

MIDLOTHIAN GREENS BRANCH NEWS



Scottish Green Party

Autumn 2018

Leading the change Autumn Conference 2018 report

Several hundred Greens attended the party conference at the Technology and Innovation Centre in Glasgow on 20-21 October.

We were inspired by the great work being done by our new councillors like Kim Long and Christie Mearns in Glasgow, challenging the fusty traditions of the established parties, and by our MSPs, with Alison Johnston forcing significant change on welfare policy, John Finnie achieving a ban on hitting children and Andy Wightman pushing significant legislative changes on housing and planning.

KEY DECISIONS

The conference made some key decisions, supporting a second referendum on EU membership, fare-free public transport and public ownership of ferries. We also passed new and updated policies on Challenging the Far Right, Food & Agriculture, Climate Change, Plastics and Universal Basic Income.

There was also support for our MSPs setting significant

reform of local taxation as a red line for supporting any Scottish Government budget this year.

On Sunday we were entertained by Magid Magid, Sheffield's first Green Mayor

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and sent on our way by a rousing closing speech from Ross Greer MSP who showed us that we were 'Leading the Change'.



MGP branch meeting

Please come to our next meeting,
on **Monday 12 November**
from **7–9pm** at **Loanhead Library,**
Loanhead

Let's get active!

What you can do to make a difference

With a possible General Election in sight (and even if that turns out not to be the case, our own Scottish Parliament and local elections are approaching) we need as many hands on deck as possible. Please think of what you can do to help our Midlothian Green Party. Please get involved and sign up to a task group. These task groups will take forward ongoing and specific activities:

Campaign task group

Contact Helen Armstrong:

helen@sunadal.co.uk

Organisation of local campaigns, having ward maps ready organising volunteers to knock doors and do leaflet drops, link up with other task groups. Possible campaigns identified;

- Sewage spillage and pollution of river in the River Esk
- Abolish single use plastics from Midlothian schools, eg the canteen food to go,
- Infrastructure and transport linked with housing

Climate/Environment task group

Contact Malcolm Spaven:

malcolmgspaven@gmail.com

- Concentrating on and following up on local climate and environmental issues as mentioned in the Campaigns task group.

Newsletters task group

Contact Paul Mephram and

Gari Donn: paulmephram60@outlook.com/gari_donn@msn.com

Newsletters and template leaflets drawn up for a snap GE and local by-election:

- A snap GE leaflet based on Brexit with an emphasis on climate change, still to decide if independence should or should not be part of the leaflet.
- A local by-election leaflet template, local long-standing issues and spaces for current local issues as well as climate and environment policies/issues.
- Work on regular newsletter with an emphasis on 'your local green party needs you!'

Web page/social media task group

Contact Mike Harrison:

mike@mahprojects.co.uk

- Update web site with personal profiles.
- Some paragraphs in main web page dated, in need of revision.

Possible use of MailChimp for newsletters/communication to members and Survey Monkey for feedback.

- Ask all recent 'likers' on MGP's Facebook posts to like the MGP page.

Housing task group

Contact Jill Simon:

jilliansimon74@gmail.com

- To put together a short sheet of info on SGP national housing policies so when knocking doors facts are found quickly and easily.
- To identify local housing issues and how a local green party would improve current housing issues.
- To identify and link up other issues relating to housing such as infrastructure, facilities, transport, affordability.

Did you know...?

...a tidal power project stationed off the Orkney Islands is the most powerful tidal stream turbine to date and it has just finished a full year at sea continually generating electricity.

In that time the FloTEC pilot SR2000 2-MW turbine has generated 3 GWh of energy, equivalent to the annual electricity needs of 830 British households, more power than has been produced by all wave and tidal energy projects in Scotland in the past 12 years.

Source: *Treehugger website*

Changes agreed today to the Scottish Government's Planning Bill will help tackle Scotland's housing crisis by making land for house-building more affordable and by better regulating short-term lets, according to Scottish Greens housing spokesperson Andy Wightman MSP.

Scottish Greens have long campaigned for reform of the planning system, to counter the current set-up where the price of land rockets once it receives planning permission. Holyrood's Local Government and Communities Committee, of which Mr Wightman is a member, today agreed to amend the government's Planning (Scotland) Bill so that the amount councils pay to landowners in new 'masterplan consent areas' is not inflated by the prospect of development

The Committee also agreed an amendment from Andy which means that changing a property from a person's home to a short-term let will require full planning consent based on clear criteria. Local

councils would determine such applications on the basis of local policy, and the changes would not affect homeowners or occupiers who only rent out a room.

Andy Wightman, Housing spokesperson for the Scottish Greens and MSP for Lothian, said:

'With average house prices seven and a half times the average salary we must take every opportunity we can to help people afford to buy or rent a home. Giving local councils the power to buy land at existing use value rather than the inflated value caused by planning permission is an important tool in the box.

'A classic example is the Waterfront in Edinburgh where there are swathes of

vacant land that have been allocated for housing for years. Developers have been biding their time while the land value rises and the city's housing crisis worsens. This land should be available for the council to buy at its current value so it can get on with the job of building affordable housing for ownership and rent.

'We also know that the uncontrolled and rapid rise in short-term lets in our cities and our rural communities is depriving families and individuals of badly-needed long-term homes. I am pleased that the Minister has agreed to discuss this matter further as the Bill progresses through Parliament.'

Hope facing an overheated climate

Professor Kevin Anderson, Deputy Director of the Tyndall Centre, University of Manchester, on the *IPCC Special Report 1.5 Degrees* and on *Quantifying the implications of Paris Agreement: What role for Scotland?*

6pm for 6.30–8.30pm

Tuesday 30 October at 50 George Square,
The University of Edinburgh EH8 9JU.

Free event, book via www.kevin30oct.eventbrite.com



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