traders from the outset, said: "It is great to see the market up and running, and to hear that sales in local shops have noticeably increased as a result. Some local retailers have even identified increased weekday sales as a result of the market."

The Pedestrian Pound

Cllr Melanie Main recommends 'The Pedestrian Pound' from Living Streets Scotland

<http://bit.ly/PedPound>

A new report making the case for new spaces to be pedestrian-friendly to boost the local economy

Read it and walk!



COMMUNITY BOARD

Spring is the traditional time to start new ventures, so join up and join in!

- Morningside Peace and Justice Group: Spring series of talks each Wed 10.30am with inspiring invited speakers: morningsidejandp.org
- Greening Our Street: Lauriston's new community group: www.greeningourstreet.btck.co.uk
- Bruntsfield Living: Where traders and residents come together to keep Bruntsfield vibrant: www.facebook.com/BruntsfieldLiving
- Friends of Craighouse: Help preserve the beautiful grounds and woods for the public: friendsofcraighouse.com
- Friends of the Meadows and Bruntfield Links: Volunteer sessions on the last Saturday morning of each month: www.fombl.org.uk
- Friends of Braidburn Valley Park: www.braidburnvalleypark.org.uk

Local banks the way forward, say Greens

Scottish Greens' bold new proposals on banking policy call for RBS's high street banks in Scotland to be transformed into a network of local banks for every region, boosting lending to small businesses.

RBS has recently been heavily criticised for its poor lending to small businesses and Greens believe local banks will do better.

As Westminster seeks to re-privatise the Edinburgh-based bank, Greens are calling for RBS's branches in Scotland to be spun off into a separate business: a network of banks serving only their local region.

Lothian Green MSP Alison Johnstone said: "We have a golden opportunity for a triple-win here: protecting jobs in Edinburgh; putting RBS back on a stable footing; and boosting lending to the small businesses which are the bedrock of the local economy.

"RBS is publicly-owned. The Scottish Government should negotiate with



Lothian Green MSP Alison Johnstone: "Local banks will better serve small businesses"

the Treasury to transfer the High Street branches of RBS in Scotland to a Scottish subsidiary, with a network of banks serving only their region – a model widespread in countries like Germany, with its Sparkassen.

"These banks would still be private organisations and could share backroom services to bring down costs but each bank would serve its city or region and be governed by local stakeholders.

"The banking crisis has shown that big is certainly not better. It is local banks which will better serve small businesses."

Contact your local Greens

Melanie Main is your Green Councillor for the Meadows and Morningside area.

Contact Melanie on 07775 665 499, 529 3181 or melanie.main@edinburgh.gov.uk. Meetings by arrangement.

 @melaniemain

You can also contact your Green MSP, Alison Johnstone at alison.johnstone.msp@scottish.parliament.uk or 0131 348 5000

Edinburgh Greens

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Bonnington Mill, 72 Newhaven Road
Edinburgh EH6 5QG

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