

# MIDLOTHIAN GREENS BRANCH NEWS



Scottish Green Party

February 2020

## MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2022

Are you passionate about your local community? Ever thought about running for the local council elections? The next Scottish local government elections are expected to take place in May 2022 to elect 1,227 councillors in Scotland's 32 local authorities and we'll need a candidate for each of the six Midlothian wards.

Yes, we know that May 2022 seems a long way off but we're developing new campaigning skills to support our Midlothian Green Party candidates and we want to start using those skills as soon as possible.

There are six wards in the Midlothian

Council area: **Penicuik;**

**Bonnyrigg; Dalkeith;**

**Midlothian West; Midlothian East; Midlothian South.**

You can find maps of the wards **here**. Three Councillors represent each ward and we would like to stand one candidate in each. If you would like to put yourself forward for



If you would like information on what it's like being a councillor, check this out: <http://www.localcouncillor.scot/>

selection as a Scottish Green party candidate please let us know as soon as possible. Please state which ward you wish to stand in and give us a few sentences telling us why you would like to stand for the Scottish Green Party in that area.

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## Spring Conference

28th March 2020,  
Adam Smith Theatre,  
Kirkcaldy

Book now for the Spring Conference – every person counts!

If you're new to the party or have never attended Conference now's your chance! The programme is tailored to new members giving them the opportunity to meet our MSPs and councillors and get to know the Rep Groups. Please book early to avoid disappointment. It's never been a more exciting time to be a Green!

Our next social meeting is on **Tuesday 3rd March** at **EH20 Bar and Kitchen, Loanhead.**  
Our next branch meeting is on **Monday 9th March** at **St John's and King's Park Church, Dalkeith, 7.00pm – 9.00pm.**



# Photo competition

## You could win a voucher to be exchanged at the Storehouse in Penicuik, our local community-run shop.

Midlothian Green Party wants to create a library of images of our area – landscapes urban or rural, pics with people such as community initiatives and campaigns and family fun days – which could be used online or in forthcoming publications such as our Vision for Midlothian.

We're offering six prizes, one for each image which represents an aspect of our Vision for Midlothian

- Communities
- Valuing everyone
- Housing
- Sustainability
- Food and environment
- A fair economy

We'll award a voucher for £10 to the person submitting the best image in each category, and reserve the right to use other submitted images in other print publications and online, with full acknowledgement of the photographer. For more information on size and specification please email [paulmepham60@outlook.com](mailto:paulmepham60@outlook.com).



## Midlothian Council Elections 2022

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Once we have a list of potential candidates, we will send the list to all members prior to holding a selection meeting where members will be able to vote for their preferred candidate for each ward.

If you would like information on what it's like being a councillor, check out this excellent resource: <http://www.localcouncillor.scot/>. The website will help you understand the many different aspects of a councillor's role, provide you with some information to help you decide if being a councillor is for you and ensure you are well prepared should you be elected. Of course, the branch will be happy to answer any other questions you may have.

From 2012 to 2017 Ian Baxter did a fantastic job as a Green Party Councillor so let's get at least one Green Party Councillor back on Midlothian Council in 2022! All potential candidates should send their responses and any questions they may have to: [midlothian@scottishgreens.org.uk](mailto:midlothian@scottishgreens.org.uk)



We need people to fill the roles of:

### Minutes Secretary Membership Secretary Campaigns Coordinator

The **Minutes Secretary** takes notes at each business meeting and then prepares them as a minuted report of that meeting which can be sent to each committee member.

The **Membership Secretary** contacts new members, ensures all queries from members regarding membership are dealt with, ensures that branch membership list is accurate, and liaises with the Scottish Green Party membership Secretary.

The **Campaigns Coordinator** develops and supports campaigns run by the branch, and also acts as a liaison for local events relating to national campaigns.

**Please contact Mark at [mark@seaveg.uk](mailto:mark@seaveg.uk) for more details about these roles**

# Promises, promises?

## Our job now is to hold them to it!

**Nine months after Edinburgh, four months after East Lothian and three months after West Lothian (Borders has yet to declare!) Midlothian Council finally acknowledged that there is a Climate Emergency.**

On December 17th last year, at a meeting of the full Council, it was stated that: 'Midlothian Council agrees to declare a 'Climate Emergency' that requires urgent action... make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030... achieve 100% clean energy across the Council's full range of functions by 2030.'

The proposals are that:

- the council will support and work with other agencies;
- it will ensure that political and chief officer leadership teams embed this work in all service areas;
- Council Scrutiny Panels will be asked to consider the impact of climate change and the environment when reviewing policies and strategies;
- a Citizens' Assembly will be convened;
- young people will be encouraged to become actively involved;
- a new Climate Change Partnership group will be set-up;
- the council reports on the investment in the fossil fuel industry of its pensions plan and other investments;
- other considerations include renewable energy generation and storage, providing electric vehicle infrastructure, encouraging alternatives to private car use, and increasing the efficiency of buildings to address fuel poverty.

• 'As a council, and as individual citizens, we need to accelerate our efforts to address the impact of climate change.'

• *Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Russell Imrie*

- it will call on the UK Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible, and ask local MPs to do likewise.

Better late than never, these offers promise measures which were all proposed as necessary to mitigate the effects of climate change by our Green councillor, Ian Baxter, during his five year tenure. We need to be vigilant and monitor what the council does over the the next months and years and ensure that these promises are kept.

### **LOW-CARBON ENERGY OFFER**

Midlothian Council recently announced that the Swedish state-owned Vattenfall company will set up an Energy Services Company (ESCo) with the council and its current partner, FCC Environment. Focusing on delivering a range of energy projects, initially at Shawfair, and using heat from the Millerhill EfW (energy from waste) facility this partnership will be a 50/50 joint

venture which will deliver:

- low-carbon district heating network for Shawfair new town;
- a 40 year agreement to heat public buildings at Shawfair;
- a future heating network which could expand into East Lothian and Edinburgh;
- possible use of Monktonhall Colliery for heat storage and supply;
- solar PV, electric vehicle charging and direct wire electricity supplies to commercial properties in the Lothians.

EfW is not top of the list of green solutions to heat and energy production but perhaps we should accept that any energy creation method is acceptable at this late date? The council has said that details of the agreements are now being worked and they hope to sign the contract later this year.

Vattenfall ('waterfall' in Swedish) doesn't have a good record; its past growth strategy included buying multiple brown coal (lignite)-fired power plants in Sweden and Germany which it then sold on in 2016 to the Czech investor EPH.

The company has also been accused of possible illegality in its effort to maintain ownership of electrical power grids in Europe, most recently its efforts to maintain ownership of Hamburg's power grid by lobbying the SPD government in Germany have drawn criticism.

# Who are 2050 Climate Group?

They are a volunteer-led, youth-run charity bursting with talent, fresh ideas and passion.

Their mission is to lead a social movement by empowering young people to take climate action. All their activities, including their flagship YLDP initiative, work towards three objectives: to empower young leaders to lead and take climate action to create a just and sustainable society; to equip young leaders with the knowledge, skills and confidence to take climate action; enable young leaders to create and access opportunities to influence and be a leading voice for young people on climate change decision-making locally, nationally and globally. Here's a link for more: <https://2050.scot/>

## BBC audience call

**The Debate Night tv discussion is back and looking for audience members for the programme in Edinburgh on 26th February.**

To apply please go to [bbc.co.uk/debatenight](http://bbc.co.uk/debatenight) and click 'join the Debate Night audience'. Please choose '26th Feb' from the dropdown box when asked 'which programme are you applying for?' Audience members will need to arrive in central Edinburgh around 18:30 to record the programme between 20:00 and 21:00.

Debate Night is a chance to discuss issues that matter. The audience lead the agenda – its questions will define the programme. And they'll be put to the people who influence how Scotland is run.

## News Brief

### 'Merching for a cause' perpetuates many of the problems it claims to help.

**If you're feeling distressed about an environmental disaster, such as the wildfires in Australia or deforestation in the Amazon, make a donation directly to a charity that can help.**

Please do not buy a T-shirt from a fashion company that says it will donate a portion of profits to helping the problem, while adding another piece of cheap clothing to your closet.

This trend of 'merching for a cause' is ridiculous for a number of reasons. First, it assumes that the buyer does not understand the connection between the fashion industry (particularly fast fashion) and the climate crisis. It's believed to be the second most polluting industry globally after oil and gas, due to the huge amount of water and chemicals required to grow textile crops and manufacture clothing, the problem of plastic microfibres shedding when synthetic fabrics are washed, and the methane released when clothes break down in landfills.

Second, it perpetuates the outdated idea that the world can be saved by shopping. Buying 'merch' to assuage environmental guilt is also an ineffective use of one's money. It makes more sense to donate directly to a charitable organization, rather than paying a company to produce a T-shirt and trusting it to donate a portion of its profits. Even companies that claim to care about these causes could donate more money if they gave directly but this would be less visible to consumers. And we need to keep in mind that these campaigns are more about free advertising than long-term environmental commitment. That is why you'd be smarter to support brands that have standing relationships with environmental projects.

Source: *Treehugger*



## Did you know..?

The expansion of Heathrow airport will lead to an extra 600,000 tonnes of climate pollution from Scotland's airports over 15 years, according to an analysis by the Scottish Government.

The planned construction of a third runway at London's biggest airport will result in over 5,000 more flights every year from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and other Scottish airports, the analysis says. This will significantly increase climate-disrupting carbon dioxide emissions from planes.

The Scottish Government has supported the expansion since 2016 on the grounds that it will bring economic benefits, though Nicola Sturgeon has said that the position is under review. Flight Free UK, which is urging people not to fly in 2020, argued that the Heathrow expansion does not just affect those living near the airport. 'It affects all of us, and this is clearly shown by the projected increase in Scotland's emissions that would occur if a third runway were to be built,' said the group's Anna Hughes.

Source: *The Ferret*

Please share your green issue Tweets and Facebook posts and please send in pieces for inclusion in this, **your** branch newsletter.



## Midlothian Greens Branch and Social Meetings 2020

We meet once a month for branch and business meetings, on alternating Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. **These meetings are open to everyone. We also meet monthly on the first Tuesday of the month at EH Twenty Bar and Kitchen in Loanhead to socialise. The venue is on the 37 bus route and there is a stop nearby.** Please contact us if you need a lift to any of these meetings.

Date	Meeting type	Venue
Tuesday 3 March	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Monday 9 March	Business	St. John's & King's Park Church, Dalkeith
Tuesday 31 March	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 9 April	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 5 May	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 14 May	Business	Navaar House Hotel, Penicuik
Tuesday 2 June	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 11 June	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 7 July	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Tuesday 14 July	Business	St. John's & King's Park Church, Dalkeith
Tuesday 4 August	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 13 August	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 1 September	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Tuesday 8 September	Business	Navaar House Hotel, Penicuik
Tuesday 6 October	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 15 October	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead
Tuesday 3 November	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Tuesday 10 November	Business	St. John's & King's Park Church, Dalkeith
Tuesday 1 December	Social	EH Twenty, Loanhead
Thursday 10 December	Business	Loanhead library, Loanhead



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