



## Bonnyrigg councillor Ian Baxter in race to be Midlothian's next MP



Bonnyrigg councillor Ian Baxter

Midlothian Green Party has selected Ian Baxter, Midlothian's first Green councillor, to be the party's candidate for Midlothian in May's Westminster General Election.

Ian has lived in Bonnyrigg for 35 years with his wife Karen, bringing up three sons who went to local schools. Elected to Midlothian Council in 2012, he was formerly chair of Bonnyrigg & Lasswade Community Council and currently chairs the town's Fair Trade Town group.

Accepting the nomination, Cllr Baxter said, "This is a very exciting time for the Greens. In the last six months our membership has quadrupled across the UK and it is clear that people are looking beyond traditional parties which have failed to work for the common good. It is a real privilege to represent a party that has a positive message for both people and planet".

### Ian's top priorities if elected ...

**Equality, not poverty** - Immediately raise the minimum wage to the level of the Living Wage, and rising to £10 per hour by 2020

**Public services in public hands** - Return the railways and Royal Mail to public ownership, serving the public, not shareholders

**End the programme of austerity** - Cuts to Welfare are driven by ideology, not economics. We need robust systems in place to stop tax avoidance

**Sort out the Banks** - We didn't cause the banks to crash, and changes are still not in place to stop it happening again. Encourage smaller, community banks, which will support local businesses

**Green industrialisation** - Start a transition to a jobs-rich economy which respects the environment. Re-skill the oil industry to move away from fossil fuel extraction to renewables

**Small is beautiful** - Promote small, local businesses and co-operatives, reducing reliance on big supermarket monopolies

**Put energy in community hands** - Midlothian has massive scope for renewable energy owned by local communities and the council, providing income, reducing emissions and putting people in charge

**Protect our green spaces** - No more out-of-town retail parks or speculative property developments in the green belt. We need to safeguard our farming land and promote local food production

## Greens push for investment in community owned renewables



Councillor Baxter spoke at a recent conference on micro hydro power in support of communities wishing to tap into the energy of Midlothian's rivers. The conference was held at the Midlothian Campus of Edinburgh College, home to an array of over 2,500 solar panels and was organised by the Midlothian Federation of Community Councils.

Hydro is no stranger to Midlothian, with the North Esk having provided power for many of Midlothian's paper, explosives and other industries in the past.

Speaking at the conference, Councillor Baxter said, "Community owned energy generation empowers local communities and gives them the financial resources and independence to do more for themselves.

The Scottish Government's Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill shows that politicians are waking up to the need to help communities do more for themselves and the appetite for this within communities themselves".

## Super fast broadband must be 'built in' to new housing estates

Following the problems of poor internet speeds across Bonnyrigg, in particular Hopefield and Baird's Way/Brixwold, the Greens have been pressing for the council to insist on all new housing estates having superfast broadband connected to houses as they are built.

'Fibre to the Premises' (FTTP) as it is known, would mean speeds of up to 300 Mbps, compared to around a tenth of that for houses connected to cabinets which have been upgraded ('Fibre to the Cabinet' - FTTC).

At a recent Planning Committee meeting, following Cllr Baxter's request, officials will now look into the possibility of imposing a planning condition on all new housing estates that Fibre to the Premises be installed.

Cllr Baxter said, "Following my discussions with BT, I understand they are keen to install FTTP for around the same cost to developers as current copper cabling, on developments over 25 houses. People moving into Midlothian, particularly small businesses working from home, expect and need a fast connection".

## Local Plan goes out to final consultation

The Midlothian Local Development Plan, approved by Midlothian Council, despite objections from the Greens that it offers nothing in the way of sustainability, goes out to final consultation on 14th May for a period of six weeks.

If you object to any of it, please make sure you respond by 26th June.

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