

Fair is worth fighting for

Winter 2012

Reaching 20,000 Oxfordshire homes

Oxfordshire

Green News

Working for social justice, peace and sustainability



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Get involved!

Oxfordshire Green Party welcomes general enquiries and new members. You can join as a local and / or a national member, or just meet the members and / or help out with campaigns.

Contact: Sam Hollick by sending an email to: sam@greenoxford.com

Greens oppose cuts to vital services

Both the Conservative-run County Council and Labour-run City Council are planning more cuts in 2013.

The Greens believe that Local Authorities should be setting an example in these difficult economic times by investing in jobs – not cutting services. Axing public spending is now seen as a failed economic policy and a major cause of what is now dubbed a ‘triple-dip recession’. But Conservatives, LibDems and Labour are still advocating dramatic reductions in our public spending as the way out of their economic crisis. The only noticeable difference between them is the speed at which they would push through the cuts.

Only the Greens have said from the outset that cutting back on services such as health, education and care for elderly and vulnerable people is a false economy. The Greens have consistently proposed alternative budgets in both the City and County Council chambers to protect front-line services.

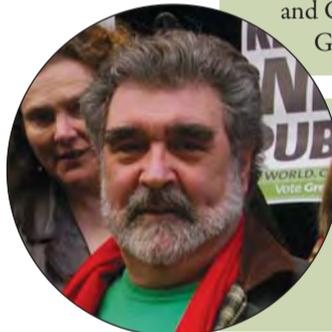
Both Councils could also be investing in job-creating green projects, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy, as advocated by the national Green New Deal Group.

How the Greens would free up our funds for our services

Cancel Trident nuclear weapons	£97billion
Collect evaded taxes	£70billion
End PFI contracts	£63billion
Stop bankers bonuses	£30billion
Collect unpaid Corporation taxes	£25billion
Introduction of Robin Hood Tax	£25billion
Stop building 2 new aircraft carriers	£15billion
No new Nuclear Power station subsidy	£10billion
Pull out soon from Afghanistan	£5billion

None of the above obvious solutions are supported by the Conservative, Lib Dem or Labour parties.

To see these figures in proportion, the UK spends the following each year: Health Care: £130billion, Education: £91billion and Defence: £39billion. In 2012 the total government income was £592billion and we also borrowed a further £92billion. Sources: BBC, Independent, Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), The Guardian, Telegraph, Green Party. Full references available on request.



“The County council plans to cut £57 million while the City Council plans to cut £2 million. The Greens will fight this!”

David Williams

Cllr for Ifley Fields, and City Council Green Group Leader.

Fact File: “quantitative easing”

The last Labour Government and now the Tory / Lib Dem Government are desperately trying to stimulate the economy by, literally, creating more money out of thin air in a process known as Quantitative Easing. As before, the £billions created will probably end up in the coffers of the large banks and the privileged 1%. Meanwhile the rest of us suffer.

Viable alternatives

Unlike the Greens, the County Labour Group failed to present any alternative Council budget last year. They offered no alternative to the Tory cuts.

“I worked for many years in the local NHS. For over 60 years it has provided a comprehensive and accessible service that is excellent value for money. I am passionate that the NHS should remain in public hands.”



Dr Sietske Boeles

Hospital consultant and Green Party candidate for St. Clements and Cowley Marsh division.

Reacting to public outcry at the Con/Dem Government legislation to privatise the NHS, Ed Miliband said that if elected he might repeal parts of the Tory legislation that is privatising section after section of the NHS.

Nobody is clear which bits he means, or if he will repeal the Labour 2006 NHS Act that has been used to hand over hospitals to private organisations, such as Richard Branson’s Virgin Group.

One thing is clear: he will not be restoring the £800million pounds worth of cuts Labour imposed on the NHS just before they left office, as Ed Milliband believes in so-called ‘austerity reductions’.

Only the Greens have held fast against privatisation and cuts.



Go to www.greenparty.org.uk for more national policies

Port Meadow: Destruction of a View

Port Meadow is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is a spiritual and environmental haven which has been used by the people of Oxford for centuries. A place of beauty, Port Meadow is greatly valued by all residents, and is noted for its open aspect. Up to now, its views have been sensitively protected.

We ask you to sign our petition to request:

A retrospective Environmental Impact Assessment is urgently carried out now and details of landscaping should be agreed which would hide the buildings in summer and soften their impact in winter. On the back of this petition there are now calls for an injunction to stop the building works and a judicial review to see if the buildings could be lowered.

Photo: www.aliceinwonderland.evanderweb.co.uk



"We need to act fast if we are to regain our view of the Dreaming Spires from across Port Meadow. Please sign the petition and get in touch if you would like to do more."

Sushila Dhall

Green Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Oxford East and Chair of Oxfordshire Green Party

However the people who should have been protecting it on our behalf (Oxford City Council's ruling Labour party) have damaged views by allowing the building of a series of massive student blocks around the perimeter of the south east corner of Port Meadow.

The historic 'dreaming spire' view from Port Meadow of the grade II* listed St. Barnabas Church tower has been all but obliterated from sight. The buildings are visible from all angles including the canal, the other side of the river, and even Wolvercote.

Sushila Dhall, Chair of Oxfordshire Green Party and Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Oxford East has set up an online petition. Visit: www.portmeadow.org/damaged_views

The petition outlines that:

- 1) Oxford City Council failed to consult widely about this.
- 2) Planning officers rejected the idea of an Environmental Impact assessment saying: 'Port Meadow is not a sensitive area.'
- 3) No detailed landscaping / mitigation has been proposed.



Photo: www.portmeadow.org

"We need to learn how to be good ancestors" ~ Ralph Nader

Greens act to protect local traders as City Council raises rents and denies rate relief

In the current economic climate, the City Council should be using its powers to support local, independent businesses – not adding to their burden.

The Greens are proposing a five point plan to protect the local economy:

1. Any changes in Council business rents to be fair and independently market tested before being imposed on traders.
2. Co-operatives and not-for-profits to be given full discretionary rates relief.
3. All new planning applications to be accompanied by a local economic impact assessment.
4. The Council to monitor the satisfaction of businesses using Council services.
5. The ban on chain stores letting units in the Covered Market to be re-instated.

When Gill's Ironmongers closed in the city centre, the owners said they were financially driven to close because people were choosing to shop in out-of-town warehouses instead.

The same could happen to all our local shops if we do not support them. The power is in the hands of you, the local community here in Oxford.

Shop local unless you want to see local businesses go out of business and be replaced by clone-town chain stores.

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"The Labour dominated Council are routinely ignoring the views of local residents and businesses when making planning decisions. The withdrawal of Area Committees and the centralisation of planning powers exacerbate this."

Sam Coates

Green Party County Council Candidate for University Parks:

Freak Weather or Climate Change?

Climate scientists have little doubt that man-made climate change is behind the ever-increasing frequency of extreme weather conditions.

Millions of people across the world are already dying from climate-change related disasters: food shortages, loss of homelands and livelihoods, floods and droughts.

In the last ten years extreme storms hit more often. There are now 5 times the number of hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons than during the 20th century. This situation is worsening before our eyes.

The Greens continue to make the case locally, nationally and internationally for a rapid growth in low carbon technologies such as solar power, and the urgent need to slow our consumption and our still-growing dependence on burning fossil-fuels. The Greens are proud supporters of the new Westmill Solar Farm – the largest community-owned solar power station in the world, located in Oxfordshire.



Hurricane Sandy hits New York

When there is a huge solar energy spill it is just called 'a nice day'

www.votesolar.org

According to Kevin Anderson, former head of the UK's leading Climate observatory, the Tyndale Centre, the world's top climate scientists now expect a 4+ degree increase in global temperatures.



Westmill Solar Farm

Climate Denial by Motherly Love



We're very concerned about Climate change! Our daughter lives in Australia and what with all the floods and droughts, well... we have to visit to make sure they're okay... every December...



About half of all greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the richest 1%. Poorest people are a tiny part of the problem. If we want to leave a liveable world for our children and grandchildren, we need to switch to a zero-carbon economy within the next decade. Yet big business and governments are doing so little to even begin this urgent task. It has to start now, with local initiatives, everywhere. Join us!

Fact File: Climate justice

The long-term forecast for the UK is increasingly wet and warm. Much of the tropics will see major storms, floods, drought and increased suffering. The poorest countries who did the least to create climate change will see the worst effects. **We need to work together to achieve climate justice!**

Setting the Agenda for the County Elections

The Greens are the real opposition to the Conservative controlled County Council, providing an alternative model to that of cuts and privatisation. Only the Greens are setting a sustainable agenda for Oxfordshire.

Greens Central Policy Objectives Include:

Creating a Strong Sustainable Local Economy

Only the Greens are proposing local investment via a Green New Deal to combat the global financial crisis with a wide range of schemes such as insulation programmes to cut energy bills and create employment.

Protecting Public Services and Stopping Privatisation

Only the Greens have put forward budgets that seek to minimise the cuts and their impact on vulnerable groups. The Greens consistently speak out against privatisation of education and health services with their higher costs and reduced accountability, and have underpinned this by putting forward City and County budgets that seek to minimise the cuts and their impact on vulnerable groups.



Action on Climate Change

The Greens are the one party to have a coherent programme that involves all the District Councils, business groups and community organisations in reducing carbon emissions in Oxfordshire.

Greening Our Transport

The Greens campaign to reduce our toxic air pollution and improve pavements and footpaths, cycling conditions, and public transport across the County.

See our Local Policies for the County Council:
<http://oxford.greenparty.org.uk/policy2.html>

Health and Protection for Vulnerable People

No party has fought harder against the malicious cuts to services for the elderly than the Greens. It has been the Greens who have proposed workable alternatives to attacking the most vulnerable. Only the Greens can be trusted to expose the folly of consecutive Governments' attempts to privatise sections of the NHS.

Education

The Greens believe in working with teachers, governors and parents to provide a broad-based comprehensive education that is focused on individual development of knowledge and skills rather than simply training for work.

Environmental Improvements

The Greens have by far the best record of fighting for environmental improvements.

Keith Taylor MEP

"Romney Marsh is one of Europe's greatest wildlife centres and should not be used as a dump for forgotten nuclear waste"



'No Nuclear Waste Dumps'

Keith Taylor, the Green MEP for South East England, has responded to Shepway District Council's consultation about proposals to build a new nuclear research and disposal facility on Romney Marsh.

In his response Keith raises concerns about the risk of flooding on Romney Marsh, the transportation of nuclear waste and the wrong-headedness of continuing to invest in nuclear energy instead of clean renewable energy.

Opposition to the nuclear dump is the latest in a series of battles for Keith. In the summer he spoke out against fracking and oil shale production, and before that he led a campaign to improve air quality in our city centres.

Fact File: Trident Nukes Return

The Con-Dem coalition Government have announced a spending package of £4billion to develop nuclear reactors for the next generation of nuclear submarines to replace the present Trident system. Backed by the Labour leadership the spending suggests that the decision to press ahead with Trident replacement has effectively already been made.

Fact File: Still Awaiting Nuclear Safety

More than 400 of the recommendations made to improve the safety of British nuclear plants after the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan last year still have to be implemented, according to the government's Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). See: www.robedwards.com/2012/11/400-fukushima-safety-recommendations-not-yet-met-in-uk.html



Air pollution

Whilst work has been carried out in Oxford to cut down on the most health threatening air pollutants, traffic-related air pollution is still a big issue for Oxford.

Road traffic pollution kills 5,000 people each year in the UK

Nitrous oxide levels are currently higher than EU health targets on most of Oxford's central streets (eg. High Street, St. Aldates, Hythe Bridge Street, Worcester Place, Holybush Row, Longwall Street etc.), on the 'arterial' routes (eg. Botley Road, Frideswide Square, Oxpens Road, Abingdon Road, St. Clements etc.) and on the urban shopping centres (eg. Cowley Road, Headington, Summertown).

Oxford City Council is working towards declaring a Low Emission Zone for central bus routes, forcing public transport to buy cleaner engines.

But it is believed that without serious traffic reduction on non-bus routes air pollution will not get significantly lower. County Council proposals to take out lights and get traffic to 'flow freely' may well pull more traffic through the city, as car-use is still rising in Oxfordshire.

In Oxford, we are at least fortunate to have an excellent air quality monitoring department. See: oxford-airwatch.aeat.co.uk

What We Stand For:

- **Protecting public services:** Stop the Cuts!
- **Creating a sustainable Oxford:** cutting waste and energy-use
- **Better housing** and keeping rents low
- **Protecting green space**
- **Action on climate change:** cutting pollution and greenhouse gases
- **Better transport:** improving public transport and a better deal for cyclists
- **Safer cities** with more community police and designed-in safety
- **Power to the people:** plugging the democratic deficit with improved consultation and a listening Council.



Abundance Oxford is a new group of volunteers that collects donations of unused fruit (mostly from private gardens) and shares them with support centres for vulnerable folks. They run regular harvesting and skill-sharing workshops on foraging, jams, juicing, chutneys and more. **Visit :** abundanceoxford.wordpress.com/ or to get involved join: [facebook.com/groups/abundanceoxford/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/abundanceoxford/)

Green Budget

In their last City budget the Greens proposed re-directing £0.5m of Council spending into a jobs fund to help younger people. Greens also proposed freeing up another £4m by abandoning plans to build a new pool in Blackbird Leys. A Green Party motion deferred from the last Council meeting is proposing using Council borrowing to help relieve the Private Finance Initiative debt burden faced by the local NHS trust, which will leave them with more cash to put into the local economy. The Greens have also proposed an investment in local energy efficiency and green energy systems to provide the City with cheaper, more reliable energy into the future.

Join the Greens

The Green party is the UK's fastest growing political party. A progressive party with a wide range of policies covering environmental and social justice issues, the Green party is a alternative to public sector cuts, privatisation, and the pro-corporate policies of the major parties. Join us in the fight for a sustainable future for people & the planet.

join.greenparty.org.uk

Support the Greens

The Green Party does not accept funding from unethical sources. We can always use more money to fund our work for a fairer Oxford. Please consider making a donation. Cheques payable to 'Oxfordshire Green Party' can be sent to: Don O'Neal, 1 Riverside Court, Oxford.

Save Temple Cowley Pools

Peggy Seeger Joins the Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign

We are delighted that internationally renowned musician, singer, songwriter and human rights activist, Peggy Seeger, has joined SaveTCP Campaign.



She has written a fantastic song performed by 24 local voices and there is an accompanying video, and two concerts in Oxford during November to raise funds.

Two years ago Oxford City Council declared that the cost of building a complete new leisure centre at Temple Cowley Pools was £12.5m, and that this cost was unaffordable and not value for money. The cost of their scheme to close both Temple Cowley Pools and the existing Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool, while only building a new 25m pool (no larger than currently at Temple Cowley) has now risen to over £11m!

It simply doesn't make sense! There is no evidence of demand for a new, £25m, non-Olympic swimming pool in Blackbird Leys, when £3m will refurbish and improve both Temple Cowley Pools and the existing Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool.

The Council is wilfully misleading the public and councillors over the cost, carbon emissions, transport implications, forecast usage and quality. Keeping Temple Cowley Pools open, as supported by the Green Party at local and regional level, is the ONLY sustainable option.

Thanks to the TCPools campaigners for this article, and for all their hard work on the campaign.



Cultivate Oxford

...are a co-operative social enterprise owned by the community, who grow fruit and vegetables without artificial pesticides and fertilisers on 10 acres of land just outside Oxford. Cultivate's VegVan mobile shop brings food direct from their market garden and other local farmers direct to the city. They are part of the movement for more sustainable food and agriculture. Cultivate is people-powered. Join and support the work of the co-operative: cultivateoxford.org



The Broken Spoke Bike Co-operative

A new multi-stakeholder co-op has set up in Oxford to provide bike workshop space, women and trans-gender evenings on bike maintenance, and good value training courses in a wide range of bike-related skills. Supporters get discounts on parts and courses, and sessions take place across Oxford. Visit their website for more info:

www.bsbcoop.org



The People's Supermarket opened on Cowley Road in July this summer. It is staffed by volunteers who buy a share in the Supermarket and each work for 4 hours a month. This community enterprise is not-for-profit, with money made going to local good causes. Prices are low and food is fresh, and often locally sourced with vegetables, fresh bread, sandwiches and pastries sold alongside ordinary grocery items. See: www.tpsoxford.org/

Fair is worth fighting for!