

## **OGP Policy Working Group: Background to Political Voice**

### **What is happening in Oxfordshire now**

Our democracy is in bad shape. The whole country is deeply divided with many people feeling unrepresented and out-of-touch with the political process. The first-past-the-post voting system stifles new thinking and empowers some large minorities at the expense of the whole society.

All local councils have been starved of funds for the last decade, which has had a severe impact on vital services such as education and social care. As a result these services have largely been outsourced to profit-making businesses, with a consequent loss of accountability, transparency and public control. Experience over the last year has demonstrated how much more efficiently publicly run local services can operate as opposed to centralised (and privatised) ones.

### **What the Green Party needs to do**

It is important that the voting system should be fair and that every voter can feel that their vote counts, so the Green Party has long campaigned for proportional representation. PR also leads to better decision making in government. We also support the use of Citizen's Assemblies in informing policy.

The Green Party calls for an end to the privatisation of services and for councils to be properly funded and resourced.

Greens place a strong emphasis on improving rights and responsibilities at all levels in society. We are strong supporters of the devolution of decision making to truly local groups and believe that the County should conduct meaningful consultations on major decisions.

In order for people to feel empowered, they need to be socially included and free of everyday stress. Greens believe that Oxfordshire County Council should lead by implementing an Oxfordshire-based living wage for its lowest paid workers. Improved working conditions and remuneration are essential for democracy to flourish.