



## Edinburgh Green Councillors' Report for June 2015

This month the Green Councillor Group hosted an event at the City Chambers for members and other interested people to provide an insight into the work of Councillors. The event was a great success attracting over 50 people who actively participated and a number of whom have indicated their interest in standing for the Greens in the 2017 Council elections. Please feel free to get in touch with any of us informally for more information if you might be interested in standing.

### Improving Public Participation - Opening up Edinburgh



At the June meeting of South Central Green Neighbourhood Partnership, Cllrs Melanie Main and Steve Burgess won backing to develop Participatory Budgeting in the area with a PB event scheduled for early next year. The aim is to have local people actively deciding how around £100K of Council money is spent.

Green councillor Melanie Main also **pressed the city council** on the case for increased parent representation on the City's Education Committee. She secured the backing of the current parent representative on the Committee but was rebuffed by the Education Convenor who is defending his political majority on the committee.

### Greener jobs



City Deal is the flavour of the month for economic development and Gavin Corbett co-ordinated efforts from branch parties across the south east of Scotland to insist that the City Deal for the Edinburgh region is a sustainable city deal. Edinburgh Council formally accepted a proposal by Green Cllrs that the City Deal criteria be extended to include a requirement to promote sustainability. A proposal has also been prepared for a forthcoming round-table event on greening the City Deal.

Cllr Melanine Main is working on a 'Beyond Foodbanks' project with Nourish Scotland and local schools that seeks to improve knowledge about

sustainable food in the retail sector. It is hoped that a pilot course will be run at Gillespie's High School next year.

## Supporting Communities & Neighbourhoods



Steve Burgess has been working with welfare agency staff to try to ensure that DWP plans to freeze rent payments to people claiming Universal Credit and whose landlords are not registered, does not impact on them, also raising the matter at this month's Council Welfare Reform Working Group.

Chas Booth has been pressing for concerted and practical action on **dog-fouling**: one of the most persistent problems to be raised at community meetings. One idea under discussion is the possibility of DNA-swabbing dogs at the time of licensing so that

owners allowing dog-fouling can be traced.

## Sustainable Transport

Nigel Bagshaw and Chas Booth took up the case of cyclists across the city by speaking up at Transport Committee in favour of keeping cars out of bus lanes. Despite this, the Green amendment was rejected. Meanwhile, Gavin Corbett has been writing in the Evening News about the need to tackle **vehicles parking on pavements**.

## Promoting Renewable & Efficient Energy

Following years of pressure from Green councillors and others, the Edinburgh Community Solar Co-operative finally went live at the end of May, and will launch their first share offer in the summer. The Coop will use council-owned buildings to install solar panels which will cut CO2 emissions and pay into a community benefit fund. Go to [edinburghsolar.coop](http://edinburghsolar.coop) for more info.

At Corporate Strategy Committee in June, Steve Burgess challenged the Council's lack of ambition towards reducing the climate-changing pollution the Council is responsible for, suggesting a 4% per year from now to 2020. Sadly, the Green proposal found no support with other parties who backed only a 10.5% reduction over the next 5 years.

At the same meeting Steve did win support that the Council instigated, continually evolving and now city-wide 'Sustainable Edinburgh 2020' strategy is updated to include a clear route map to 2020, including aims, objectives, targets and timelines.



## Highlights from Green Councillors' Wards

At the former Fountainbridge brewery site Gavin Corbett has been meeting with local action group Fountainbridge-Canalside Initiative on the case for a community hub at the heart of the site, and, as part of that, secured recognition from the council's Economy Committee of that case.

In Leith, Chas Booth was delighted to attend the official opening of the Custom House on 14 June, when the building was opened to the public for the first time in 30 years. The Scottish Historic Building Trust is working with the council to find a long-term use for the building, ideally as a heritage hub for Leith. In the interim, it will be used as artist space by Out of the Blue.

In Meadows-Morningside ward, Melanie Main lead an informal road safety community event where 150 residents discussed with each other and council staff , proposals to improve safety and reclaim streets for pedestrians in Greenbank and Braidburn.



In Southside-Newington, Steve Burgess has been actively supporting ‘Spirit of Dumbiedykes’ a project to invest £250K over the next 3 years to promote youth activities, volunteering, sports and cultural activities in a large former council estate in the ward.