



MANIFESTO 2015

www.scottishyounggreens.org

INTRODUCTION

So...

...what is the Scottish Young Greens' Youth Manifesto?

Quite simply, this manifesto is an easy-to-read version of the Scottish Green Party's 2015 election manifesto.

In this manifesto, we have chosen to highlight Scottish Green Party policies that we believe are particularly relevant to young people, including the following:



Equality not Poverty

- Introduce a living wage
- Invest in affordable homes
- Tackle wealth inequality
- Stop cutting welfare

Public Services in Public Hands

- Support access to education
- Stop selling off public services
- Renationalise the railways
- Fix the banks

Radical Democracy

- Reform the political system
- Create more powers for Scotland
- Improve workers' rights
- Create an energy democracy

Environment

- Decommission the fossil fuel industry
- Create Green jobs
- Promote and protect our environment

Society

- Adopt a peaceful foreign policy
- Become a more welcoming country
- Fight for a more democratic Europe
- Protect and respect human rights
- Tackle health inequality

Read on to find out more...

THE SCOTTISH YOUNG GREENS

The SYG is the self-organising youth wing of the Scottish Green Party.

We are committed to giving a political voice to Scotland's passionate young Left and empowering young people to work towards genuine, lasting political change.

Together, we campaign on a range of social justice and environmental issues. In the past year alone we have taken action against fracking and trident, and demanded that more powers be devolved to the Scottish Government.

The SYG is a member of the Federation of European Young Greens, part of a growing global youth movement committed to a more equal and peaceful world and to safeguarding the world's environment. We also work closely with our friends in the Young Greens of England and Wales.

If you are aged between 16-30 you can join the SYG. Membership is free and you don't have to be a member of the Scottish Green Party to join.

#VoteGreen2015

We want 2015 to be the year that sparks a political transformation. Across the country, young people are tired of the same old business-as-usual politics. We are ready for change.

This election is about voting for what you believe in. Membership of the Scottish Green Party has increased by a staggering 600 percent since January 2014. Young Greens now make up around a third of the Party's membership.

Across the UK, Green membership has quadrupled in a year. The Greens now have more members than the Liberal Democrats or UKIP. Along with our sister parties in England and Wales and Northern Ireland we are in a strong position to deliver a real alternative to the Westminster parties in 2015.

Support the #GreenSurge by voting Green on the 7th of May.



EQUALITY NOT POVERTY

We know that many young people have struggled to find work under the coalition government's austerity agenda. We will make a clean break from austerity to create an equal society and a job-rich economy.

Living Wage

Because we believe that nobody should be expected to work for a wage that keeps them in poverty, we will increase the Minimum Wage to the Living Wage.

Our target is for everyone to be paid at least £10 an hour by 2020.

This will help end exploitation in the workplace, enabling young people in work to retain their independence and remain self-sufficient.

Invest in Homes

Under the current government it has become harder than ever for young people to afford to live independently. We will use our devolved powers in Scotland to break from austerity at Westminster and invest in homes for the people of Scotland.

To make renting fairer, we will introduce secure tenancies and rent controls in areas of spiralling rent levels.

We will aim to stabilise house prices and invest in social rented homes across the country. We will finance this by scrapping the buy-to-let mortgage interest tax allowance and through prudent borrowing.

To slash energy bills and carbon emissions, create over 100,000 jobs, and help end the fuel poverty crisis, we will implement the world's most ambitious home energy efficiency programme.

Close the Wealth Gap

Tackling wealth inequality will be a Green government priority.

We will help ensure women are paid the same as

men by improving flexible working rights, requiring businesses to publish information about pay, and requiring that public and private boards comprise of at least 40 percent women.

We will introduce a wealth tax of 2 percent on the wealthiest 1 percent of the population.

We would clamp down on tax evasion and avoidance, estimated to be worth at least £120 billion in 2014.

Stop Cutting Welfare

We will roll back the welfare cuts founded on false claims that people prefer benefits than rewarding work.

Shorter-term action

The SYG will oppose any moves to reduce benefits available to young people under the age of 25. The SGP will remove the punishing benefit sanctions regime, abolish the Bedroom Tax and Workfare, and halt the roll-out of Universal Credit.

Instead, we will allow the Scottish Parliament to design a scheme that works with the new devolved social security powers.

Longer-term action

We need to build a welfare system which removes the stigma of benefits and promotes equality.

To do this, Greens would replace all benefits, apart from disability payments, with a Citizens' Income. This would mean that everyone would receive a simple regular payment which should meet their basic needs.

PUBLIC SERVICES IN PUBLIC HANDS

Public services should operate in the interests of the people, not in the interests of private profit. We will invest in our public services and keep them in public control.

Education and Innovation

Education is one of the most important public goods, especially for young people. Access should not be based on ability to pay.

We support investment in schools and highly qualified teachers.

Education is devolved to the Scottish Parliament, but we will support access to vocational learning by increasing the minimum wage for apprentices, which is currently just £3.30 an hour.

We support maintaining free university tuition in Scotland and ending tuition fees in England and Wales.

To create the foundations for new businesses and new jobs, we will provide more publicly-supported investment in research and innovation.

Stop the Sell-Offs

Our parents and grandparents have benefitted from public services like the NHS and public libraries. Now, Westminster's austerity cuts are having a particular impact on children and young people. That's just one reason why we oppose any corporate power grab that involves privatisation of public services.

The Greens are committed to a publicly-funded NHS that is free at the point of use. We will work with other parties to ensure that the damaging privatisation of the NHS is halted.

We oppose the Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership (TTIP), which takes power away from the people and puts it into private hands.

Renationalise the Railways

Before it was privatised, East Coast Rail returned over £1 billion to the public purse in five years of ownership. This money could be used to pay for a better, more affordable transport system, or for other public services.

We will make sure that public ownership is the default option when railway franchises, like Scotrail, are ready for renewal.

Fix the Banks

Banks still serve shareholders and the casino economy.

Unless we sort things out, young people will always live in a world where people are not the priority for the financial sector. The banks need to be fixed.

We will fight to create a banking system with banks of all types and sizes. This means supporting more cooperatives, credit unions, and small banks serving local areas.

We want to break up Government-owned RBS into a network of local banks. These new banks would be People's Banks. They would have social obligations to the local community, not just a financial mandate.



POWER TO COMMUNITIES

The independence referendum brought about a dramatic increase in political engagement, especially among young people. We refuse to return to the tired tribal politics of Westminster.

Reform the System

Throughout the independence campaign, young people proved that we are just as capable of engaging with politics as our older counterparts.

We're passionate about supporting political engagement among young people, so we want to extend the voting franchise and give all citizens over the age of 16 the right to vote.

We will replace First Past the Post with a proportional voting system to elect MPs who better represent the politics of voters.

We believe that the House of Lords should be replaced by people who are actually elected to make law. We also support the 50:50 campaign for gender balance in parliament.

To crack down on corruption, we will deliver more transparency about MPs who take paid jobs and directorships in big companies.

We will also roll back the 'gagging act' which limits small campaigns and community groups during an election.

Greater Powers for Scotland

We respect the outcome of the referendum but we do think an opportunity was missed. Many Greens still support independence because they believe that power should be as close to the people as possible.

During the Smith Commission we secured greater devolved powers over fracking, energy efficiency and fuel poverty. Now we see the Smith Commission as part of a process of more devolution to come.

We will ensure that the full set of new powers for Scotland are devolved as quickly and completely

as possible as there is much work to do to reverse the damage done by the last UK government. We will make sure that decisions at Westminster don't prevent the Scottish Government from taking bold action.

Workplace Democracy

Young people are particularly likely to face job insecurity or be in zero hours employment. Under such conditions, it is increasingly difficult to build a stable lifestyle for the future.

We believe that nobody should face discrimination in the workplace or be forced to accept a zero-hours contract. We will improve workers' rights and roll back anti-trade union laws.

To tackle inequality, we will introduce laws to limit the pay packets of CEOs relative to the lowest paid workers in the organisation.

There is unacceptable pay inequality, abuse of tax loopholes and poor treatment of employees in too many workplaces. In such circumstances, we will give employees the legal right to buy out their companies and turn them into workers' cooperatives.

This will be subject to limits, consultation and an asset-lock. Nonetheless, it will help spark a revolution in workplace cooperation.

Energy Democracy

The benefits of renewables should be shared by everyone, not controlled by multinational corporations.

We will reform the energy generation market to support low-carbon energy and community ownership.

We will support local Councils to organise the building of publicly-owned renewables. The profits from these ventures will be used to fund public services.

We will not build nuclear power plants because they can never be democratically controlled, decentralised, delivered or decommissioned without massive subsidy.

ENVIRONMENT

While people of all ages are affected by climate change, young people will take on the heaviest burden if we don't act now. We live on one shared planet. Protecting the environment and preserving our earth for future generations is our greatest responsibility.

North Sea Skills

Most of the world's fossil fuel reserves must be left in the ground if we are to avoid doing potentially irreversible damage to the environment. This has profound implications for the oil industry in Scotland and for the Scottish economy as a whole.

It is time for a change in direction. If we move first, Scotland could become the world centre of decommissioning the fossil fuel industry.

Instead of cutting taxes for oil companies, we will invest in marine renewables and use the skills, engineering expertise, and natural resources around our shores to their full potential.

We have an opportunity to use tidal and wave energy as a basis for prosperity. We will make a just transition possible.

Green Jobs

We need to move towards a jobs-rich economy which respects the environment.

We will deliver a government-led Green New Deal to invest millions of pounds in Green industrialisation.

This will promote sustainable expansion of environmentally-friendly industries by investing in a wide range of green industries, from the chemical sciences, construction and engineering to independent small retail, textiles and design.

Promoting Our Environment

Scotland's landscapes, seascapes and wildlife are among our greatest assets.

Not only is biodiversity valuable in its own right, it is also a lynchpin of our tourism economy and fundamental to our health and wellbeing.

We will ensure our most important wildlife sites are protected from development, encourage restoration of habitats that help us manage land and water sustainability, and ensure that people across Scotland have access to high quality greenspace.



SOCIETY

Inspired by the post-WWII generation that created the welfare state, we want to recreate a welcoming society built on empathy and social justice.

Peace and Defence

It's time for the UK to play a new role on the world stage. A Green Government will deliver a foreign policy based on peace, a global deal on climate change and a halt to the arms trade.

We will disarm the Trident nuclear weapons in the Clyde and scrap the nuclear submarine fleet. Workers will be reskilled and redeployed to provide defence of the strategically important northern seas.

We will leave NATO and collaborate with our neighbours on security without the use of weapons of mass destruction.

We will reduce military spending and change the way the armed forces work. Instead of prioritising power we will focus on defence, UN-sanctioned peace-keeping and international humanitarian efforts.

A Welcoming Country

We believe Scotland should be a welcoming country where immigrants are celebrated because they enrich our culture and are an asset to our economy.

To allow students who study at UK universities to stay and use their education in Britain, we will reinstate the post-study work visa.

We will consistently challenge the toxic rhetoric used by too many politicians which turns people against their international neighbours.

We will reform the UK Borders Agency's dysfunctional approach to immigration, and create an asylum system which treats people with dignity.

Europe and Trade

We will fight for a more democratic Europe that is driven by elected institutions and reasserts the principle of devolving power to the most local level. A lot of EU action so far has been progressive. For instance, the EU have worked to safeguard basic rights, protect the environment, and regulate the financial system.

However, we disagree with the EU's emphasis on the economics of free trade and unsustainable growth. The election of Syriza and Green coalition partners in the Greek election provides an opportunity to challenge Europe's right-wing agenda.

We have no fear of campaigning positively for remaining in the EU if a referendum on membership takes place.

We will use our diplomatic and trade muscle, not on behalf of corporations, but in support of human rights, indigenous people and impoverished nations.

Civil Liberty

Prejudice based on race, skin colour, gender, sexuality, religion, national origin, social origin or any other factor has no place in our society.

We will respect the basic human rights of all citizens and will retain the UK's Human Rights Act.

The threat of terrorism should not undermine our civil liberties. We oppose mass surveillance of the population and will roll back untargeted state powers to intercept emails and phone records.

What's more, we will introduce a Digital Bill of Rights to protect net neutrality and online privacy.

Health Equality

Poverty and social inequality among children and young people is closely linked to poor health throughout life. To tackle poor health in Scotland, we must end poverty.

NHS research shows that the Living Wage is one of the most effective ways to improve both physical and mental health.

Healthcare is devolved to the Scottish Government, but we will support UK-wide actions to tackle poverty and health inequality such as the £10 minimum wage, a wealth tax on the richest 1%, affordable housing and a fairer social security system.

YOUNG GREENS WESTMINSTER CANDIDATES

We are very proud to have seven Young Greens running as candidates for Westminster this general election. Not only does this demonstrate that young people can be eager to engage with politics, it also shows that the Greens are well-placed to represent the interests of young people.

Meet our candidates:



SARAH BEATTIE-SMITH

Edinburgh North and Leith

Sarah Beattie-Smith is co-convenor of the Edinburgh Green Party and a member of the Scottish Greens' national Elections and Campaigns Committee. A Borderer, Sarah studied Sculpture at Edinburgh College of Art, and was President of the Students' Union. She now leads a team of policy and research officers for a national charity working on issues such as fuel poverty and is based in Leith.

A co-editor of Bright Green blog, Sarah has also contributed to National Collective, Post magazine and Resurgence & Ecologist magazine. In addition, she works with fellow Leithers to organise Common Weal Edinburgh North and Leith.

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LEWIS CAMPBELL

Dunfermline & West Fife

Lewis is the Scottish Greens' Candidate for Dunfermline and West Fife and the youngest parliamentary candidate known of in the UK. He grew up in Dunfermline, attending Touch Primary and Woodmill High School before beginning study of Sustainable Development at St Andrews University in 2013, where he is vice-president of St Andrews' Young Greens.

An advocate of Greens' ideology, Lewis believes delivering as many Green MPs as possible to Westminster would allow the pursuit of a more sustainable and just society, whilst "holding the pro-establishment parties' feet to the fire" on more powers.

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YOUNG GREENS WESTMINSTER CANDIDATES



ROSS GREER

East Dunbartonshire

Ross has lived in East Dunbartonshire all of his life. He has campaigned locally on a range of issues, such as stopping school closures and supermarket expansion. Ross represented part of the constituency as an MSYP and was involved in setting up the East Dunbartonshire Youth Senate.

He sat on East Dunbartonshire Council's Education Committee, where he pushed for greater involvement of young people and local communities in decision-making. During the referendum, Ross was Yes Scotland's Communities Coordinator, playing an important role in building the massive grassroots movement for independence. He is also active in his local church and community

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ZARA KITSON

Glasgow North East

Zara Kitson, 29, works for a national charity promoting LGBT equality and human rights. Passionate about a fairer economy, equality, and democracy, Zara brings a determined and refreshing voice, working hard to champion issues important to Glasgow's communities.

She is an organiser of So Say Scotland, a member and supporter of Women for Independence and has an MA in Public Policy from Glasgow University. Zara's experiences growing up in an ex-mining community motivate her to push for social justice, and a world that works for us all.

She voices a different kind of politics – one that puts people first.

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YOUNG GREENS WESTMINSTER CANDIDATES



KIM LONG

Glasgow East

Kim Long is from, lives and works in Glasgow. With a background in youth work and a First Class degree in European Studies and English, she is self-employed as a facilitator and community worker.

Kim works with economically and socially-marginalised women and young people on behalf of a number of key third-sector organisations. In addition, she has helped to build a new social enterprise, developing creative work in criminal justice. Through this, Kim leads ground-breaking singing and songwriting projects in prisons across Scotland.

A Green Party member since 2013, Kim is also an active member of Women for Independence.

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JAMES MACKESSACH-LEITCH

Moray

James, 28, currently lives on the family farm at Alves. A graduate of Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities, he has worked in the public and private sectors in a range of roles from the oil industry in South Sudan to transport planning in the Highlands.

He is currently a Director of a local community trust, and has been involved in a number of local campaigns – most notably in opposition to Elgin's western link road.

Having grown up on the family farm, James is passionate about local produce and will work tirelessly to promote the interests of small local businesses.

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YOUNG GREENS WESTMINSTER CANDIDATES



RYAN MORRISON

Paisley & Renfrewshire North

Having been born and raised in Ferguslie Ryan is proud to be your Scottish Green Party candidate in Paisley and Renfrewshire North.

He previously represented Paisley in the Scottish Youth Parliament and helped create the now annual, Positive About You(th) Awards recognising inspiring young people in Renfrewshire. Ryan currently studies Law at the University of Strathclyde and will complete his degree this May. He hopes to use his qualification to move into environmental law.

Ryan believes that under austerity, our public services and the poorest in society are suffering most. He is committed to fighting against further cuts.

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