

2010 MANIFESTO



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction from Robin Harper	3
Introduction from Eleanor Scott & Patrick Harvie	3
An economy built around people	4
Supporting new green jobs	5
The environment at the heart of politics	6
Creating a new energy-generating democracy	7
A transport network we can rely on for generations to come	8
Sustainable agriculture, good food for all	9
Foreign policy: making this country a responsible global citizen	10
Restoring Britain's reputation at home and abroad	11
Devolved to Scotland, but where Westminster matters too	12
Radical reform to Britain's mistrusted Parliament	13
Caroline Lucas	14
Join us	15



2010 MANIFESTO

INTRODUCTIONS

An introduction from Robin Harper MSP, Scottish Green Party candidate for Edinburgh East

Greens have been elected to Holyrood for eleven years now, and we've made a significant impact on the political landscape. Our record of achievements in each of those eleven years shows what even a small team can do in parliamentary debate, in policy making and in legislation.

From my early action as the first and only Green parliamentarian anywhere in the UK, I've had to work creatively to make the maximum impact. I forced the first government's hand on organic farming, improved the laws protecting National Parks, and laid the ground work for legislation to tackle hate crime.

Later, with a larger group of MSPs, and now working with Patrick Harvie in a tightly balanced Parliament, I've had to create opportunities to challenge the other parties. There could be no better experience for a Green MP to take to Westminster.

Our time at Holyrood has seen greater progress for Green policies than we could ever have hoped for, with Patrick leading the scrutiny of the Scottish Climate Change Act.

The balance of parties at Holyrood has given us the chance to put Green ideas into action, ensuring that the Scottish budget funded projects like the home insulation programme to slash people's bills while cutting emissions. Similarly, the Climate Challenge Fund has already helped hundreds of community groups to do great work on reducing our impact on the environment.

We have seen our first Green Bill passed by the Parliament, ensuring that hate crimes are taken seriously in Scotland, as well as securing much-needed changes to strengthen the Marine Bill and the Climate Change Bill.

Two Green MSPs achieved all this, as well as winning votes against new coal power, and working with others to save the Edinburgh trams and to scrap tuition fees for good. Just think what even a small number of Green MPs could do in Westminster.

Don't waste your vote by giving it to one more MP from the tired Westminster parties – vote Green and send a fresh and radical voice to Parliament.

An introduction from Eleanor Scott & Patrick Harvie MSP, Scottish Green Party Co-convenors

This is an election which should focus on the need for a transformation in our economy, in our society, and in our politics.

We have witnessed market failure of historic proportions over the last two years, driven by the irresponsibility of those who were paid obscene salaries to play with other people's wealth as though it was Monopoly money. But the casino capitalists didn't act alone; they were cheered on by Minister after Minister, and by every political party at Westminster. All these parties spent years pursuing an economic policy which indulged the risk-takers, and which allowed society to become ever more unequal. The root cause of poverty, as well as of the frenzied and destructive behaviour of the City, is political failure. 2010 should be the year to end that, and to put the market back in its place.

But instead, we now see a debate about which public services to cut first. At the same time the other parties continue to peddle the myth that a tiny handful of bankers and chief executives possess such extraordinary talents that they must be paid astronomical sums while others endure disgraceful levels of poverty.

It's time to stop trying to re-float the failed economic model, and to start building an alternative. Green politics offers that alternative. We believe that today's levels of inequality are wrong in principle. We believe that the economy must serve real people's needs. We believe it's wrong to simply offset the harm we cause to society or to the environment – instead we must end it.

Green ideas are on the agenda around the world, and it's time to bring them to Westminster too.







AN ECONOMY BUILT AROUND PEOPLE

Green economics offer a radical and positive alternative, grounded in a desire to put human wellbeing and a safe environment at the top of Government priorities.

We believe that economic policy must place value not just on material wealth, but on the things which truly make life worth living – our health, our relationships, our human need to co-operate and create a sense of equality and community.

GDP, the narrow measure used to represent economic success, fails to take account of the things which matter most in life, and instead counts the good and bad aspects of economic activity as one.

It doesn't have to be this way. Around the world, the Green movement has long argued that the old economic system was unstable and could not last – that consumerism and perpetual economic growth on a planet of finite resources was impossible.

In financial services, we would:

curb the power of banks, by splitting up the megabanks and ensuring that none are "too big to fail"

ensure that retail banking and investment banking are kept separate

encourage mutual financial institutions such as building societies, co-operatives and credit unions

ensure banks bailed out with public funds are used for the public good, banning investment in damaging projects like tar sands and the arms industry in favour of low carbon technologies, small businesses and ethical trade

introduce a transaction tax or 'Tobin Tax' which would help stop financial transactions from boiling over, and help cut excessive bonuses - as has been suggested by the chair of the Financial Services Authority, Lord Turner, and the campaigners behind the similar 'Robin Hood Tax'

To tackle poverty and help create a more equal society, we would:

defend the universal approach to benefits and put an end to the benefits trap by introducing a citizen's income to replace means tested benefits, such as Job Seekers' Allowance. This would provide a universal payment sufficient to cover the basic costs of living

ensure that needs-based benefits are sufficient to provide dignity and independence for those who cannot take on paid employment

protect the interests of older people by investing in housing and providing a genuinely liveable Citizens' Pension

build a recognition of the value of volunteering, caring and other unpaid work into the benefits system

move the minimum wage toward the level of a living wage to ensure an end to in-work poverty, including a guarantee of a living wage for all state employees and public sector contractors

i support better parental leave for all parents

restore the principle of progressive taxation, including tax on share dividends and NI for high earners, to ensure that the very wealthy pay their share

support workplace democracy, mutuals and workers' cooperatives, so decision making power in the economy is more equally shared, and to encourage wage equality

introduce maximum wage ratios in the public sector, and ultimately throughout the economy, to ensure that Chief Executives' pay doesn't soar to ridiculous levels at the expense of people working hard in ordinary jobs



"Recycling creates six times more jobs per tonne of waste than landfill"

SUPPORTING NEW GREEN JOBS

The recent recession has been a tough time for many people, but astonishingly the other political parties seem determined to re-float the same failed economic model. To do so, they will cut public spending rather than raise taxes on those who can afford to pay.

Greens would instead defend public services, and develop new sources of funding such as a tax on financial transactions, and a genuinely progressive income tax. It's time for an economy that puts people's real needs first, and challenges the shallow and selfish values which have come to infect the political system.

That selfishness shows itself in the gulf between rich and poor too, with wildly inflated salaries and bonuses for a handful of people, while ordinary wages stagnate. Labour and Tory governments alike have fostered this inequality, on the assumption that economic growth benefits everyone eventually. This great lie of the unfettered free market cannot be allowed to stand.

At the same time, the evidence has never been clearer that more equal societies are happier, healthier, safer and greener. Greens have long argued that equality is good for our whole society, and that Government should use the tax system to help bring about that equality – at present many of the poorest people pay a higher proportion of their income in tax than the wealthiest.

All poverty is a blight on our society. The focus on specific categories such as child poverty, pensioner poverty and fuel poverty must be maintained, but should not distract us from the unacceptability of poverty regardless of who it affects.

For those who need the support of the welfare state, the current benefits system is often humiliating, unhelpful and inefficient. Labour and Tory proposals for reform are punitive and will fail to deal with welfare dependency.

To meet the needs of the 21st century, Government policy must support moves to a more localised, low-carbon, low-waste economy. A Green economy will require investment in universities in order to promote innovation and skills relevant to new low-carbon industries. A Green economy must support small independent businesses, which are too often squeezed out by multinationals.

Government policy on competition fails to protect independent businesses serving their local community, and even provides direct financial support to multinationals. Instead we should be making use of public sector procurement to give priority to independent businesses wherever possible.

A Green economy is also a social economy. This means that Greens will support social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals, and work constructively with the trades union movement to build a working culture which respects labour rights.

On enterprise, we would:

place a greater emphasis on small businesses and local economies, instead of subsidising and protecting the multinationals

support small businesses, community and social enterprise through reform to procurement regulations

support co-operative businesses, mutuals, industrial and provident societies and community based social enterprises through a social investment bank

support credit unions and other social lenders, and invest in training to broaden participation in their democratic boards

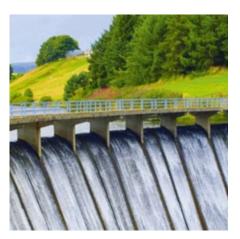


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THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE HEART OF POLITICS, NOT AN AFTERTHOUGHT

Climate change is the most urgent threat to the survival of humanity. The threat is particularly grave for the poorest both in our own society and throughout the world.

But it's important to see the positive opportunities which arise from climate change too – the action we need to take to build a cleaner, greener world offers a huge opportunity to guarantee human wellbeing and social justice around the world.

That action will mean a transformation in many areas of life – energy, transport, food, homes and buildings, and the very shape of the communities we live in. Environmental harm has been felt most keenly by poorer communities, and this environmental injustice can be seen around the world as well as at home.

The transformation to a low carbon, low waste society offers the chance not only to end much of that injustice, but also to help create a more equal society and achieve a better quality of life for everyone. This will only happen if government is willing to give the leadership which has been so badly lacking.

The Copenhagen conference on climate change was a disgraceful letdown, with Governments from around the world refusing to take the steps which are needed.

Even more disturbingly, the UK joined with a handful of other governments to present their 'Copenhagen Accord', which contained no commitment to binding cuts, no solutions for developing countries, and no prospect of safeguarding the world against the crucial 2-degree warming threshold.

But despite this, and despite the misguided attempts to discredit the science on climate change, most people in the UK are still clear that this task is urgent, and want to see Government take responsibility.

A fundamental shift in energy markets is needed to ensure security of supply and substantial reductions in carbon emissions. This will accompany huge investment in improving the existing housing stock, as well as high standards for new housing, reflecting the need to reduce energy demand and increase energy efficiency.



Robin Harper discusses the Climate Change Bill the day it passed

Although housing itself is a devolved issue, much of the investment will need to involve the power companies as well as Government and individuals. The UK Government therefore has a key role.

The Green approach will move us away from fossil fuels and towards local supply of energy. Local community heating schemes, combined heat and power and micro-generation have the potential to secure energy supply while reducing carbon emissions, but only if we also invest in a "smart grid" and support large scale renewables too.

Guaranteed feed-in tariffs for micro-generation by individual households, businesses and community groups would help to ensure that people are protected from rising energy prices, and can even create new sources of income.



"Scotland's future energy exports will be clean electricity, not our declining oil and gas."

CREATING AN ENERGY-GENERATING DEMOCRACY

The transformation of the energy system through energy efficiency measures and renewable energy will create thousands of jobs, both high and low skilled.



Image credit: is.gd/bqbgu

This country has no need for new nuclear power, and even our existing nuclear power stations can be allowed to close as they age. New nuclear represents the most costly and unsustainable way to generate electricity, and will tie future generations into the vast expense of decommissioning.

We reject the idea that the mere possibility of Carbon Capture and Storage, an unproven technology that's still in development, should be used to justify new fossil fuelled power stations.

Nor should "energy from waste" be used as an excuse for another generation of industrial incinerators, when there are so many opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle the materials which would be burned.

Greens have been radical and imaginative on home energy issues at every level of government. In local councils, Greens in Kirklees developed the UK's leading home insulation programme, as well as installing solar panels to further cut the bills of council tenants.

It's a programme with social, environmental and economic benefits, but throughout the UK we could do so much more if Government policy was changed.

We need Greens elected at UK level to help make energy dependence a thing of the past - it's absurd that the vast majority of households are completely dependent on the big energy companies, instead of generating some energy at home or in the local community.

On energy, we would:

- begin a national energy efficiency and energy demand reduction programme
- insulate all domestic and public sector buildings to a high standard
- provide incentives for combined heat and power schemes and for district heating
- : create high environmental standards for all new buildings
 - extend the feed-in tariff to cover all micro-generation and community-owned renewables and begin a retrofit programme to add micro-renewables to public buildings
- oppose new nuclear power stations, and decommission existing ones as they age
- support the growth of renewable energy generation, and reduce the volume of coal burned in power stations as renewables come online
- introduce tight restrictions on incineration, especially close to communities
- support the companies trying to create jobs in renewable generation and infrastructure



"We need better facilities for cyclists and better quality public transport to help people get out of their cars."

A TRANSPORT NETWORK WE CAN RELY ON FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Transport policy is still stuck in the 1960s. For most people, there are huge benefits to taking more of our short journeys on foot, by bike and on public transport.

Most people want the safe streets and good quality public transport which would make this possible. Our lives could be made much easier with greater localisation too, allowing people to find housing, employment, public services and markets within easy reach.

So we'll aim to reduce the need to travel by re-localising communities through better planning, and supporting work-from-home facilities, for those who want them.



Mockup of Edinburgh's trams
Image credit: is.gd/bg9X1

The electrification of road transport has a huge potential to reduce carbon emissions, cut people's travel costs, and help to balance the energy system as millions of recharging vehicles serve as energy storage, drawing power when it's cheapest.

But Government is not yet giving the necessary leadership, and fundamental questions regarding infrastructure and financing have barely been addressed. The UK is many years behind our European neighbours when it comes to high speed rail, but the opportunity exists now to put that right.

Instead of prioritising airport expansion, Greens would invest in public transport links between cities, and end wasteful and damaging motorway expansion. Greens would invest in a mass reopening of branch rail lines allowing better connections for smaller towns.

On transport, we would:

make streets more friendly for people to walk and cycle, not just with pavements and cycle lanes but also by reducing dependence on the car and through measures such as speed limits and traffic calming

work with industry and other EU member states to agree standards for electric vehicles, and begin the long term strategic planning needed to provide charging points in time for these vehicles coming onto the market

seek to renationalise the railway network, and invest in making stations accessible for all

expand the high speed rail network, which must be built to serve Scotland, not just London and the southern half of the UK

oppose airport expansion, to ensure that carbon cuts elsewhere are not wasted

decrease demand for transport through stronger local economies to meet communities' needs, and through home working

Greens would provide realistic alternatives to domestic flying, but would support lifeline services to remote and island communities. Again, these priorities require co-operation and joint investment between the UK and Scottish Governments; it's not something that can be left to the devolved administration alone.

Greens in the Scottish Parliament have already cast the deciding votes to save sustainable transport projects and to scrap harmful ones. But some of the worst examples of polluting transport policy still have the support of every other party in Scottish politics, and in both Parliaments. A green challenge on transport is vital.







SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, GOOD FOOD FOR ALL

Food and agriculture are sometimes forgotten when it comes to climate change, but land use is one of the most important things to address if we want to cut emissions. There are wider environmental impacts too, as well as the need for successful and sustainable rural economies.

We want to ensure that habitats and biodiversity are protected, and the promotion of sustainable agriculture can help to achieve this. Organic agriculture has the advantage of relying less on fossil fuel based fertilisers and pesticides.

There's huge scope for more urban agriculture too, and for smaller producers to make a direct link with their consumers through farmers markets.

Sadly Governments have spent decades either ignoring the need to protect our food culture, or worse still handing control of it to the multinationals.

Four vast retailers now have so much power that they can tell us what to eat, tell farmers what to grow, set the prices and let others carry the cost of their wasteful practices.

To support rural economies and agriculture, we would:

- Financially recognise the role of farmers in protecting habitats and biodiversity
- promote urban agriculture and farmers markets
- : support organic agriculture
- introduce a powerful supermarket regulator

When supermarkets are kept to a reasonable scale, as part of a mixed retail economy, they have their place. Most people would want to be able to use them, but don't want them to squeeze out the genuine choice and variety which comes from smaller independent shops. The big supermarket chains mustn't be allowed to keep this unfair control of the food chain.

Greens will introduce a supermarket regulator with strong statutory powers to ensure that producers and consumers are treated fairly. This will help to promote both sustainable agriculture and sustainable communities.

Greens support well-regulated, sustainable aquaculture and fisheries. We recognise the efforts being made by the fishing community to conserve depleted stocks, and the signs of recovery which should not be undermined. We would put in place a fishing community regeneration plan with the health of fish stocks at its heart, redirect fisheries subsidies towards recovery, and put in place a long-term management policy to revive stocks and secure livelihoods for fishing communities.

On fishing, we would:

- tighten controls on industrial fishing and put the emphasis on sustainable fishing, including regeneration zones, no take zones, quotas for bycatch of non-target species, onboard observers and marine protected areas
- work to reform, implement and enforce the Common Fisheries Policy, which is vital to sustainable fisheries in Scottish waters and internationally
- impose a moratorium on new fin-fish farms pending an enquiry into their environmental impacts, and move towards closed containment for smolt rearing
- investment in research into closed containment for sea based farms and sustainable feed sourcing



"This country should be known around the world for peaceful co-operation, not foreign wars"

FOREIGN POLICY: MAKING THIS COUNTRY A RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL CITIZEN

A country like the UK has so much opportunity to be a force for good in the world, promoting peace, fairer relationships between countries, and tackling the disgrace of poverty around the world.

Foreign policy need not be determined only by self interest, enforced by the aggressive projection of power. We always opposed the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, and would put an end to the continued occupations.

On defence, we would:

abolish Trident replacement, and scrap the existing nuclear fleet

reduce overall military spending, while investing in the safety of the armed forces by redirecting resources from the purchase of aircraft carriers and the redundant Typhoon fighter aircraft

increase support to ex-service people in resettlement and long term care

support the human rights of members of the armed forces

support an international treaty banning the trade in arms, and remove all government support for arms manufacture in Britain



Image credi is.gd/aRwbl We also reject the renewal of the illegal and immoral Trident nuclear weapons system, and would move immediately to scrap the existing nuclear fleet.

It's not the only example of wasteful spending on military hardware, the current approach to which is designed to support wars of aggression: we would also abandon plans for strategically pointless new aircraft carriers.



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Much of the money saved could be used repairing the damage that generations of military and economic meddling have caused in other countries, and supporting the essential needs of the armed forces in their peaceful international roles.

Other aspects of the arms trade need to be dramatically reined in, and the world's international organisations are in urgent need of reform.

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RESTORING BRITAIN'S REPUTATION AT HOME AND ABROAD

The UK has a key role to play in delivering a safer, more ethical and more just world, a role currently being neglected by a Government which appears to have forgotten the commitments it gave at Gleneagles and elsewhere.

The focus of Green foreign policy will be on supporting developing countries and increasing international co-operation to secure more effective action on human rights, climate change, and tackling poverty.

On foreign policy, we would:

push for a global treaty on greenhouse gas emissions to give the greatest chance of limiting climate change to 2 degrees and to support poor countries to develop cleanly

commit a minimum of 1% of GDP in aid to developing countries

develop international trade based on the standards set out by the International Labour Organisation and integral to the Fair Trade movement, for example by supporting trade from co-operatives and mutuals

drop the debts owed by the most indebted countries which cannot afford to repay them, and push other EU and G8 nations to do the same

seek to ensure fairer trade rules both through World
Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations and by aiming to
reform the WTO

commit to a stronger democracy within the United Nations, and ensure that neutral and non-nuclear states have a clear voice within the Security Council

The UK as a wealthy country also has a responsibility to offer refuge to those who need it, but currently the asylum system is lacking in compassion and justice.

Our asylum system ought to be a source of pride – the UK is in the privileged position of being able to offer asylum to those who need it. That makes us the lucky ones – we're not in the position of having to ask others for help.

Yet the system which Labour has presided over is now a compassionless, even brutal system which dehumanises people and seems designed to maximise deportations no matter what the human cost

Our proposals to improve the treatment of asylum seekers are a necessary start, but strong political leadership is also necessary to ensure that the lies of the far right are challenged head on.

It's also vital to recognise the many reasons why economic migration occurs, including the poverty which is caused in part by policy this country has supported. Just as many UK citizens have enjoyed the freedom to live and work abroad, that freedom is understandably sought by others.

On asylum and immigration, we would:

oppose arbitrary caps on immigration, but ensure that public services plan better for the needs of a changing population

urgently end asylum destitution and the imprisonment of children in the asylum system, and work to ensure that asylum applicants have the same standards of justice and legal representation as UK citizens

allow asylum seekers the right to work if they are able







Image credits
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DEVOLVED TO SCOTLAND, BUT WHERE WESTMINSTER MATTERS TOO

Though this is an election to the Westminster Parliament, it can take actions on policies which though devolved to Holyrood will have an impact on Scotland too.

Policies south of the border often find support in Scotland in time, and spending on areas such as health, education and housing have consequences for the Scottish budget.

We would recognise the role of MPs in debating issues for the whole UK, including those which are devolved to Scotland but which could have an impact here.

Justice, civil liberties and crime

Many politicians like to talk tough on crime, but this rhetoric has failed. Policy should be smart instead of tough, if we want to reduce crime and create a safer society.



Prison is needed for serious offenders who pose a real threat to the public, but its over-use increases re-offending rates and leads to more crime. Instead we will focus on community sentences and rehabilitation – techniques which have been proven to help cut crime.

Greens will put victims first by ensuring that restorative justice measures deliver both punishment and reconciliation.

We will always defend the basic human rights of citizens, and oppose the increasingly authoritarian policies of recent years such as detention without trial, the ID-card database, and the steady growth of the surveillance culture.

Health and education

We will resist the privatisation of health and education, services which are best delivered by the public sector in the interests of the whole population. Privatisation of these vital services will only lead to greater inequality in standards and quality.

We support women's reproductive rights, and will always defend a woman's right to make her own reproductive choices on her own terms.

We will fully fund universities to provide tuition to students. Restricting access to and participation in higher education through charging fees restricts innovation and turns knowledge into just another market commodity.

Students should not be expected to incur tens of thousands of pounds of debt in order to achieve their potential. No-one should be unable to take up further or higher education on grounds of cost, so a return to living grants for students is essential.

We will redress the decline in publicly funded academic research, which is valuable in its own right and can turn new ideas into public goods.

Communities, localisation and local government

Strong communities and strong local economies mean that individuals are able to live happier, longer, healthier and more sustainable lives. The shift to localisation will require the UK Government to work with community councils as well as devolved and local government.



"The whole
Westminster
culture has to
change – but that
won't happen
if the MPs who
were there before
get re-elected."

RADICAL REFORM TO BRITAIN'S MISTRUSTED PARLIAMENT

Active citizenship should mean more than an occasional lesson in civics; it's a way of developing better communities. Development trusts, housing associations and housing co-operatives all have an important role to play in renewing the fabric of society.

Greens will support community enterprise and community business, and will increase the role of social enterprises as anchors for community development.

Greens will empower communities through participatory budgeting, community endowments, and greater support for community councils.

We would write off housing debt regardless of whether a stock transfer has occurred, allowing investment in better housing by Local Authorities where that is the wish of tenants.



lmage credit: North Kelvin Meadow Campaign

Making Westminster work for the people

Profound reform of the UK constitution is clearly long overdue. Parliament has had its power to hold Government properly to account removed, and by its own behaviour has also lost the moral authority to represent the public.

As an institution which was only ever half-elected using the least fair voting system available, it never had a meaningful democratic mandate to do so anyway.

We believe that constitutional reform must include a continued clear basis for human rights, and a radical approach to increasing real democratic control.

Localisation should be another key principle, with each nation or region able to exercise devolution at the level its people wish, and to seek the views of the citizens on constitutional questions including independence.

To embed these principles in the constitution, Greens will:

- introduce proportional representation for all elected bodies, using the single transferable vote
- Extend voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds
- restore the balance of powers between Parliament and Government
- devolve budgets directly to communities through
 Participatory Budgeting
- require that any Bill of Rights or written constitution must enshrine equality and human rights
- hold a referendum on the future of Scottish devolution, including the options of independence and greater power for Holyrood
- support other parts of the UK which wish to hold referendums to achieve devolution of powers, or independence

CAROLINE LUCAS MEP, LEADER GREEN PARTY ENGLAND AND WALES

Business as usual, brought to you by the main political parties, has given us a series of linked economic, environmental and social crises.

Why would you trust these same parties to sort the crises out? The state of Britain in 2010 cries out for fresh thinking and new progressive voices.

Unlike any of the other parties, we believe this is exactly the time to address the rising inequality which has so disfigured our society in recent years.

We want to address the triple economic, environmental and social crises and give every member of our society the opportunity to have a better life.

Only the Greens understand the need for a new economic and environmental settlement, in which our economy and our environment work with rather than against each other, for the benefit of all.

There has never been a greater need to bring Green voices into Westminster, and there has never been a greater chance of success.

After a decade of Greens in the Scottish Parliament, the European Parliament and in local councils, this is the moment for Green politics to reach the next level by electing its first MPs.

Caroline Lucas MEP,

Leader Green Party England and Wales

Drè Lixes



JOIN US AND BUILD THE GREEN MOVEMENT



Edinburgh EH2 2PR

Contact Details

Title: Name:	
Address:	
Postcode: Date of birth (if	under 18):
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