

Headingley

GreenLight



The Newsletter of Leeds Green Party

Spring 2011

Do you feel conned?

In May 2010 many people in North-West Leeds voted Liberal Democrat with the intention of stopping the election of a Tory government. For many years the Liberal Democrats posed as a left of centre party. Now we know the truth. Clegg has committed his party to the immediate imposition of cuts that are harming the most vulnerable people in our society. Lib Dems have ditched their long-held demand for proportional representation in exchange for a referendum on the Alternative Vote. The Tories have already said that they will campaign against a change. Senior members of the Labour Party have also announced that they are in favour of keeping the present unfair system.

There is only one serious party in England that is committed to fair votes: that is the Green Party.

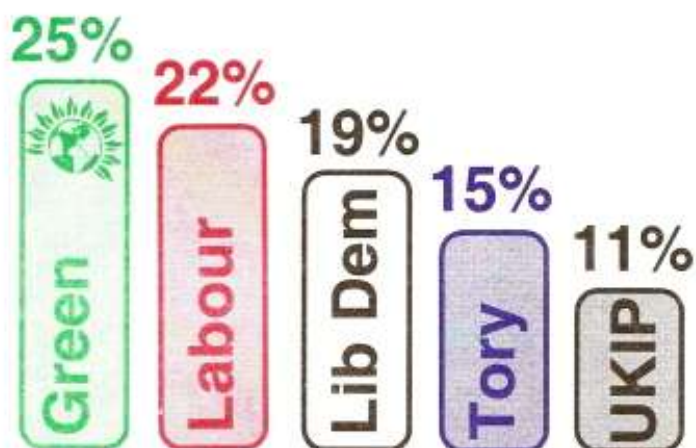
We are the only party opposed to cuts in public services. The three big parties all want to cut vital public services – the only difference between them is how soon and how much.

People voted Labour in 1997 and were dismayed to see their government suck up to City financiers and engage in illegal wars. In 2010 people voted Liberal Democrat and now find Clegg propping up the Tories.

There is only one credible, genuinely progressive party in Britain – the Green Party. Caroline Lucas' victory in Brighton demonstrates that we can win at Westminster. But we need your help. With your support we can get more Green councillors elected and more Green MPs.

There is a clear majority in the UK for progressive policies. Take a look at voteforpolicies.org.uk.

Results for Leeds North West constituency from the "Vote for Policies" website (voteforpolicies.org.uk) showing the Greens' policies commanding the most public support



This shows that the policies of the Green party enjoy much more support than the policies of the Right.

But people won't vote Green until we look like winners. So we need more members who will campaign for a Green victory. You can join the Green Party online – go to www.greenparty.org.uk. Go on, do it today and join the campaign for a genuinely progressive country. Alternatively, if you would like to help us without becoming a member then please contact us:

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Greens say no to cuts

Cuts - not fair, not needed

The coalition government has imposed drastic cuts to public services. In Leeds the city council is having to cut its expenditure by 18% over 4 years. The government wants us to believe that these cuts are necessary to bring the deficit under control. In fact, as a proportion of GDP, the deficit has been significantly greater in recent history than it is now. Cameron and Clegg are using the deficit as a pretext to make cuts in welfare that they have wanted to impose for many years.

The independent Institute for Fiscal Studies has proved that the poorest people in our society will be hit the hardest. This fact is unlikely to trouble the 23 millionaires in Cameron's cabinet. It will be of little consequence to the numerous 'business leaders' who give money to the Conservative party.

The Greens in Leeds

There are two Green Party councillors in Leeds City Council. At present they sit with the Labour group – in fact they hold the balance of power on the council. A major Green party project in Leeds is to provide free insulation in council owned property, including domestic housing.

This scheme aims to extend the Warm Zone programme which was championed by Green Party councillors in Kirklees. To date the figures are

hugely impressive: more than 40,000 homes have been provided with free loft insulation and more than 20,000 houses have had free cavity wall insulation installed. The Kirklees scheme has been a beacon for local authorities throughout the country. Council officers have calculated that for every £1 spent on the scheme a further £4 has been generated in the local economy.

Green Party



The Green New Deal

The Green Party has a better and fairer way to deal with the deficit – it's called the Green New Deal.

- Massive investment in renewable energy and wider environmental transformation in the UK, leading to the creation of thousands of new 'green collar' jobs
- Reining in reckless aspects of the finance sector – but making low-cost capital available to fund the UK's green economic shift
- Building a new alliance between environmentalists, industry, agriculture, and unions to put the interests of the real economy ahead of those of footloose finance.



Green Party leader Caroline Lucas was one of the authors of the "Green New Deal" report released by the New Economic Foundation. She has spoken out in parliament against the government's prescription of cuts and more cuts.

A Broken Promise

When they were asking for your votes LibDem candidates publicly signed pledges saying that they would not raise student tuition fees. Now we know that those promises were worthless. They claim that there is no alternative because of the economic situation. But they knew before the election that bailing out the bankers had caused an increase in the national debt. Vince Cable even wrote a book on the subject! Students were not the people who created the deficit but the Tory/LibDem government is making students pay for it.

The Green Party believes that a university or college education is a basic right. Greens know that well-educated people are essential to a modern society. Our commitment is to abolish tuition fees and return to a grant to enable students to meet living costs. We will not introduce a graduate tax. This is not pie in the sky – merely a return to the system that was in place throughout the UK from 1945 until fees were introduced by Labour in the 1990s.

Caroline Lucas MP, leader of the Green Party, has condemned the recent increase in tuition fees. She said: "This huge hike in fees, together with the scrapping of Educational Maintenance Allowance and proposed cuts in college funding, amount to nothing less than a Government assault on our young people – and an attack on the principles of universal education." She added that a more progressive policy would be a business education tax levied on the top 4% of UK companies, who benefit greatly from a graduate workforce.



What the Green Party stands for

It's the only planet we have.

So let's stop trashing the Earth. We can't go on cutting down forests, polluting rivers and seas and concreting over our English countryside. For the sake of our children we have to learn how to live in a sustainable way. If we fail then we bequeath to future generations an overheated toxic rubbish dump in place of the breathing green planet that we inherited.

A fairer society

Britain is now one of the most unequal countries in Europe. Since the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 the gap between rich and poor has become ever wider. This widening continued under the Labour government.

Inequality is bad for everyone: unequal societies have worse health, more violence and less trust. They also have worse records on environmental protection.

To bring about a fairer society the Green Party would introduce a High Pay Commission, we would also bring in a tax on City financial transactions known as the Robin Hood tax).

Greens also propose closure of tax havens abroad. We believe that people who do business in the UK should pay their fair share of taxation – the way the rest of us do.

Fair votes

It is clear that the Green Party is now the only party that is serious about proportional representation. The present system is seriously undemocratic. In 2005 Labour took only 35% of the votes. But despite the fact that nearly two out of three electors voted against Labour they still formed the government. This is not democracy.

Labour and the Tories want to retain the present system because it keeps them in power. The Green Party will fight for a system where every vote counts.

Sane foreign policy

The Green Party wants to take our soldiers out of Afghanistan. We believe that our security is compromised, not improved, by our part in the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. We would also work to bring about an end to Israel's siege of Gaza.

We also want to have British foreign policy made in Britain – not Washington. For too long we have let America dictate our external relations to us. This ends up with Britain supporting dubious regimes such as Hosni Mubarak in Egypt even though it is well known that his government practised torture on his own people.

Greens also want Trident to be decommissioned and not replaced. This would save £20 billion even on government estimates. According to Greenpeace the saving would be £34 billion.

Steady-state economics

It is quite clear that limitless economic growth is neither desirable nor possible. We cannot continue to use up the Earth's natural resources at the present rate. Research has consistently shown that in developed countries economic growth does not make us happier. The Green Party wants to move to a position where GDP is not the only measure of a nation's progress. We want to bring about a society that is not based on the relentless purchase of badly made consumer goods.

Headingley Green Party activist Chris Foren



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