

REAL CHOICES FOR A GREENER AND FAIRER SCOTLAND



THE SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY 2001 ELECTION MANIFESTO

The Scottish Green Party is part of the most dynamic political movement on Earth. In two short decades Greens have made a huge impact on some of the most influential states in Europe. That influence is spreading fast: to North and South America, to Africa and across the southern hemisphere. Throughout the world the Green message is a breath of fresh air to old-style, destructive politics. This message poses huge and urgent challenges but it also offers new and positive ways for people to relate to each other, and to our beautiful but fragile planet. The only politics of the future is Green politics. The only choices are Green choices. This manifesto sets out some of those choices in 2001.

The Elections for the Westminster Parliament

The Scottish Green Party is contesting only a few of the 72 Westminster seats in this election. We value the support of those 84,000 people in Scotland who voted Green in 1999 and look forward to that support growing at the next Scottish Parliament elections in 2003. So we no longer see Westminster as the focus of the aspirations of people in Scotland. Polls have shown that voters already see the Westminster Parliament as secondary to our own Parliament. The unfair "first-past-the-post" voting system, coupled with the tax on democracy - the £500 election deposit which every candidate must pay - does no credit to the Westminster Parliament and to this election.

So why are we standing at all in a blighted election? After all, we already have much fairer voting systems for Holyrood and for the European Parliament. And, despite the resistance of those who wish to cling to power, it will not be long before elections for local councils are transformed too. That will leave Westminster isolated in its refusal to accept all but the most modest modernisation of the voting system.

But we recognise that the UK Parliament has many powers that affect Scotland. We are prepared to campaign on our policies in these areas. The election would be even more tainted were

there to be no Green voice on the national stage and no Green choices for at least some voters. That these choices are not universal is the fault of the electoral system, which has abandoned many voters and their hopes.

Our ten key policies for the Westminster election are to:

- Tackle climate change through renewable energy;
- Develop a safe and sustainable transport system;
- Overhaul taxation to penalise pollution and waste;
- Fight for a nuclear free Scotland;
- Introduce a 'Citizen's Income Scheme';
- Promote responsible business;
- Campaign for reform to international trade rules;
- Tackle the real drugs war;
- Restore democracy for elections and government;
- Enhance devolution with more powers for Holyrood.

In our local campaigns we will focus on issues of vital local concern.

In Ross, Skye and Inverness West, our campaign will be highlighting the dismal failure of a Liberal Democrat MSP and MP – the latter none other than their leader Charles Kennedy – to prevent a

Liberal Democrat Rural Affairs Minister from allowing a GM crop "trial" to take place on a Ross-shire farm. A strong Green vote will send a clear message that this is unacceptable to the people of the Highlands.

In Edinburgh Central, we will be campaigning for action on climate change to prevent more of the floods that have brought havoc to the city. Improved public transport, protection of green spaces and a drive on energy efficiency are urgently needed. Tackling climate change in these ways would see Edinburgh take its place as a model European city for the future.

In Glasgow Kelvin, our candidate, a student activist, will be fighting for greatly improved and cheaper public transport, as well as an end to student poverty. He will also be highlighting the government's failure to tackle poverty and inequality, implement a fair and equal voting system and create a sustainable economy within the once great city of Glasgow.

In Stirling, we will be fighting against the unacceptable risks caused by the transport of nuclear warheads through the constituency. Drawing on our candidate's personal experiences, we will also be pushing for re-investment by the banks in our deprived urban and rural communities and the need for local organic food that people can trust.

Policies for a Green Scotland

Before we know what changes we want the Westminster Parliament to pursue, we need to look at the kind of Scotland we want. To get to a green Scotland needs action at many levels – through all levels of government and in international agreements. But our programme is not simply a programme for government. It involves individuals and community organisations. It requires major reform of the huge and unaccountable global corporations that increasingly hold sway over our lives.

Over the years the SGP has watched as ideas which were once dismissed as 'cranky' Green concerns have been accepted by the public as mainstream. Who, apart from a few technocrats, now believes in a future for nuclear power? Who supports genetic tampering with food? Who suggests that we can get out of the transport crisis simply by building more roads? Climate change? Originally dismissed as green scaremongering, now it is scarcely out of the news. The public now knows the truth. But public acceptance of these concerns has not led to real political action. Why? Because the traditional 'grey' parties are so tied to the big business point of view that they cannot and never will see the green alternatives staring them in the face. When push comes to shove it is **always** the green agenda that gets ditched.

Scotland's Environment

For two decades now the SGP has warned that we are living on borrowed time. Crisis after crisis in the last year has, sadly, shown how right we are: floods and storms as a result of climate change; fiascos with genetically modified crops; seas empty of fish; farming in meltdown. The list goes on. If we wait much longer, the damage will be irreversible. So Greens will restore Scotland's natural environment. Our policies will create new forests for upland areas, developing rich habitats where now there are barren hillsides. Our

programme of land reform will mean communities have a proper say over their future. Communities themselves will be the major stakeholders in Scotland's unique resources of wind and wave power. We will become the European leader in organic farming – creating thousands of new jobs and positioning Scotland at the head of a huge new market in safe natural food. We will end the absurd long-distance transportation of millions of animals, which has magnified the foot and mouth crisis. Working with fellow Greens in northern nations we will return life to the North Sea. In our towns and cities Greens will battle to save precious green spaces and green belts. We will give communities real say in the planning system.

Scottish Society

A Green society is a fair society. In a Green Scotland everyone will have a guaranteed minimum income. We will end fuel poverty and damp housing with an eight-year programme of housing improvements. We will give a new lease of life to many schools, acting as hubs of learning within their communities, while cutting class sizes for children and young people. Our health policies emphasise prevention of illness, and access to a full range of complementary treatments, within a NHS that remains free to everyone in need. Our approaches to crime are based on rehabilitation being more effective than punishment and prevention being better than both. A decentralised society is much less a breeding ground of crime.

The Scottish Economy

The Scottish economy depends far too much on the whims of multinational investors. Our enterprise policies promote home-grown companies as a first priority. We will actively develop the 'third sector economy' – community enterprise, community banks and local exchange trading systems – through a Scottish Community Development Bank. We will reform banking law to give banks

greater community responsibility. Our tax reforms will make it more economic to re-use and recycle goods than to dispose of them. Workers from traditional but declining industries will be able to retrain to take on urgent work in renewable energy technologies and new transport systems. Our transport and tax reforms will promote strong self-reliant local economies by making it more economic to use local goods rather than those transported from far-off places. We will introduce a new system of accounts to replace the grossly misleading measure of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Resources that are used to deal with deeply anti-social activities such as pollution and waste will no longer be part of the way in which we measure the nation's wealth.

Scotland and the world

Despite shocking poverty in parts of Scotland, for many people this is a rich country. That means we must do much more to tackle global problems of hunger and environmental destruction as well as tackling poverty at home. We continue to support writing off third world debt. We will increase the overseas aid budget and make sure that it is used to support long term development rather than projects which line financiers' pockets. The Scottish Green Party is a proud member of the fast-growing European Federation of Green Parties and we are committed to shared European goals where those are necessary, for example, to tackle pollution or to prevent conflicts. However, we reject the corporate-driven consensus on open markets and globalisation and we seek tax and institutional reforms to give priority to local production where possible. We believe that governments should set their own levels of taxation, public spending and borrowing in areas that only affect their own country. European Monetary Union will undermine local and regional economies and takes no account of environmental or social goals. We oppose Scottish membership of the Euro.

Our Ten Key UK Policies for a Green Scotland

1 Harness Precious Resources. In order to develop our untapped potential for renewable energy we will set up a Scottish Grid Company, owned in full by the Government. This would take over running the national grid in Scotland and so provide a guaranteed outlet for the new community-controlled wind, wave and water enterprises which would be developed by a Scottish Renewable Energy Commission.

2 Invest in Transport. Greens support re-nationalisation of the railways. We will reduce the numbers of lorries on our roads by making far greater use of rail freight and renewing our canal system. We pledge to return the proceeds of higher fuel duties to improvements in public transport and to safeguarding the interests of rural communities. We will introduce lower speed limits in built-up areas. Airport building and any privatisation of air traffic control services will be halted.

3 Overhaul Taxation. We will reform taxation to make sure it is fairer and promotes sustainable development. That means higher levels of taxation for those who can well afford it. Over the long term we support a shift in taxation towards anti-social activities like pollution, waste and land speculation. We argue for internationally fairer taxes, such as a proper tax on aviation and a "Tobin tax" on international currency speculation.

4 Fight for a Nuclear Free Scotland. With Scotland taking its rightful place as a world leader in renewable energy, we will phase out nuclear power stations within the shortest possible timescale. The skills no longer being used to build ships are just what are needed for renewable energy generation. Greens will immediately end funding for Trident and all other weapons of mass destruction. We will end the country's shameful role in the arms trade. Defence forces will be refocused on international mediation and peace-keeping duties and on restoration work in war-torn countries.

5 Introduce a Citizen's Income Scheme. Under this scheme every citizen will receive an income from the state. It will be high enough to cover basic needs of shelter, clothing, food and heating. It will replace tax allowances and credits and most welfare benefits. Pensioners and people with special needs will receive special supplements. Students will receive Citizen's Income, in effect restoring grants. Children will receive a smaller amount payable to parents or guardians. As well as providing real security, the slashing of red tape and an end to the benefit trap will provide new freedom to work, study and volunteer.

6 Promote Responsible Business. We will require companies to publish annual reports on the social and environmental costs of their activities. Where companies use animals or animal products we will require them to report on standards of animal welfare. We will introduce new rules for comprehensive labelling of products. Company law will be changed to give workers, customers and suppliers a say – alongside shareholders – in how a company is run. We will introduce strict new rules on marketing items like products aimed at children, and on advertising cars, alcohol and tobacco.

7 Reform International Trade Rules. We will lead international calls for reforms to trade agreements and loans which hammer the poorest countries. The General Agreement on Trade in Services will be debated during this parliament. It requires countries to let private companies run state schools, hospitals and much more. Greens have led international opposition to this secretive and unaccountable corporate agenda and we will campaign hard against the UK signing up to it.

8 Tackle the Real Drugs War. We will promote the safe and legal use of cannabis, both for medical purposes and by putting it on the same regulatory and fiscal footing as tobacco and alcohol. The resources which are freed up from the pointless prosecution of

cannabis users will be diverted towards health education campaigns on all drugs, rehabilitation of and support for people addicted to drugs like heroin and to prosecution of the big players in illegal drug trafficking.

9 Restore Democracy. Current proposals to reform the Westminster voting system are too timid and will do little to restore the credibility of this parliament. We want a fully proportional system to be in place for the next Westminster elections. Election deposits should also be scrapped and replaced by a system where candidates or parties must collect sufficient signatures of support within the constituency.

10 Enhance Devolution. The Scottish Green Party supports greater independence for Scotland. In the immediate future we will work to resolve the most glaring anomalies in the devolution settlement. These include the lack of control over GM test sites, over the location of nuclear submarines, over some parts of transport policy and much of energy policy.

These are only a sample of the priorities which Scottish Greens would have at Westminster, alongside Green MPs of our sister parties in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. All of the so-called Scottish parties will tell you that they are fighting for Scotland. But only one party will be fighting for Scotland's future generations: the Scottish Green Party.

These policies complement our pledges for the Scottish Parliament. Our Scottish Parliament manifesto in 1999 set out how we would use devolved powers for the good of Scotland. Those pledges included slashing pollution through tougher action on polluters and producers of waste; investing in dry warm homes; bringing the NHS back to meeting the needs of the communities it is supposed to serve; and preparing for the future by opening up access to free, learner-centred education. This work has been started, even with only one Member at Holyrood.



Green votes count

On 6 May 1999 the Scottish Green Party made history. Robin Harper, MSP, became the first Green Parliamentarian to be elected anywhere in the UK. He joins scores of successful Green politicians across Europe, some of whom are even sharing in government in states like Germany. Since May 1999 Robin's success has been followed by the election of two English Green MEPs, many Green councillors in England and three Green members of the London Assembly. Wherever you turn the Greens are on the rise!

A message from Robin Harper, Green Member of the Scottish Parliament

"Since my election as Green MSP I have been privileged to work with very many people who are deeply committed to a fairer, greener Scotland for us all and for future generations.

"For years I have argued that the Scottish Green Party is only one part of the wider Green movement that unites hundreds of thousands of people. Over the last two years we have begun to put that argument into action. Campaigning groups and concerned individuals are, I believe, beginning to see the real benefits of having Greens inside as well as outside of parliament or government, at whatever level.

"The task of greening Scotland is an urgent one. None of us can do it alone and we need to take forward the crusade in every possible way. That's why we need more Greens in parliament. That's why a big Green vote really matters.

"If you voted Green with your second vote in 1999 I would urge you to stay with us. If you are one of the half million or more people in Scotland who share Green ideas, then I would urge you to join with us by VOTING GREEN, both now where you can and everywhere in 2003."

So what difference does having Green politicians make?

Here is just a flavour.

- Introducing the first Bill which sets ambitious targets for **organic farming**, helping to address the farming crisis and meet public demand for safe, wholesome food.
- Continuing leadership of the battle against planting **genetically modified crops** in Scotland's countryside.
- Forcing a government commitment to legislate for an **energy efficiency survey** whenever a house is sold.
- Setting up parliamentary groups to look at the impact of **Citizen's Income** and to promote **renewable energy**.
- Ensuring that the Scottish Parliament has adequate recycling facilities and

pressing the Parliament to make sure that the new Parliament building is a **model sustainable building**.

- Working with campaigning organisations to put forward amendments to flawed **land reform and transport** Bills.
- Acting as the sole voice of dissent in Parliament on plans to **contaminate our drinking water with fluoride**.

The success of Scotland's first Green MSP has already been recognised by staff in Scotland's network of voluntary organisations and, in particular, by campaigners in areas such as transport, wildlife protection and energy. Without a Green MSP there would be no Green conscience within the Scottish Parliament.

Scotland needs more Greens!



Join the Scottish Green Party.

Name _____
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I enclose my annual subscription of £ _____ plus £ _____ donation

SINGLE: £20 (standard)
 £8 (concession)
 JOINT: £30 (standard)
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I/We are not members of any other political party

Signed _____

Scottish Green Party, PO Box 14080,
 Edinburgh, EH10 6YG.
www.scottishgreens.org.uk
 Phone 0131 478 7896.
 e-mail: office@scottishgreens.org.uk

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