



Green Party of Northern Ireland Manifesto

For the May 2010
Westminster Elections



Introduction

Make a Difference. Vote Green

The Greens demand full transparency for all involved in the decision-making processes. This implies taking a tough stand against corruption at all levels and being more accountable to the public.

A combination of ambitious and binding targets, of incentives and of public investments into green technologies and services will help create tens of millions of green jobs worldwide, which are much needed at this difficult period of economic slowdown.

In Northern Ireland 33,000 jobs can be created and sustained for electricians, fitters, plumbers, engineers, construction workers, project workers, and sales and marketing staff, through the utilisation of our existing agricultural, industrial and research and development sectors. These are skills we have in abundance and jobs that cannot be outsourced.

A Green New Deal for Democracy

**GREEN
POLITICS IS
CLEAN POLITICS**

The Greens demand full transparency for all involved in the decision-making processes. This implies taking a tough stand against corruption at all levels and being more accountable to its public. **It is time to open closed files and closed doors.**

The Green Party will work for a ban on all corporate and commercial donations to political parties, including those from

developers and from the drinks industry. We support a shift to public funding for political parties.

The Green Party will work for a tighter and more transparent expenses system along the lines adopted by the Scottish parliament where even the purchase by an MSP of a pint of milk for their office is a matter of public record.

Meet our candidates



Adam McGibbon



Cadogan Enright



Steven Agnew

For more information on our candidates go to www.greenpartyni.org

A Green New Deal for People – making society work for all of the people



In the Westminster Parliament, the Green Party will make a difference by

- re-balancing the public and private sector, and help stimulate the development of an outward looking and enterprise economy ;
- ensuring that the voice of small business is not only heard but understood and acted upon within the policy community ;
- shifting the weight of public expenditure on transport towards public transport (bus, rail and tram), non-private motor car use, pedestrianisation, and cycleways ;
- ensuring that ethical investment is adhered to in all areas of government activity;
- introducing a Robin Hood Tax at a very low level– just 0.05% - on financial products such as stocks, bonds and derivatives – this could raise £250 million in the UK ;
- introducing an enhanced Refundable Tax Credit system to assist parents who wish to care for their own children - if we want to fix broken Britain we have to start by ensuring that our children are properly cared for ;
- introducing a childminder start up package to address the deficit of childcare places including a grant to help with setting up costs and a one to one mentoring service ;
- introducing a proper state pension for all, which gives pensioners a livable amount, without means testing and would be linked to the rise in average earnings ;
- introducing green sustainable indicators of the economy which become a cornerstone of the annual budget process ;
- legislating to confer favoured status on a non-profit directed financial sector, e.g. the Credit Union Movement

A Green New Deal for economic regeneration



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In the Westminster Parliament, the Green Party will make a difference by

- supporting a fiscally neutral carbon tax on the industrial uses of energy;
- ensuring fuel tax is spent on public transport and other energy conservation measures ;
- ensuring that some of the monies from ecotaxes are directed to measures to counteract the effects of climate change ;
- Promote windwave, biomass and solar energy;
- ensuring that building regulations and building construction are ecologically based ;
- supporting increased afforestation, favouring the planting of deciduous, hardwood forests.

A Green New Deal for Public Services



Good quality public services, freely available to all, are key to the development of a more equitable and secure society. Increasingly, however, we are seeing health, education and other services come under pressure to adopt the principles and practices of the market place, with growing levels of privatisation and private sector delivery. Such commercialisation is undermining the universality and, particularly in the

case of the NHS, the comprehensiveness, that used to be a hallmark of the welfare state.

The Green Party believes we must restore pride in our public services, re-emphasise the service ethos, increase their resources and free them from commercial management. Such a commitment will require substantial public investment.

HEALTH

Prevention is better than cure. A great deal of our national health spending is wasted on treating the cocktail of social and poverty-driven illnesses caused by factors such as air pollution, overwork, junk food and poor quality housing.

Instead, the Green Party will return the NHS back to its founding principles of comprehensive and universal care, which is available to all on the basis of need, not ability to pay. We will restore the professional medical ethos and

reduce the business-centric culture that is commonplace in our hospitals.

PHASE OUT CHARGES

The Green Party will abolish prescription charges throughout the UK. They raise little revenue, discourage some from taking prescribed medicines and operate under a system that is confused and particularly discriminatory towards mental illness sufferers. We will also reintroduce free eye tests and NHS dental treatment for all.



EDUCATION

The Green Party is committed to life-long education opportunities for all. A fully rounded education - not just skills for the workplace – is necessary to help people to reach their full potential as human beings and is a foundation for an equitable and sustainable society.

We will increase the amount of funding available to education. Such extra resources will be directed at improving staff-student ratios in schools, expanding pre-school care and developing Children's Centres.

The Green Party will replace student loans with maintenance grants to ensure students have a decent standard of living. They will not be charged tuition fees.

The grants systems will subsequently be integrated into our proposals for a Citizen's Income scheme, which will provide for basic living expenses and additional costs, such as books.

HOUSING

The provision of affordable and adequate housing has become a major issue, especially in rural areas, partly through the continued lack of investment in social housing by local authorities.

The Green Party will take a range of measures to tackle housing shortages, including:

- Supporting self-build social co-operatives
- Reforming land ownership through Land Value Tax
- Improvements to existing housing stock through increased insulation and energy efficiency

A Green New Deal for the environment



In the Westminster Parliament, the Green Party will make a difference by

- ensuring that local authorities, in cooperation with NGOs, draw up plans for sustainable development and sustainable transport plans ;
- insisting on strict implementation of the Polluter Pays principle in all aspects of environmental legislation ;
- developing a sustainable, non-nuclear EU energy policy to replace the present pro-nuclear focus of the Euratom Treaty, and seek to amend the Treaty to oversee the safe decommissioning of nuclear plants and safe disposal/storage of nuclear waste.

A Green New Deal for farms and fisheries



In the Westminster Parliament, the Green Party will make a difference by

- ensuring that all forests are internationally accredited for sustainability ;
- reforming the Common Agricultural Policy to favour humane, healthy farming;
- phasing out all long distance transportation of animals ;
- promoting local abattoirs and value added meat processing to minimise live animal transportation;
- promoting sustainable fishing by favouring smallscale, less environmentally damaging vessels and fishing methods, and by applying more stringent penal ties to illegal fishing ;
- renegotiating the EU Common Fisheries Policy ;
- designating Marine Protected Areas around the coast, with the involvement of all user groups, to allow regeneration of stocks and conservation of wildlife;
- pressing for a moratorium on all whaling internationally and promoting ecotourism instead ;
- ensuring that the development of offshore gas and oil resources is under tight State control ;
- 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and we applaud the move to raise awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity for human well-being and promote understanding of the economic value of biodiversity.

A Green New Deal for equality and fairness



Westminster needs to listen and everyone's voice should be heard.

The Green Party objects to the negative portrayal of young people in the media. A young person is much more likely to be the victim of crime than the cause of crime. The Green Party would like to see inter-generational initiatives which would see the children and youth sectors working in partnership with other sections of the age sector, particularly with a view to dispelling many of the negative stereotypes of young people that exist and encouraging and promoting positive images of young people.

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children must have a say in the decisions

that affect them. This should include the planning of communities so that young people have a place in our towns and cities and not pushed to the margins. It is time children were seen and heard.

Greens will fight to apply the extended Charter of Fundamental Rights under the British/Irish agreement, to include all members of society and defend the rights of vulnerable and minority groups. This implies fighting for equal rights for women, ethnic minorities including the Roma, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and religious minorities as well as for social and civil rights.



This also means continuing the fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other religious intolerance, sexism, discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and all forms of violent political extremism.

The British-Irish Agreement, and the joint referenda which gave it effect, provided for the balanced constitutional change which the Green Party has campaigned for since its foundation. We remain wholeheartedly in support of it. Human rights are for all.

In the Westminster Parliament, the Green Party will make a difference by

- eliminating discrimination against any person on the basis of gender, creed, colour, sexuality, age and disability;
- ensuring that there is an increase in the numbers of women in decision making civil service positions
- and similar management positions in semi-state bodies and state agencies;
- ensuring that the entire public transport system is made accessible to all members of the community.

On May 6th 2010
Make a Difference.
Vote Green



www.greenpartyni.org

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**If you would like our manifesto in an alternative
format please contact email mark.bailey@greenpartyni.org**