

Fair is worth fighting for

Spring 2012

Reaching 20,000 Oxfordshire homes

Oxfordshire

Green News

News and views on peace, justice and sustainability



Green Party

Inside contents:

Page 2:

Eco Betrayal
Save the NHS
Air Pollution

Page 3:

Save Temple Cowley Pool
Greens for a Post Office in Summertown
Occupy Movement: Fighting Inequality

Page 4:

Greens Defend Local Democracy
Tax Fiddles
Keith Taylor vs Fracking

Get involved!

Oxfordshire Green Party welcomes general enquiries and new members.

Contact: Sid Phelps on 01865 765 852 or email: sid@greenoxford.com

Green Jobs

The Green Party is calling for Government investment in Green Jobs to stimulate the UK economy out of its present stagnation.

Cuts in public spending in the 1930s only led to massive unemployment and economic stagnation. History is repeating itself, with the Coalition Government cuts creating nearly 3 million unemployed and undermining recovery.

Labour, Lib Dems and the Tories are all in agreement that public services must be attacked with massive cuts, when what is really needed is to stimulate the economy. Public spending did not cause this crisis and cutting it is not the solution.

The solution is financial reform of the banks and a tax on financial transactions. The Greens believe in a more equal society and fairer taxes instead of cutting public spending.



Green Jobs can be high-tech and low-tech. They can improve our homes and towns and also help people to reconnect with nature and their communities.

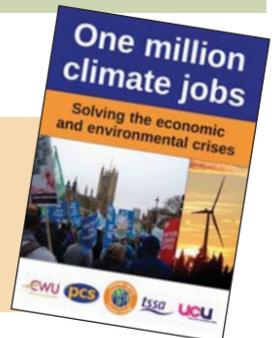


"If we pulled out from Afghanistan, cancelled the replacement of Trident and the building of two new aircraft carriers, plus made the corporations pay the billions they owe in back taxes, we would save over £100 billion. A Robin Hood tax on bank profits and bonuses, plus stopping offshore tax avoidance, would bring in another £50 billion to spend on new Green jobs. That would dramatically reduce wasted energy use and put people back to work."

Craig Simmons
Green Party candidate for St. Mary's Ward

By cutting subsidies to nuclear power and nuclear weapons we can generate more than enough to create a massive green jobs expansion programme and put the UK back to work.

For more info see the Green Party website: www.greenparty.org.uk/policies.html
Also see the excellent "One million Climate Jobs" booklet available for free from: www.climate-change-jobs.org/



'The Greens are now the only British political party with representation at all levels which supports free education for all. A charge of £9,000 is simply unacceptable for a country that values social mobility and inclusiveness. With rent charges increasing and the cost of living jumping, students are under attack from all sides. Millstone loan payments and record levels of youth unemployment make their future prospects look grim.'



Adam Ramsay
Green Party Candidate for Carfax, Oxford

Green Students Fighting Back

Oxford's Student Greens are fighting back against the greatest ever attack on Further and Higher education

Joining demo after demo, speaking out on every occasion, blogging, lobbying Parliament, organising petitions and campaigning widely, the Student Greens have been tireless in supporting their fellow students and the education service they are working within.

Now it has been revealed that 2012 will see a 8.7% drop nationally in the numbers applying for university - a direct result of the trebling of the tuition fees by the Lib Dem / Tory Coalition Government.

Flashback to 2007: Nick Clegg makes a promise he soon breaks



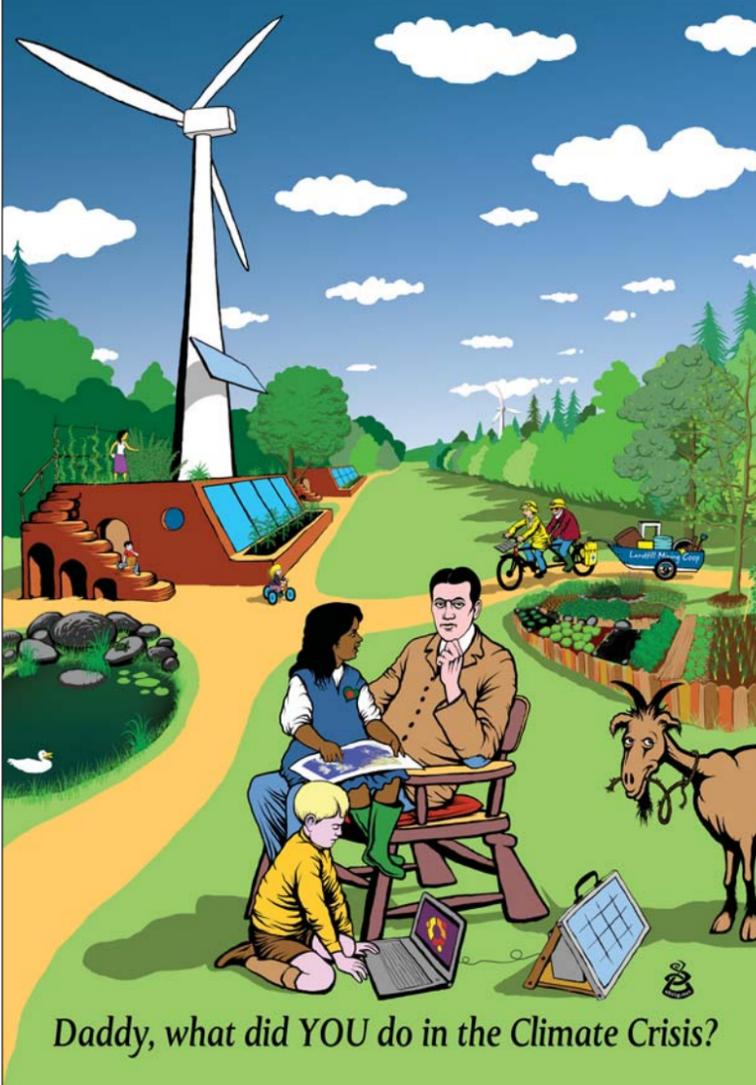
Oxford students march for education for all. Photo: (cc) Julie Simmons

The £900 million cut in research funds introduced in the last days of the Labour government, together with Ed Miliband's commitment not to restore the cuts, demonstrates where they stand. Labour of course introduced tuition fees and their sole concession is that they would 'only' double, not treble this barrier to opportunity.

The £600 million cut in Further Education funding has been equally devastating, with the abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance dramatically reducing the ability of students to stop on and reach their full potential. For more contact: adamramsay@googlemail.com

Join the Green Party - The REAL opposition in Oxford

Green policies are common sense for People & Planet



Eco betrayal

Given the appalling record of the last Labour government it wouldn't have taken much effort to be, as the Tories and Lib Dems promised, the 'Greenest Government Ever'. Instead it has been a dismal record of failure and retreat:

- They are cutting the feed-in tariff on solar panels from 43 pence to 21pence per kWh, dramatically slowing the installation of solar panels, and undermining Green jobs, with plans for further cuts.
- They confirmed that the UK will only proceed at the rate of the slowest European country in establishing renewable energy sources.
- They delayed the establishment of the Green Investment Bank until 2014 and have earmarked some of the money to subsidise the nuclear power industry rather than the 'new green technologies' they previously promised.
- The nuclear industry is set to benefit from other generous handouts despite an earlier promise that it would receive no Government subsidies. Now taxpayers will end up footing the bill for clean up and storage of toxic waste plus the security costs. Nuclear will also get preferential treatment in planning and its liabilities will be capped.
- They allow imports of hardwoods, that were previously banned, encouraging even more deforestation, often in poorest countries.
- Virtually all the advisory bodies for Climate Change have been closed down.
- They want to sell off the forests and are introducing more developer-friendly planning rules.

More info: *The Greenest Government Ever: One Year On*. A report by Jonathan Porritt - see: ww.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest_gvt_ever.pdf



Sushila Dhall
Candidate for North Oxford:

"We should tackle the economic crisis and the energy crisis together, by creating many thousands of much needed jobs in renewable energies and public transport re-building, insulating buildings, and working for a massive shift from road to rail. This would improve the quality of life for people in the UK, which is an island surrounded by wind and waves. We have the solutions to many of our problems on our own shores."

Low Carbon East Oxford

...a group started by local Green Councillors, recently won two national funding awards.

It has donated a solar panel system to the charity Restore, saving them money on their energy bills.

A second funding award will help those in rented accommodation by improving the energy efficiency of their homes. This will both lower their energy costs and reduce their carbon footprint. Details: ww.lceo.org.uk

Low Carbon East Oxford (LCEO) with Landlord Energy Saving Scheme (LESS) presents:

FREE Energy makeovers for rented properties in East Oxford

You could save £100s and a tonne of carbon

Offer ends 17th March so get in touch today

Tenants
Are you fed up with soaring energy bills? Living in a chilly or draughty house? Get a free energy efficiency audit and free help to make your home warmer & cheaper to live in.

FREE Training as an Energy Surveyor
Need some new transferable skills & experience for your CV? Do you want to help people make their homes cosier, greener and cheaper to live in? Get free training on Wednesday 7th March or on Saturday 10th Mar 2012 (meals included)

To sign up contact Catrina Pickering Tel: 07970 233418 Visit the website: www.LCEO.org.uk E: catrinapickering@gmail.com

www.lceo.org.uk

Last attempt to Save the NHS

Oxford Green Party councillors on the City and County Councils have introduced motions calling on the Government to abandon its plans to open up clinical services to private providers in the NHS.

The British Medical Association, the RCN and the seven former Presidents of the Faculty of Public Health have all called for the Government Health and Social Care Bill to be dropped.

The BMA denounced the bill as introducing an 'unprecedented marketisation' of services and posing 'a major threat to the integrity of the NHS'. The present NHS local cuts of £200 million are the result of Labour cuts announced in 2010 just before the election. Now, on top of cuts, we have privatisation too.

The NHS is being stolen; the coalition government is the thief.

www.KeepOurNHSpublic.com



March for the Alternative, March 26th 2011 Photo: (CC) Stefan Photo of Hafiz: Lilia Patterson

Hafiz Ladell

the Green Party Candidate for St. Clements says:

"The Green Party is totally against privatisation of the Health Service. Labour are as guilty as the Lib Dems and the Tories for they started the whole process, introducing private beds into NHS hospitals and contracting out services. It was Labour who introduced the disastrous Private Finance Initiative, whereby taxpayers will end up paying the bankers outrageous rents for their new hospitals for the next 30 years."



Judy and her daughter at OxGrow

Weirs Lane Air Pollution

Judy Chipchase, a former City Council Planning Officer and Green Party candidate for Hinksey, has been monitoring air pollution at the Weirs Lane / Abingdon Road junction.

The Abingdon Road / Weirs Lane junction is a pollution hot spot in Oxford. It is currently over safety levels at 42ug/m3. Fortunately, at present, it is not a spot where people linger for long. Most people are probably unaware that more people die prematurely from air pollution, largely caused by vehicle emissions, than die or sustain serious injuries because of road traffic accidents. In November 2011 the Government acknowledged that Councils are the key to improving air quality and that the public needs more information. Oxford City Council know that the air quality around the Fox and Hounds is above the EU recognised danger limits for traffic pollution but still nothing is being done.

Save Temple Cowley Pools

City Labour waste millions on pet project

In these hard times the Labour-controlled Oxford City Council will spend a staggering £9.2 million on a new swimming pool in Blackbird Leys, and in the process close two of the most loved and best used swimming pools - the existing pools at Blackbird Leys and Temple Cowley. The £9.2 million cost stands in stark contrast to the £2.8 million it took to build the new Barton Pool just 6 years ago. Already the Council is suggesting that £9.2 million might not be the final price. But they seem fixed that their pet project will go ahead, despite the fact that over **16,000 people have signed a petition demanding that Temple Cowley Pool be saved. This is the largest petition in the history of Oxford!**



Kevin Meaney, Green Party Candidate for Cowley Marsh, with Clare Cochrane, Green Party Candidate for Cowley, collecting signatures outside the Pools

It was accepted by the Finance department last year when the Green Party moved their alternative budget, that both the Temple Cowley and the Blackbird Leys Swimming pool could be upgraded and give an extended life for another 25 years for a total of £3 million. **The Greens say: why spend £9.2 million when we can least afford it!**

Want to help? Talk to your friends and family and get them to sign the petition with you. You can follow the campaign on twitter at **@SaveTCP**, or you can contact the **Save Temple Cowley Pools** campaign by email at **SaveTCP@gmail.com** or visit their website at: <http://savetemplecowleypools.webs.com>

Fight inequality

Caroline Lucas MP, the Leader of the Green Party, has visited the Occupy encampment to pledge Green Party support to those who have had the courage to brave the weather over the last six months and protest about inequality in the UK.



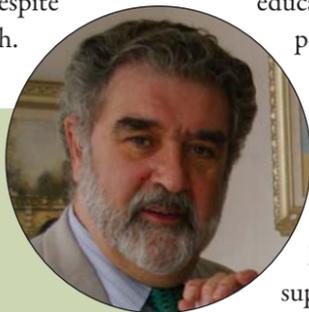
Caroline Lucas MP with Peter Tatchell and friends at Occupy Photo: (cc) Haydn Wheeler

The Occupy camp at St Paul's has been evicted, but its ideas live on. The majority of people in the UK supported the aims of the protest and agree that our economic system isn't working. Yet rather than listen, the government pushed for the protest to be shut down.

Green Party activists including MP Caroline Lucas and Oxford's councillors took a different approach. They supported the occupation, and took part in discussions there about how we can build a fairer economy and how we can rein in the banks who caused the crash.

Here in Oxford, Green Party councillors have been working with other groups to defend public services from spending cuts and pushing for a more equal economy, with enough decent jobs to go round, rather than allowing bankers and executives to make off with the highest wages in history despite causing the economic crash.

David Williams
Leader of the Green Group on the City Council and Councillor for Iffley Fields



Green Party City Council leader David Williams said: "for example, in this year's city budget, the Green Party proposed measures including a small tax on luxury hotels to help offset the cuts to the Education Maintenance Allowance. This would have meant a better education for the poorest teenagers in the City. Sadly, neither Labour, Tories nor the Lib Dems supported us."

Summertown still needs a Post Office

Greens are fighting for a Post Office to be re-established in Summertown's South Parade.

With the number of shops increasing, and a growing number of people using the Summertown parade, Post Office claims that there is no public demand have been denounced as 'unreal' by Green councillors.

Although there was a Lib Dem commitment to re-establish post offices closed under Labour, nothing has been done and closures continue. The former Lib Dem Government minister responsible has been dismissive of representations by the Greens and has pushed on with the privatisation of the service. More closures are expected.



Cllr. Elise Benjamin
Lord Mayor of Oxford and Green Party Candidate for Iffley Fields Ward

"All communities need a Post Office nearby"

Inequality:

what can we do about it?

There is strong evidence that rich and poor do better in more equal societies as shown in Wilkinson and Pickett's 2009 bestseller, *The Spirit Level*.

But the UK is more unequal than most developed societies; and since 1979, income inequality is 50% higher. We can see it when the wealthy flaunt their wasteful lifestyles in the the midst of social breakdown such as mental and physical ill health, homelessness, crime, etc. Across the globe there has been a reaction to the greed and self interest of the 1% who seem to own the vast bulk of the Earth's wealth. The international Occupy movement has peacefully given a voice to the demands of the 99% who are mostly neglected by their governments.



Ann Duncan
is the Green Party Candidate for St. Margarets ward in North Oxford

2010 - 2011 saw a jaw-dropping 49% increase in salaries for the UK's top bosses whilst everybody else got virtually nothing. According to Kevin Anderson, a leading Climate scientist, **the world's richest 1% are roughly responsible for 50% of carbon emissions.**

If people-power can unseat vicious Middle Eastern despots, it can change social norms here. We do have power and should use it: to educate ourselves and others; protest; 'Occupy'; write letters; discuss; and pressurise politicians.

For more see *"The Spirit Level"*, by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. Also: www.poverty.org.uk and www.equalitytrust.org.uk

Climate Denial by Embarrassment



Join the Green Party - The REAL opposition in Oxford

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 locally
- **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.



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 credible 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 and the planet. Call Sid Phelps on Oxford 727723 or email sid@greenoxford.com

Support the Greens

The Green Party does not accept funding from unethical sources. We are always short of money for publications like this one. Please consider contributing to our costs. £75 will pay for 2000 newsletters. Cheques payable to 'Oxfordshire Green Party' can be sent to our Treasurer: Don O'Neal, 1 Riverside Court, Oxford.

Greens Defend Democracy

Labour councillors on the Oxford City Council have introduced a new system of decision-making that centralises all power in the hands of a tiny group of their party members.

The new system sees the introduction of one-person 'committees' (all Labour) and the abolition of Area Committees. All power is now vested in a 'Supreme Leader'. The new system introduced has been imposed even though it was overwhelmingly rejected by residents in the formal consultation. The changes were voted through with Liberal Democrat support – shame on them!

Area Committees, which used to have powers over local planning decisions and funding allocation, have been abolished and replaced by occasional 'Area Forums'.



Green Councillors and activists

These forums have no devolved finance with which to fund local community initiatives and cannot make policy decisions. All that remains to residents is an opportunity to express their anger at the antics of the Labour-controlled council. If history is any guide, no matter what local people say, Labour will not be taking any notice.

Planning is now being dealt with by two central committees with Labour majorities. Local councillors have very little input. Labour have thrown local democracy in the dustbin. But the Greens will not let localism die and are very committed to restoring Area Committees. All-party committees should run the Council, not small one party cabals.

Keith calls for a halt to Fracking

Green Euro MP Keith Taylor has called for a halt to plans by Cuadrilla, a US multinational, to use toxic chemicals in their hunt for gas in West Sussex.

Hydraulic fracturing (or 'fracking') is drilling deep into rock, then pumping high-pressure water, sand and toxic chemicals down to flush out 'Natural Gas'. Keith says there is growing evidence that fracking can cause a range of environmental problems, including the polluting of water supplies.

A recent study by the US Environmental Protection Agency found a range of toxic chemicals in the groundwater around shale gas wells in Wyoming. Last year in Lancashire a report investigating two minor earthquakes found it was "highly probable" that fracking in the Blackpool area by Cuadrilla was the cause. Evidence is growing on the many negative impacts of this type of mining for gas.

An award-winning documentary film *Gasland* was made last year that clearly explains and exposes the story of fracking in the US.

See: www.gaslandthemovie.com



Keith Taylor visits Ardingly reservoir in Sussex in February to lend his support to local campaigners from 'No Fracking in Sussex' To follow their campaign see the facebook page: 'NO-Fracking-in-Sussex'

The Gaia Foundation has just produced a report covering the global rise in 'extractive industries' that includes Fracking and open-cast mining. The report *Opening Pandora's Box* is free to download from: www.gaiafoundation.org

Our Green MEP is calling for a full independent public inquiry into the possible effects on the environment and people's health. Until then the government should halt drilling operations. Keith is also working on lots of other issues. Find out more here:

www.keithtaylormep.org.uk

Greens say Northern Gateway industrial park is unnecessary

The Northern Gateway Business Park is still being promoted by local Labour (and some Liberal Democrat) councillors even though commercial parks to the south of the City are about 40% empty. The scheme would develop the green space between Wolvercote and Pear Tree, with links to the A34. There is already massive congestion and pollution at the Wolvercote roundabout. The effects of the development on local wildlife and green spaces seem not to have been taken into consideration.

Green Budget ignored again

The Green Party's 2012/13 County Council Budget showed how it was possible to make more than £56 million extra available for frontline services. Meanwhile, the Tories and LibDems accepted Government cuts. Yet again, Labour Councillors failed to even propose an alternative budget.

See: www.greenoxford.com



The weekly East Oxford Farmers' and Community Market, founded by local Green Councillors, was recently awarded second place in the highly prestigious BBC Radio 4 Food and Farming Awards. Visit any Saturday between 10am and 1pm at East Oxford Primary School behind the Union Street car park. www.eastoxfordmarket.org.uk

The Great Government Tax Fiddle

Marginal tax cuts planned by the Government in April will be dwarfed by massive reductions in tax credits that will hit the poorest hardest.

The tax cut of £1 billion for above average earners will be paid for by a £2.5 billion cut in top up credits to low income families in work.

The Resolution Foundation which analyses family income suggest that higher earners will gain £41 per year whilst those who need tax credits to survive may lose over £400 each year.

The raising of the tax threshold was suggested by the Liberal Democrats. But the Resolution Foundation suggest that combined with the complex cuts in tax credits this move will be deeply regressive, hitting the poor yet again.

No doubt we will be told we are "all in this together"! resolutionfoundation.org

Fair is worth fighting for!