



SCOTTISH
GREENS



MANIFESTO 2017



OUR
FUTURE
IS GREEN

SCOTLAND NEEDS A GREEN VOICE AT WESTMINSTER

“ During the next parliament, a huge number of the social and environmental protections which have been achieved within the European Union will be transferred to the UK, where many Conservatives are openly calling for a bonfire of regulations. This will literally put people’s lives on the line.

Greens led the way in achieving much of what’s now at risk, from capping bankers’ bonuses to controlling toxic chemicals. We need a Green voice to stand up for these protections.

The UK Government’s cuts agenda is unnecessary, and wrong. It’s wrong because it’s destroying people’s lives, but it’s also wrong because it’s a failure to invest in the new, sustainable economic future we need.

Greens have been the only party opposing ever bigger subsidies and tax breaks for the big polluters, and we have a plan to create over 200,000 high quality jobs for Scotland in the new economy. We need a Green voice to stand up for this investment in our future.



What was once a social security system to be proud of, looking after us all from cradle to grave, is now serving the needs of big business, enabling poverty wages and exploitation at work.

Greens will make the case for a social security system based on a Universal Basic Income. We need a Green voice to stand up for everyone’s right to live with dignity, free from the fear of poverty.

We need a Green voice who will stand up for what matters, and help build a confident and caring society.

This election was called for opportunistic reasons by a Prime Minister who seeks a power-grab at Westminster, and who refuses to allow the people of Scotland to choose their own future after the false promises of the Brexiteers. By necessity, we are forced to run a tightly focused campaign in a small number of seats.

But by doing so, we’re giving Scotland the best chance it has had to send a Green voice to Westminster, to make the case no other party is making for the sustainable, fair and decent society we know this country can become. ”

Patrick Harvie
Scottish Green Party candidate,
Glasgow North

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AN ECONOMY FOR EVERYONE

The low carbon economy must be the foundation of our future prosperity.

We know we can create 200,000 jobs by 2035 in Scotland's renewables industry, energy efficiency, forestry and North Sea decommissioning. We will create a government-led Green New Deal to invest in green industrialisation to deliver the affordable homes, transport and energy we need for a low-carbon future.

We will create a network of local banks for every city and region. These banks will be there to serve people and lend to low-carbon enterprise. Financial institutions which gamble on speculation will face a financial transactions tax, which could raise billions for public services.

We will invest in warm homes for all, with a nationwide insulation programme, and in a Green Industrial Strategy to build resilient national and local economies.

We will end the scandal of working poverty, by abolishing exploitative zero hours contracts, upholding employment and trade union rights, closing the gender pay gap, and ensuring that everyone is paid a living wage. With these protections for incomes we will phase in a 35-hour working week to shift our economy away from excessive working hours.

We will take steps towards the introduction of a universal basic income, including a government sponsored pilot scheme, as a means to increase security for all and reduce the poverty trap. And we will promote credit unions to free people from unjust and burdensome debt.

“We can create 200,000 jobs by 2035”



PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

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

The UK's membership of the EU has created cleaner air, beaches and rivers, protected our marine areas, driven up animal welfare standards, and is ending the UK's reliance on coal for electricity. Brexit threatens this progress.

We will fight to protect hard-won environmental rights and protections, and argue that we must continue to collaborate with other countries to tackle climate change and protect our natural environment.

We know most of the world's fossil fuel reserves have to be kept in the ground if we are to stop run-away climate change. We will ban fracking across the UK and replace subsidies to fossil fuels with investment in jobs-rich renewable energy technology.

Quotas and financial support for fisheries must support long-term fish stock recovery. On land, we will direct funding to farming methods that safeguard our future, through sustainable management of soils, water and carbon- and wildlife-friendly farming. Any powers over fishing and farming that come from Europe must be devolved to Scotland.

“Most of the world's fossil fuel reserves have to be kept in the ground”

DEVOLVING OUR DEMOCRACY

We will work to make Britain truly democratic by introducing proportional representation for parliamentary elections, extending votes to 16-year-olds, reforming the House of Lords as an elected second chamber, repealing the “gagging law”, and empowering local communities to recall their MP. We will introduce job-sharing for MPs, to increase disabled representation in particular, and work towards a gender-balanced parliament.

Devolution of powers must continue. We will fight for more powers over tax, social security, employment, migration and energy to be devolved to the Scottish Parliament and local councils. At the same time Greens will continue to call for existing powers to be used fully and creatively to deliver a greener and fairer society.



MEMBERSHIP OF THE EU

Scotland voted to stay in the EU, so it should have the option to stay in the EU.

The Conservative UK government's decision to negotiate a "hard Brexit" for the UK creates a stark choice for Scotland. The result of the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence and Scotland's 2016 vote to stay in the EU are now incompatible. We believe that people should be given the choice in a referendum of that hard-Brexit UK or – as we would propose – an independent Scotland free to rejoin the EU.

Even if a Scottish referendum is to happen, it is vital that the damage the UK's exit from the EU will do is minimised. We will fight for Scotland to retain as close a relationship as possible with the EU. We will push for the Brexit deal to include retention of freedom of movement, including the rights of EU citizens to remain in the UK, for young people to study, work, live and travel in the EU, and for the preservation of environmental protections and the principles and regulations which protect human health, animal welfare, data protection and workers' rights.

Any repeal of European legislation must respect devolution, with no new reservations added to the Scotland Act and all changes to devolved policy areas agreed by the devolved nations. There must be strong democratic protections on any Repeal Bill. So-called "Henry VIII powers" must be restricted, time-limited, and allow an emergency brake for parliament to pause executive action if concerns are raised. Any proposed changes to legislation that involve substantial reforms or affect basic rights must undergo full consultation and parliamentary scrutiny.

The Green vision for the EU is for a people's Europe, protecting workers' rights, the environment, welcoming refugees and reining in the banks and major corporations. Europe has its flaws but progress is being made, driven significantly by Greens, and Scotland can be a leader for that progress. We want to be at the heart of the EU, working to end the economics of inequality, corporate power and unsustainable growth. These are problems that do not respect borders, and it is through cooperation that we can tackle them.

Whatever deal is negotiated for Britain's departure from the EU, we are open to the idea advocated by many that this should be ratified through a referendum; however, this cannot be allowed to prevent the people of Scotland from making their own choice.



EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

Scotland has lowered the voting age to 16; we will campaign for Westminster to follow suit.

Hard Brexit will mean fewer opportunities to study abroad. We will campaign to guarantee the right to study, work, live and travel in the EU.

Creating a job-rich economy, with wages that rise with the cost of living is essential. We would scrap age-related minimum wage bands which discriminate against young people, and raise the national minimum wage to the real Living Wage for all, of at least £10 per hour by 2020.

Everyone deserves a good home. We will reinstate housing benefit for under-21s, and help first-time buyers by aiming for a gradual reduction in housing costs. We will axe buy-to-let tax breaks, reduce VAT on repairs, and back community-led approaches to building affordable homes.

While education and most housing policies are the responsibility of the Scottish Government, Green voices at Westminster will fight for the principles of free and inclusive education and truly affordable homes, with rent controls and better rights for tenants.

“We would scrap age-related minimum wage bands which discriminate against young people.”

PROTECTING OUR PUBLIC SERVICES

Health, social care, education, housing and many aspects of transport are already devolved to the Scottish Parliament where Green MSPs are making Scotland better with a bolder parliament.

We believe education is a right, not a privilege, with high-quality education equally accessible at all stages of people's lives.

We support a public NHS that is free at the point of use, and want to see that principle extend to social care.

We believe that everyone deserves a warm, affordable and accessible home and support rent controls to give a fairer footing to renters.

We will continue to fight against tax breaks for the airlines from the Scottish Government, or an extra Heathrow runway as the UK Government proposes. We will instead prioritise investment in a publicly-owned rail service, and accessible local bus services.

The design of public services may be devolved, but change at Westminster is needed to invest. Green voices will help deliver the change needed to end our reliance on fossil fuels, deliver millions of green jobs, and begin the transition to a universal basic income.

“The design of public services is devolved, but change at Westminster is needed to invest.”

DELIVERING EQUALITY

Prejudice has no place in our society.

We will respect the basic human rights of all citizens and will celebrate the progress made as part of Europe. Brexit must not be used as an excuse to water down or repeal any other domestic protections, such as the Equality Act 2010. We support the UK remaining part of the European Convention on Human Rights, will oppose any effort to repeal the Human Rights Act 1998, and support adopting the European Social Charter to protect fundamental social and economic rights.

We will abolish the “family cap”, the “benefit cap” and the “bedroom tax”, and reverse cuts to the social security safety net brought in by Conservative welfare reform acts. These changes have hit women and disabled people hardest, and pushed more people into working poverty. We will end the punishing sanctions regime, halt the roll-out of Universal

Credit and allow the Scottish Parliament to design a scheme that works with greater devolution of social security powers.

In the longer term, a universal basic income will build a welfare system that removes the stigma of benefits, helps end the “poverty trap” and promote equality. Pensions should provide a guarantee for people in retirement and we support the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign for transitional protections.

“We will end the punishing sanctions regime.”

Tackling wealth inequality will be a priority. We will introduce a wealth tax on the wealthiest 1%, continue support for a Land Value Tax and introduce laws to limit the size of CEO pay relative to the lowest-paid workers in the company. We will remove VAT from sanitary products and ensure that they are provided free of charge to those in extreme financial need.



A MORE JUST WORLD

The vote to leave the EU has opened questions on the UK's role in the world. We believe the UK should be a global citizen and welcoming to all.

We will work to strengthen the global deal on climate change, including delivering climate justice, building fair trade relations and promoting ecologically sustainable development so that poorer countries can cope with the impacts of climate change.

Scotland can welcome many more migrants and asylum seekers who enrich our culture and are an asset to the economy. We will promote a humane and compassionate immigration and asylum system, with a bespoke policy for Scotland including the post-study work visa to allow students who study at UK universities to stay.

“The UK should be a global citizen and welcoming to all.”

We will leave NATO and cancel the replacement of the Trident nuclear weapons system, saving at least £100 billion over the next 30 years. We will reduce military spending and reorient the armed forces away from the projection of power and towards defence, protecting the maritime environment and UN-sanctioned humanitarian efforts. We would end the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, Israel and other repressive regimes.

We will continue to stand up to the Trump administration, and to those in the UK who are happy to walk hand-in-hand with this dangerous extremist. Instead we will forge closer links with those in the US who are most threatened by his administration, such as those working on climate change and

science-led policy, and campaigners for human rights and equality.

We oppose any mass surveillance of the population and will roll back untargeted state powers to intercept emails and phone records. We will strengthen oversight of the security services and introduce a Digital Bill of Rights to protect net neutrality and online privacy.

LOW-CARBON ENERGY

The renewables revolution must be shared by everyone.

We will fight to reverse the Conservative government's cuts to renewable energy subsidies. Our energy system must deliver emissions reductions, tackle fuel poverty and reduce energy tariffs, while bringing in new measures to reduce energy demand.

We will support community-owned renewables with access to subsidy and the grid. We will support councils to create “local energy companies” to build publicly-owned renewables, earning profits to fund public services.

The gas and electricity transmission and distribution network is a clear instance of monopoly without the scope for real competition. The grid should be under public control to enable a coordinated transition to a low-carbon and distributed network.

We will fight to restore funding for carbon capture and storage research, and continue to oppose nuclear power plants because they can never be safe nor decentralised, nor delivered and decommissioned without massive subsidy.



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