

Green Party South West

GREENWORD

Greens grow by 26% in 2010!

Chances are, you are one of the new members of the Green Party reading this for the first time - so welcome to *GreensWord*, the word from the Green Party South West!

Since the start of 2010, the Green Party has seen a huge leap in membership, up 26% to 1810 in the south-west and rising daily. People are joining for many reasons. In South Somerset, new member David Grant wanted 'to give financial support to a campaigning political organisation'. Having previously supported Labour in a marginal where he hoped they would 'beat the machine', he had seen the positive effect that elected GP activists could have on other Councillors, and decided that the Green Party is the way to stop the ConDem erosion of waste and recycling legislation.

In North Devon, new member and Young Green Toby French joined because the Greens are 'heading in the right direction, maybe not with all the answers, but they stand up for the right things, often against the tide.'

For Jacqueline Deebanks-Irwin from Braunton, who likes to be 'green and eco-friendly', she says that locally, none of the other parties seemed to be addressing the issues that concerned her.



Sharon (centre) and East Devon Greens

Says Sharon Pavey, founder of the newly formed East Devon Green Party, 'I was an activist in my teens and at university but it was when the Copenhagen Conference came along that I felt I needed to get involved again.' Since then, she's balanced work, family and politics to establish a vibrant group with 30 members and 50-60 supporters. She wants to do more though. 'Our next job is to get those supporters to join us,' says Sharon. 'We have an

active committee and we're all working hard to increase membership. Hopefully our recent successes will spur others to join, like Copenhagen inspired me.'

Read all about it - Greens blogging

Green blogs are stirring up interest (and trouble) in these ConDem times. Members and supporters in Somerset have joined the revolution.

You'll find us at somersetgreenparty.blogspot.com. where you'll get regular comment on the state of our nation, and ideas for action.

If you want to share your thoughts on politics, sustainable lifestyles and the state of our planet, get in touch with your ideas - email southsomerset@greenparty.org.uk.

For other good green blogs, start with Caroline Lucas - www.carolinelucas.com/ci/blog.html.

And try Richard Lawson - greenerblog.blogspot.com - and Philip Booth - ruscombegreen.blogspot.com



GreensWord: the future?

Ryan Cleminson, Green Party South West Co-ordinator, introduces a consultation on the future of this newsletter.

It has probably not escaped your notice that the GPSW Committee has been ever more vocal in trying to extract your hard-earned cash with every issue of *GreensWord* that plops on to your doormat. The reason for this is that only 8% of your annual membership fee is returned to the region, and this, together with monthly donations from kind and generous individual members, is all we have to perform our many functions.

Our major cost is the printing and postage of *GreensWord*, which is the only way that we can inform all members of the dates of General Meetings, as some members either

do not want to be informed by, or do not have access to, email. However, it should be mentioned here that if you renew your membership via the website and request 'no contact from the party', then you will receive neither *GreensWord* nor any ballot papers for GPRC elections.

Due to our phenomenal success in attracting new members over the last year, the membership base to whom we must post *GreensWord* has outstripped our ability to cover costs within our current year's membership fee percentage.

In order to save costs (and from an environmental perspective), it has been proposed that *GreensWord* should be made available electronically for the majority, but that we should still have a print-run for

those not connected (!) to the internet. This is likely to happen over the next few months as the new membership database becomes available, hopefully with facilities to allow members to change their preferences. In this way, it should be possible for members to 'opt in' for electronic copy.

Costs have yet to be determined, but even though we must pay the postage for ballot papers to elect GPRC reps., this is likely to be much less than the costs for *GreensWord* with ballot papers included.

What do you think? If you feel that you would like to add your voice to this discussion, then please contact Ryan at redshutephotoGraphics@gmail.com



'The time to organise resistance is now'

'It is time to organise a broad movement of active resistance to the ConDem government's budget intentions,' writes Caroline Lucas, MP and Green Party Leader, along with many others opposed to the 'most savage spending cuts since the 1930s'.

The statement goes on to say the cuts will 'wreck the lives of millions by devastating our jobs, pay, pensions, NHS, education, transport, postal and other services.'

The government claims the cuts are unavoidable because the welfare state has been too generous, but the Green Party maintains this is nonsense:

ordinary people are being forced to pay for the bankers' profligacy.

To read the full statement, go to www.greenparty.org.uk/news and click the link.

And, take a look at The People's Charter - thepeoplescharter.org - which is demanding 'a people's Britain not a bankers' Britain'.



The Longest Night

The longest wait is just before dawn writes Ricky Knight, GPSW lead candidate in this year's General Election.

We were all standing bewildered in the bleakest sports hall of the Easton City Academy. We'd seen the 20 boxes for the LibDems, stacked in readiness. 16 for Labour, 12 Conservative. Two for the rest. Well at least we filled ours!

The wait for our first vote to appear seemed endless. None of us were expecting the meltdown of the Green vote across the country. Yet, Bristol West made the 'Top 10' highest Green votes in the country.

In Bristol, we had set ourselves 3 targets – get Caroline Lucas into Westminster; get Tess Green elected to the City Council; and, be able to say 'we couldn't have done any better'. Job done, you could say.

It was an amazing campaign, from Day 1. The benefaction of a 5-storey Georgian mansion in the centre of Bristol as an HQ was a good kick-start. This became the hub for a pretty impressive campaign. (As a parachuted candidate, not a common occurrence in Green Party circles, permit me some bragging!)

I was fortunate enough to land where there's an excellent local party structure, most of whom I knew anyway from the Euro Election Campaign and who are now even closer friends.

On top of that, the volunteers came flooding in, particularly our indefatigable HQ 'Intern' quartet who, it has to be said, hardly missed a day's work. Highlights of our successes include:

An Art Auction and Exhibition at HQ –



Some of the Bristol Team

which apart from being a remarkable and beautifully visual departure from 'politics as usual', raised a silly amount of money

A fantastic 6-hour music gig at the Canteen (Google it)

City centre stalls more or less every day (and four on Saturdays)

Peter Tatchell visiting on the night of the second 'Three Egos Debate', held in Bristol Arncliffe

The writing, production and hand-delivery of over 40,000 GP newspapers

6 x 5,000 newsletters to our 2 targeted wards within the constituency

Hand-delivering mail-merged directly-addressed letters to (nearly) all postal and first-time voters

15 hustings, 8 radio and 3 TV appearances

Bristol-wide, a full slate of 23 City Council candidates and 6 constituency hopefuls

Heart-warming financial contributions from friends and members – leaving us rewardingly in the black at the end of it all

A student-registration drive the day before the deadline, resulting in 273 new voters

2 very successful launches, 1 for members and supporters, the other for the Press, featuring Oscar-nominated Steve Petter as

GET INTO TOUCH

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Mr Brunel – what a performance!

Most importantly, a huge increase in our visibility, credibility and electability and far better networking with groups as diverse as 'The Convention of the Left' and 'Queen Elizabeth Hospital School', whose well-groomed Green-team made history by beating the Cons into 2nd place in their school mock election

And, we managed to get to Brighton – in fact we lost Geoff and Chris down there most of the time

Personal accolades might not be your thing but these are offered as ideas for next year's local elections.

And, all that for 3.8% of the vote. Was it worth it? Yes, absolutely. It was an incredible journey and a great adventure. I'd do it all again. Thank you Bristol West – you made an old man really happy!

General Meeting - 25 September, Bath

You are invited to a General Meeting of the Green Party South West on Saturday 25 September, at Manvers Street Baptist Church Hall, Bath (entrance on left side of building).

Agenda

11am Arrival and Coffee

11.15am General Meeting

1pm Lunch (on site or in Bath)

2.30pm Ricky Knight - Reinvigorating the SWeeT campaign

Open Forum - Communicating with our members

4pm Meeting closes

Sweet Reincarnated

A week is a long time in politics. In dragonfly terms, June 2014 is aeons away – to Ricky Knight, it is but a blink. Here he announces the re-formation of the South West European Election Team.

It's a micro-blink to next May's local elections. Then it's another one to the Olympics, which, whether we like it or not, will dominate every aspect of 2012. The finale of that will be the starting gun of our race to the tape in what was so nearly a photo-finish last June.

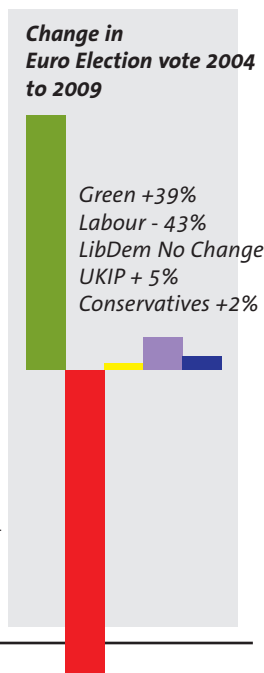
One of the major conclusions from the 'autopsy' of our last Euro Election campaign is that we must start in good time for 2014: get candidates elected, get roles allocated – and get the money in!

This, then, is the first warning salvo that *Sweet* is to be re-activated and that I am going to co-ordinate the nascent team. More importantly, though, it's an invitation to any member in the South West to send me an e-mail - rickyknight@northdevongreens.org.uk - to join us, no strings, no pressure. It's also an

early call for you to consider putting your name forward for the list of candidates.

This much is known: our 2014 Euro Campaign will kick off proper in the autumn of 2012 and it will prioritise the involvement of local parties - fledgling, struggling, enthusiastic or prosperous. It will also involve the whole massive region. And it's going to be FUN!

I see two goals for the regional structure: to develop local parties and campaign to elect a Green MEP. All we need is a good team!



The Age of Responsibility

The hypothetical tide of hooded criminals and teenage mums have parted to make way for the new youth archetype, says Rebecca Parnel.

On 5 December, 40,000 gathered in Parliament Square for the UK's biggest ever climate change demonstration, ahead of crucial UN talks in Copenhagen that would have such significance for the world's climate future. A majority of those blue-clad activists were young faces, taking direct action to offset the destructive actions of themselves and their elders.

The post-60s decades introduced bras too nice to scorch and issues too resistant to change to worry about, leading to the widespread notion that young people are unconcerned and self-absorbed. That is, until now.

2011 brings with it a colossal danger. Melting glaciers and starving polar bears will be but a minor detail in comparison to the droughts that will devastate the world's poorer countries (ironically the countries that have contributed the least carbon dioxide to the atmosphere).

The effects of climate change have been taught in schools, yet any activist knows that there is still a long way to go, with catastrophes such as the rejection of a fair and binding climate change treaty and BNP leader Nick Griffin, a climate change denier, being chosen to represent the EU at

Copenhagen further prompting an already huge stir in the UK's youth circuit. And so the wail of the 20-year-old activist rises once more.

The injection of youthful spirit has given the image of campaigning a thoroughly modern dusting off. Expansive use of web 2.0 has seen a volume of online petitions, social networking campaigns and newly recruited activists reaching new levels of the public unconscious through social networking campaigns and inspired methods such as Climate Camp, flash mobs and Critical Mass.

Young people are not only representing a need for political action against climate change, but also representing themselves. After years of environmental mishaps caused by our greedy forefathers, younger generations are ready to stand up and face the burden, sacrificing their own time, money and reputation to amend what those before us caused.

The role of the young activist has evolved from a racial minority to a social norm, and they will not stop at anything until politicians make a rapid, fair and sustainable agreement.

Now that's something to tell the grandchildren about.



Five resolutions for local climate security...

Things you can do to get your local council to green-up...

1. 10:10: a firm decision to reduce carbon emissions by 10%, in 2010

The 10:10 campaign is gathering support from individuals and businesses across the country - and some local authorities www.1010global.org/uk

2. 'Business Reporting Obligation': a new byelaw for businesses trading in the south west?

The Local Government Act 1972 authorises byelaws for the prevention and suppression of nuisances. A byelaw to monitor the nuisance of excessive 'greenhouse gas' emissions would be reasonable, affordable and legal. All businesses with rateable premises would provide an annual report on their main carbon emissions, and a plan for steady reduction of those emissions.

3. Fair competition in the international marketplace: a call for the government to use its powers under WTO rules

World Trade Organisation rules allow for countries that control emissions to impose trade barriers against those that don't. Local government should demand that Whitehall exercises those rights.



4. Disinvesting from coal: pension fund activism

Local authority pension funds control huge investments, and must be responsibly managed: that means no cash for coal.

5. Lawful excuse: legal guidance on defensible activities that the law can no longer protect

'Lawful excuse' is a legitimate and occasionally successful legal defence for breaking the law when lives depend on it. Local authorities that blatantly damage the climate are exposed to direct action - and should know it.

Ricky off to Estonia

North Devon member Ricky Knight has been chosen to accompany the GPEW delegation to the European Green Party Conference in Tallinn, Estonia from 8-10 October.

The theme of the Conference, to be addressed by GP Leader, Caroline Lucas, MP and by GP economics spokesperson, Miriam Kennett, is the 'Green New Deal' and its macro-economic and financial framework.

Says Ricky: 'One of the joys of 'retirement' is I am no longer ruled by 'the Bells' and can now be involved in so many more events that were previously impossible. Eastern Europe has always held a deep fascination for me and this will be the first time I have been to the Balkans. Oh whoops - wrong ticket! It's a five-day round trip by boat and train, an adventure holiday in itself - but there's a serious workload involved as well.'

Ricky, a Barnstaple town-councillor and the GPSW lead candidate at the last Euro Elections will report on the trip in the next edition of GreensWord.



Local Party Support

Congratulations! Since the last edition of GreensWord, you've saved an extra one-third of a Local Party Support Worker. We now have £163 per month coming in, enough to feed 1.33 Local Party Support Workers! A big THANK YOU to everybody who has contributed so far!

For the important stuff please see southwest.greenparty.org.uk and click on 'Donate Locally'.

Joy Irving, Treasurer - GPSW



EXETER GREEN FAIR 2010
 Saturday 4th Sept 10am - 4pm
 Exeter Cathedral Green
 For information please ring 07977 079722
 Or email greenfair@exetergreenparty.org.uk

Interview with Green Party Devon County Councillor Paula Black



What's been the most satisfying experience since you won your seat?
 Every day from my kitchen window, on the hill opposite I can see the new allotments that I helped gain funding for, it's like a daily smile

knowing that a community project that had been struggling against some opposition and lack of funds got the go ahead.

What are you trying to achieve at the moment?

In a nutshell, trying to reverse the incineration policy for waste in Devon, working towards 3 new cycle-ways linking Totnes to nearby villages, trying to find a solution to traffic through Totnes High Street, working with community groups to develop alternative energy solutions, and trying to safeguard as many services as possible at this rather scary time.

Is it tough being the only Green?

Yes in some ways, there are a lot of expectations from across the whole county, but the rewards of making sure there is a positive voice for Green concerns makes it VERY worthwhile. It has been an amazing year, a real learning curve, and at times so very funny.

Are the other councillors mostly friendly or hostile?

Most are very friendly, but also a little bemused, it is amazing how many people say to me that they are green!

What's the single most important thing you've learnt about winning elections?

You need to knock on doors and talk to people, and just be yourself, tell people your beliefs and how you will represent them.

How would you encourage people thinking about standing for election?

As a councillor you have real power to help change your community for the better, you represent something good rather than the same-old-same-old. If there is something you want to change whether it's at parish level or across the whole county then being a councillor, from parish to county, allows that change to be aired and enacted. To really enact change in your local community a county councillor has more power to change things than an MP ever can, and that is something that is worth doing.

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Want to be part of the Green revolution? Get in touch by calling 07854 783821 or email info@southwest.greenparty.org.uk

Join the Green Party - a party working hard for a fair future. Find out more at www.greenparty.org

Call for Green Party Regional Council nominations

Katharine Chant is standing down as the region's female representative on Green Party Regional Council.

This is a formal call for nominations to replace her, as female GPRC representative.

Please send nominations to Ryan Cleminson, GPSW Co-ordinator, at redshutephotographics@gmail.com.

Nominations close on 24 September.