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## Democracy, Equality, Sustainability... for the Common Good

The Green Party in Northern Ireland is a local party with a global vision.

We stand for transparent, active democracy; for social justice and equality in an inclusive, non-sectarian society; and for sharing the rewards of a sustainable economy.

We believe in clean politics in a clean environment. We recognise that the best way to make the transition to a fair, sustainable society is to think globally and act locally – beginning with the neighbourhoods in which we live.

This is a time of change: local councils in Northern Ireland are about to undergo radical restructuring. We must seize this unique opportunity to ensure that local politics is changed too, and changed for the better.

The Green Party is the party with the vision to lead this change.

By voting for our candidates on 22 May, you can help to elect representatives who will put people before profit, and work to build a better, more equitable and sustainable society for all.

This is your opportunity to choose councillors who will clean up our politics; tackle our planning problems; find ways to build healthy and sustainable neighbourhoods; address our waste and transport issues; clean up our environment, and help to create safe and healthy areas for our families to enjoy.

This manifesto sets out our vision of how to rise to those challenges, and to seize the opportunities, making the transition to a politics and economics fit for the future.

The Green Party NI is committed to working for a better quality of life for all. Together we can create vibrant, socially inclusive communities that are economically dynamic and strong enough to adapt effectively to change.

Simply put, we believe in councils that listen, and councillors who work not for one or another section of society, but for the common good.

***Steven Agnew, MLA - Leader of the Green Party in Northern Ireland***

### ***Our Commitments:***

#### ***Your Green Party NI councillors stand for:***

1. *Clean politics - for the common good*
2. *Caring for communities - for the common good*
3. *A sustainable local economy - for the common good*
4. *Caring for our environment- for the common good*



## 1. Clean politics

### Transparent local government

The Green Party believes in a politics built from the ground up, not dictated from the top down. We believe in a politics not beholden to powerful elites, or corporate special interests, but for the common good.

And we believe in political representatives who respond to the needs of all of the people, rather than carving out empires by playing on traditional divisions. We need an inclusive politics for a diverse society, a politics beyond the 'two communities' mentality, in which what counts is our standing as equal citizens.

The Green Party in Northern Ireland does not accept corporate donations because we believe that **big money pollutes politics**. We are the only party that publishes all its donations over £500 so you can see who funds us, while others keep vested interests hidden. We will continue to push for legislation to require parties to publish

their donations so you can see who is serving their wealthy backers and who is working for the common good. Now that councils are to be given greater responsibilities, including the power to make planning decisions, we need more than ever to be able to see who is paying our politicians.

The Green Party will bring greater transparency to councils so you can see how your money is spent.



Clare Bailey

Botanic – Belfast City Council

You can change and improve local politics by electing Belfast's first Green Party councillors. I will focus on creating meaningful jobs, protecting our public services and tackling the social and economic inequalities in our city by expanding the political conversation. I would be proud to represent and work for you in Council.

I will work for:

- \* Clean, transparent politics that work for the common good
- \* Protecting local services for local communities
- \* Sustainable jobs in a vibrant and diverse city economy
- \* Protecting our environment through cheaper, greener transport solutions.

*'Local government reform is about changing the rules so that ordinary people can participate and have their say. We want people to be involved in planning their own communities'*

*Clare Bailey, Green Party Candidate, Botanic DEA, Belfast*

## Responsive local government

The local government reform programme will produce a radical change in how our councils operate, increasing their powers, especially in relation to planning. Used well, these new powers could be a force for good. But it is not only local authorities that require greater power: we believe the citizens they are elected to represent are entitled to expect greater accountability from councillors, and to have the opportunity for greater involvement in council decisions.

Democracy and accountability are key issues for the Green Party.

We will push for robust regulation of local authorities and greater transparency in their day-to-day business, so you can ensure YOUR interests are at the heart of local government.

Green Party councillors will work hard to ensure you are actively informed of, and have the chance to be involved in, decisions that impact on you.

## Our goals:

- We believe in direct democracy. We want councils to facilitate the use of citizens' petitions, so that if enough signatures are gathered a motion is tabled, and councillors must vote on the issue.
- We aim to introduce the facility of e-surveys, to make it easier for local citizens to express their views online to their representatives through emails and texts.
- We believe council meetings should be made more accessible to the public, so facilities such as webcasts should be made available; and all decisions taken should be made available on the Internet within four weeks of the meeting.
- Our councillors will also support the introduction of participatory budgeting at local government level, following the model successfully run in Durham, where local citizens meet to choose from a range of projects needing funds.
- The Green Party supports a robust and well-enforced Code of Conduct for councillors, to be strengthened by penalties.
- All local councillors should publish their registers of interests online, including all forms of remuneration, and the ownership or tenancy of any property.
- Councillors making planning decisions must be impartial and must be seen to be impartial, so they should make no public statements for or against a proposal before the relevant meeting.

## 2. Caring for communities

### New powers for community planning

We believe that the planning system should serve the many, not the few.

Our planning system has favoured big developers over communities for too long.

**It is your neighbourhood: you should decide how it is developed.**

The transfer of greater planning powers to local authorities offers the chance to create a fairer, more sustainable planning process, but only if elected representatives use their new powers responsibly.

An open and transparent planning system can help us create sustainable, inclusive communities through quality development rather than profit-driven expansion. We believe our towns should not be simply commercial centres but vibrant spaces for all sorts and ages of people to enjoy together. They should be family friendly, safe

and welcoming, promoting wellbeing and the common good.

In local government the Green Party will insist on the rigorous application of the new legislation, and the speedy creation of transparent and professional decision-making and enforcement processes.

For the Green Party, the focus of the planning system should be on **the common good, not private profit.**

We will push for the creation of lasting, sustainable neighbourhoods, with priority given to appropriate community facilities.

In this day and age, no building should be constructed that does not meet the highest environmentally sustainable standards. Climate change proofing should be incorporated into all local authority decision-making procedures. All local development plans must be energy efficient, focused on reducing waste and promoting the use of renewables, based on international best practice.

*"The Green Party will make decisions that serve the common good and community need - not developers' greed"*

*Noelle Robinson,  
Green Party Candidate,  
Bangor Central DEA*



Noelle Robinson

Bangor Central – North Down and Ards Council

I urge you to help me change local politics by voting Green on 22nd May. As someone committed to contributing to my community and to working for the common good, I would feel privileged to serve all the people of Bangor on the new North Down & Ards Council.

I believe in:

- \* Investing in Children for the Common Good Investment in children is an investment in all our futures.
- \* Community Planning for the Common Good Making decisions to serve community need not developer greed.
- \* Clean Politics for the Common Good Being transparent to earn your trust.

**Local transport** decisions should be made locally. Local authorities currently don't have enough control over many aspects of transport policy; the Green Party NI wants to see this change so that your public transport needs can be met efficiently and cost-effectively within the context of national transport policy.

### Inclusive communities

The Green Party stands for the inclusion of all members of society, both socially and economically, enhancing everyone's quality of life.

Our local councils must do more to protect and actively engage the most vulnerable - the homeless, the unemployed, older people, minority ethnic communities, LGBT, disabled, and other marginalised social groups.

We will take a firm stand against all forms of discrimination and social injustice; we will work hard to combat the causes of inequality, and to remove all barriers to participation in society.

Community spaces, where local groups can enjoy low-cost facilities in which to meet and carry out their activities, are a key issue in the development of inclusive neighbourhoods.

We want to build neighbourhoods where older people can feel secure and included. Young people, too, require safe places to go where they can meet and socialise without fear of being stigmatised. All members of the community need affordable sport and recreation facilities to improve their health and wellbeing.

The Green Party is **opposed to needless austerity cuts** that directly affect local services, and diminish the sense of a shared **common space, common values, and the common good**.



VOTE NO.1

## Ross Brown

### Ormiston – Belfast City Council

I invite you to make history and elect the very first Green Party Councillors for Belfast.

I am passionate about tackling injustices in our society and helping the most vulnerable people. I am committed to bringing transparent and accountable politics to Belfast.

I believe in the common good and that is why I am promoting:

- \*Clean, transparent politics
- \*Protecting local services for local communities
- \*Sustainable jobs in a vibrant and diverse city economy
- \*Protecting our environment through greener, cheaper transport solutions

## 2. Caring for communities

The development of a community depends on the active participation of as many members as possible, but people can take part only if there are services and facilities available to them. Local authorities, therefore, have an important role to play in building healthy, inclusive communities through good planning and the provision of community spaces and services everyone can enjoy.

For our society to flourish in all respects, lively culture, arts and leisure sectors are vital. The Green Party celebrates the creative talents of all members of our society, and believes everyone should be able to enjoy our **rich diversity of cultures**. We will work in partnership with organisations already active in this area, in order to foster an open and welcoming sense of shared cultural space.

We will promote opportunities for greater involvement of marginalised groups in the arts, and in sport, promoting both physical and mental health. The arts uniquely open a space where a new conversation can take

place, where connections are forged, and where greater empathy and much needed understanding can develop.

And nothing could be more important for the future of our shared community than investing in our children and young people. We believe in equal opportunities for all children, regardless of class or gender, colour or creed. The Green Party, through community planning, will mount a robust defence of funding for Early Years, and indeed argue for an enhancement of existing programs, with an emphasis on a healthy head start, in nutrition as well as education.

Older people, too, hold a unique place in our society and deserve the same access to services, leisure and mobility as others. Green Party councillors will take action in partnership with older people and other agencies to facilitate social wellbeing, enabling older people to be valued for their continuing contribution to society, and to live securely in good health at the heart of the community.

### What is Community Planning?

Councils must initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate in community planning. Community Planning is described as the process where councils, other public sector organisations, business and voluntary and community groups work together with local communities to plan and deliver local services. It should result in integrated service provision that promotes the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area through identifying long-term objectives for achieving sustainable development.



### Our goals:

**Through community planning, councils will have influence over services they do not control directly. Using community planning, we will:**

- work to ensure maximum collaboration between public bodies on children's services and services for older people, including pooled budgets to optimise service delivery.
- push for greater support for childcare services
- address the need to maintain and develop library services
- work for more action to tackle homelessness
- support more tenant involvement in social housing management
- help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Green Party councillors will, at all times, encourage effective community engagement in community planning to ensure that you can participate and hold accountable your local representatives and service providers.
- We will develop a strategy for sports development, working with sporting clubs and associations to widen access and promote greater cross community participation for everyone.
- We will work to ensure that leisure services are kept in-house and accountable, and will invest, using council borrowing powers, to ensure leisure and community service provision remains available and affordable for all.
- We will work for the provision of low-cost premises for community organisations through reduced-cost hiring of Council premises for inclusive not-for-profit groups, and will examine the potential for Community Asset Transfers, especially where they support cross-community contacts.
- We want local people and user groups to be more involved in the running of services such as parks, libraries and public transport. User groups should have greater input; as a minimum they must always be consulted meaningfully on decisions being made within their area of expertise.
- We want to disabled people to have a greater say in service provision and will work with disability groups to ensure services meet their needs
- We will fight to protect grant funding for the many charities and voluntary groups who provide crucial support for the most vulnerable people in our society.
- We will support organisations such as Linking Generations Northern Ireland, the Rainbow Project and Stronger Together in their efforts to bring people from marginalised groups together in a partnership of equals.
- We will defend and seek to improve provision of local shops, services, post offices and other amenities in local neighbourhoods.

### 3. A dynamic, sustainable local economy

#### Where the economy works for people – not the other way round

The Green Party recognises that Northern Ireland's future economic success lies in the ability of our small and medium-sized businesses to thrive in both a national and international context. Instead of racing to the bottom, competing to cut public spending and reduce taxes in order to attract foreign direct investment, we should lead from the front, investing in local, sustainable enterprises, providing the best possible training for our young people in the trades, crafts and technology of the coming economy.

The future economy is green. The future of industry is green, or there is no future for industry. The Green Party NI will push for investment in low-carbon, sustainable companies, in an open and transparent manner that restores confidence in the economy. We must reshape our economy to create sustainable, secure jobs and develop home-grown enterprise, in order to

serve the common good rather than the interests of the few.

The transition to a home-grown green economy requires a clear commitment from government on **clean energy and infrastructure** in order to stimulate business, as well as a commitment to funding training, research and development in the renewable energy sector. Northern Ireland enjoys some of the best wind and tidal resources in Europe: an investment in renewable energy has the potential to bring large returns, and is key to laying the foundations for a sustainable economy.

At a local level, the Green Party wants to help develop a thriving neighbourhood enterprise culture. Our objective is to build resilience into the local economy so it is less dependent on the whim of global market fluctuations. We support community-based businesses, where local and ethical trading is central to the functioning of an efficient and **sustainable neighbourhood economy** – a prime example of 'thinking globally, acting locally'.

*"Supporting a local economy is not only good for local people, it is good for the economy as a whole"*

*Martin Gregg, Green Party Candidate, Castlereagh East*



Martin Gregg

Castlereagh East – Lisburn City & Castlereagh District Council

By giving me continued support, citizens of the Lisburn City and Castlereagh District Council LGD can be assured of experienced, committed and confident representation. I am a serving Green Party councillor in Castlereagh and would be honoured to serve you further in this new council.

I am campaigning for:

- Clean Politics - bringing greater transparency to hold your councillors accountable and see how your money is spent.
- Planning Communities - making decisions that serve community need not developers.
- Local Business – supporting local business and enterprise to help local employment.

Local authorities are well placed to support and facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy as quickly, smoothly and successfully as possible because this transition is essentially local in nature. For example, through good planning policy, local authorities can approve micro-generation projects for renewable energy.

No one grasps the need for a transition to a low-carbon economy better than the Green Party; no one would be better placed to drive that change in a way that remains sensitive to local conditions than your Green Party councillors.

#### **Our goals:**

- The Green Party supports moves to restrict out of town superstore developments, which too often damage neighbouring town centres, putting local retailers out of business and diluting the unique identity of our towns. We will call for a moratorium on such developments, and initiate a program aimed at revitalising our town centres.
- We will focus the economic development budget of councils on support for small businesses and co-operatives; particularly those that are already established and need help to expand.
- We will push to reduce the Small Profits Rate to help local small businesses and help grow a strong, resilient Northern Irish economy from the ground up.
- We will work with local traders and businesses to introduce a 'shop local' scheme with a Residents' Card giving discounts for local shops, services and leisure facilities.
- We will support a review of parking enforcement to ensure it helps rather than undermines the local economy.
- We support initiatives that boost local food production, such as Farmshare, reducing food miles and supporting local growers.
- We support the well-regulated development of Green enterprises and renewable energy projects, where these can be shown to be good for the environment and good for the local economy.
- We will push for the development of a safe, well-regulated, family-friendly night-time economy, helping our neighbours, young and old alike, enjoy creative, secure social lives, and fostering a welcoming 'café-culture' for visitors.
- We will continue to support the arts and our creative sector as both a unique cultural resource and a key economic driver. We believe every town and city should be a 'city of culture', not just for a year, but for good.
- We will seek to maximise the use of social clauses to ensure the local economy benefits from goods and services that councils buy.
- We will campaign for our councils to become living wage employers and champions of fair trade.

## 4. Caring for our environment

### Growing greener

The Green Party cares about our environment.

Why? Because it's where you live, from the house you live in to the planet you live on.

Green living makes sense both globally – climate change is arguably the greatest challenge facing humanity – and here at home, where, for example, properly insulated houses would at once reduce carbon emissions and **ease the effects of fuel poverty on all citizens.**

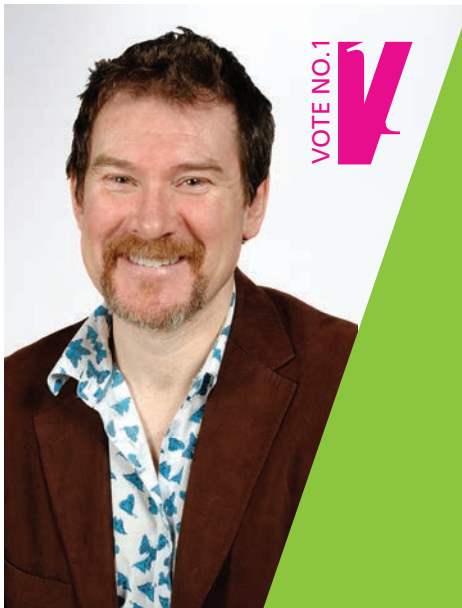
Global warming has already unleashed climate chaos, with droughts in some areas increased flooding in others. Locally, severe storms have affected some of the poorest and most vulnerable people.

A full-scale response to the crisis will have to be coordinated at the international level; but local authorities can play a significant part in reducing carbon emissions in their own areas.

Green Party councillors will push for local authorities to reduce their own energy-use, and to re-examine procurement policies to save both carbon and much-needed funds. Councils should lead the way, kick-starting action in local communities, as well as **undertaking a carbon audit** of their housing, planning and other statutory functions.

CO2 emissions could be dramatically reduced with existing technologies through a combination of energy efficiency in housing, locally-based renewable energy generation, waste recovery, food production and a reduced need to travel - all of which can be facilitated to a large extent by local authorities.

The Green Party believes that waste should be minimised first and foremost by reducing unnecessary overconsumption – breaking the habits of our disposable culture, reducing packaging, promoting public transport infrastructure, a safe cycling environment, and related activities.



John Barry

Hollywood & Clandeboye – North Down & Ards

As a Green Party councillor I have a proven track record of working closely with the community, supporting local businesses and bringing fresh ideas to local government. I passionately believe our new council should use its powers to promote community cohesion, economic vitality and a better quality of life.

I am working for:

- Local economy working hard to create jobs and support local businesses.
- Clean Politics bringing greater transparency so you can see how your money is spent.
- Community Planning involving the community in decisions that affect them.
- Tackling fuel poverty working for a home insulation scheme to reduce carbon emissions.

*“We used to know how to mend, salvage or reuse things. Now we just throw them away.*

*But it’s not ‘waste’ unless you waste it!”*

*John Barry, Green Party*

We will encourage all local authorities to pursue a vigorous policy of recycling. Local authorities can become leaders in this area and set an example to local business by ensuring that the amount of waste they themselves produce is reduced to an absolute minimum.

Diverting waste from landfill saves some councils over £80 per tonne.

A strict recycling system within all local authorities would not only reduce the amount spent but also encourage local green business growth in the recycling sector.

The reuse of materials by local authorities in house-building and infrastructural projects could also make a significant local impact on the amount of waste for disposal.

Furthermore, Green Party councillors would ensure strict enforcement of environmental regulations and crack down on environmental crimes.

The Green Party believes that local food growth forms an important component of a healthy community. We support more organic and local food production in an effort to reduce wasteful transportation, provide local employment, and strengthen links between producers and consumers – an integral part of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and increasing food security.

We will therefore press local authorities to support local food growing initiatives, for instance by encouraging more locally-grown food with provisions for allotments, community gardens and urban vegetable growing.

#### **Our goals:**

- We will aim to commit Councils to a carbon reduction strategy with tougher yearly targets for reductions in energy use, and a staged increase in renewable energy generation. We propose an annual carbon budget to run in parallel with the financial budget, aiming to drive down the carbon footprint of local councils.
- We will promote schemes such as WARPit, to provide an online ‘swap shop’, so that local government offices can exchange, rather than simply dump, furniture and equipment they no longer need.
- We will ensure all council offices include comprehensive recycling facilities.
- Through community planning, we will work to ensure that all schools have sustainable School Travel Plans. All schools should have adequate, secure cycle storage, and provide safe and responsible cycling education to all students.
- We will campaign for a Walking and Mobility Officer at Council level to facilitate alternatives to car-use and implement measures to make streets more attractive and easier to use for pedestrians and cyclists.
- We will plan for more segregated cycle routes and work to ensure they are properly maintained and policed, in particular making road surfaces safe, providing clear signposting, and removing cars parked across cycle gaps and in cycle and bus lanes.

- Smart meters should be available for loan from councils, to encourage efficient energy use, so you can reduce your bill without reducing your warmth or comfort.
- We will campaign for a sustainable construction strategy for developers to follow, covering recycling and reuse of materials, reduction of waste materials, energy generation, energy conservation, landscape and diversity and sustainable transport facilities.
- We will seek to initiate council-led home insulation and retrofitting schemes, and set up council-led one stop energy efficiency advice services to help cut people's fuel bills and reduce energy use.
- We will push to ensure all residents have adequate access to recycling facilities, whether through doorstep collections or community bins.
- We will call for an increase in the provision of allotments per head of population in each council area and introduce innovative approaches to growing food near to where people live.
- We will strive to ensure existing animal welfare legislation is properly enforced, and seek to boost animal welfare standards to the highest level possible.
- We will work to protect our open green spaces and parks.
- We will work to ensure that the council is proactive in keeping the streets clean.
- We support the promotion of coordinated activities between environmental monitoring bodies and councils across the UK and Ireland in recognition that environmental issues do not start or stop at territorial borders.
- The Green Party recognises fracking and unconventional oil and gas extraction as a dirty, dangerous process that is incompatible with CO2 reduction targets. We oppose fracking always and everywhere.

## A vote for the Green Party NI is a vote to:

Break the deadlock of the politics of division, and build a politics serving all citizens equally;

Build effective and appropriate public services and develop leading education and health sectors, to combat the causes of inequality and marginalisation;

Share our common wealth of experience, energy and ideas, and celebrate the riches of vibrant, diverse neighbourhoods;

Make Northern Ireland a regional leader in clean energy, sustainable industry, and an entire green economy fit for the 21st Century;

Bring life back to local politics, and local politics back to life!

*The Green Party in Northern Ireland - for the common good*

## Our local election candidates



**Ross Brown**  
Ormiston  
Belfast City Council Candidate



**Noelle Robinson**  
Bangor Central  
North Down & Ards Candidate



**Clare Bailey**  
Botanic  
Belfast City Council Candidate



**Trana Rebecca Gray**  
Bangor & Donaghadee  
North Down & Ards Candidate



**Elli Kontoravdis**  
Balmoral  
Belfast City Council Candidate



**Paul Roberts**  
Bangor West  
North Down & Ards Candidate



**Connal Hughes**  
Lisnasharragh  
Belfast City Council Candidate



**James McMurray**  
Lisburn South  
Lisburn & Castlereagh Candidate



**Gregor Claus**  
Titanic  
Belfast City Council Candidate



**Luke Robinson**  
Downshire West  
Lisburn & Castlereagh Candidate



**Cllr Martin Gregg**  
Castlereagh East  
Lisburn City & Castlereagh  
Candidate



**Laurence Speight**  
Enniskillen  
Fermanagh & Omagh Candidate



**Cllr John Barry**  
Holywood & Clondeboye  
North Down & Ards Candidate



**Ciaran McClean**  
Mid Tyrone  
Fermanagh & Omagh Candidate

## Contact Us

We would be pleased to provide you with any kind of information about The Green Party in Northern Ireland- its people and its policies.

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