

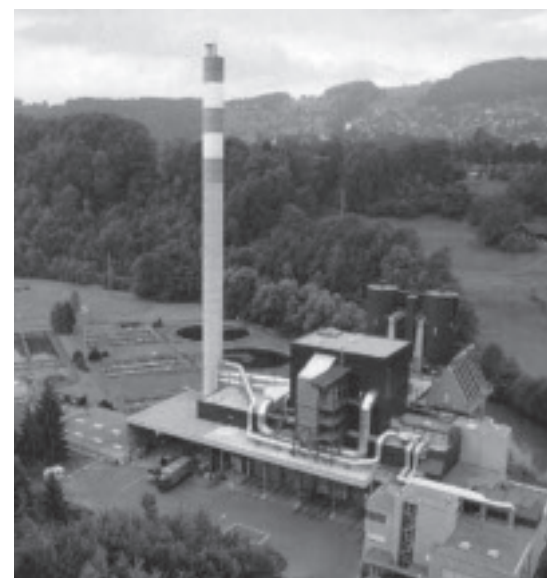
Healthy Communities and a Healthy Environment



Sustainability is at the heart of all Green Party policy. Unlike other political parties, all our policies are inter-related on both a local and global scale. Our main objective is to create a socially just society in which everyone has freedoms and takes responsibilities. Greens want to protect the earth's diversity and to ensure that our world is preserved for future generations.

Reduce, Re-use, Recycle - and no to a huge incinerator

Excess waste is increasing year on year, and it badly damages the environment. In Stroud District it is possible that a large, visually intrusive incinerator will be built near Stonehouse, increasing heavy vehicle traffic from around the county and beyond. There is an urgent need to reduce the waste we send to landfill, but this is not the solution and Greens on the District Council will fight to oppose it. We need to turn to the new, highly efficient small-scale technologies now being developed to deal with waste that can't be recycled. The Green Party is also working to put pressure on supermarkets and manufacturers to produce less packaging. Simple schemes such as Freecycle can help people re-use more, and with better facilities we can recycle a much higher proportion of what we now throw away. This will provide massive financial savings and help to preserve our unique and beautiful local environment.



Bad planning offers no hope to flood victims

The floods in July were disastrous for many local people, but the consequences of the rains were in part a direct result of simple bad planning. We are living through changing times, and are likely to see such extreme weather conditions again and again, yet the Government continues with the folly of building on flood plains. Now insurance companies are refusing to insure housing built on such vulnerable land. It is imperative that all tiers of local Government provide more resources to help ameliorate the worst effects of flooding. If you help to elect more Green District Councillors, you can be sure that they will work to ensure sensible planning decisions and more support for the victims of severe weather.

Affordable housing for all

The Green Party recognises that secure, warm and affordable housing is a basic human right, and that the existence of homelessness is unacceptable in the sixth richest country in the world. There are over 2,000 people on the District Council's waiting list. We see many large executive homes being built, but the Government has abandoned the building of council houses suitable for ordinary working families. The cost of housing in this area is therefore often way out of reach for most people, and private renting is also expensive. The free market just doesn't have the ability to meet diverse housing needs. Greens are pushing for 50% of all new developments to be affordable or social housing, and it is essential that this is available for people in the localities where they work.

Supporting local businesses

Greens work hard to create an environment where small businesses rooted in their communities can thrive through the employment of local people and resources. The relentless drive for cheaper goods and services has ripped the heart out of many communities, making local shops, Post Offices and pubs unprofitable. These businesses are vital to maintaining the individual character of towns and villages such as Nailsworth, Stroud and Wotton. They offer employment for people who are unable to access transport, as well as increasing community cohesion and improving social equity. Small businesses of all kinds are an intrinsic part of the local economy and remain sustainable through responding to customer demand.



Greens on the District Council set the pace



Left to Right: John Marjoram (also Stroud Town Mayor), Gwen Belcher, Philip Booth, Sarah Lunnon (group leader), Martin Whiteside (also Green Party Parliamentary Candidate).

The Green Party has five Councillors on Stroud District Council. At the moment, the Conservatives have an unhealthy overall majority, with 31 out of 51 Councillors, which isn't good for local democracy as none of their decisions can be seriously challenged. The Green vote is growing faster than that of any other party, and in last year's elections Greens took 23.4%, overtaking Labour while the Lib Dems received only 10.6%. This year we are putting up candidates in all 17 wards being contested.

Green Councillors are respected for working hard on local issues - these are some of our achievements on the District Council over the last year:

- **Supporting** the setting up of a Social Enterprise to protect our local health services as far as possible from continual cuts and privatisation, particularly for older people and the maternity hospital.
- **Influencing** the process of community planning at Brimscombe Port redevelopment to make sure high priority is given to community and environmental benefits.
- **Ensuring** that the District Council's Environment Strategy had ambitious targets and making sure they will be met.
- **Being** very influential in opposing the Government's closure of Post Offices.
- **Helping** to set up a number of flood action groups around Stroud.
- **Working** very hard to support social and council housing and those people with planning problems.
- **Working** with Parish Councils on various traffic safety initiatives.
- **Working** to increase energy efficiency measures that save money and tackle climate change.

The Green Councillors do hit above their weight - just think what a few more could do!

Save our Local Communities and Post Offices

Greens see communities as the bedrock of society. When they function well they provide mutual help and co-operation, giving security for those less fortunate and bringing out people's social creativity. However, they must have an infrastructure to succeed, including good local healthcare, stimulating schools, youth provisions, elderly care facilities, community halls and pubs. The Government, whose only yardstick is profit, seems determined to undermine the fabric of our society through the privatisation of vital services like Post Offices, many of which are now under threat of closure. Working to keep local Post Offices open is a priority for the Green Party. We will also fight on your behalf in order to protect essential provisions like bus services and local shops. Greens believe in an inclusive society, and our aim is to empower people to lead more enriched lives within their own communities.



Ladies and Gentlemen, we are about to enter some turbulence, caused by rapid climate change and the exhaustion of fossil fuels. Please tighten your seatbelts.