



Green Party Manifesto

2017 Westminster Election

#PuttingYouFirst





**WE ARE STANDING SEVEN CANDIDATES
ACROSS NORTHERN IRELAND –
OUR STRONGEST EVER GREEN TEAM**

#PuttingYouFirst

Your Candidates from left:

Ricky Bamford Strangford, **Tanya Jones** Fermanagh & South Tyrone, **Steven Agnew** North Down, **Malachai O'Hara** North Belfast,
Ciaran McClean West Tyrone, **Georgina Milne** East Belfast and **Clare Bailey** South Belfast

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Key Points

The Green Party will:

- Secure a referendum on any final Brexit deal
- Provide a strong voice for Northern Ireland, our people and businesses in the Brexit negotiations
- Guarantee human rights, workers' rights and environmental rights
- Protect vital public services by ending Tory austerity
- Promote equality for women and LGBTQ people, and fight against poverty
- Protect the environment and tackle climate change, ensuring that renewable sources of energy are prioritised and transport is decarbonised
- Reform the tax system to make it fairer, and ensure that public services are put on a sustainable footing
- Promote co-operation and peace both locally and internationally
- Strengthen devolution for Northern Ireland and reform the devolved institutions to make them more democratic and accountable

Introduction



This election is set against turbulent political times. The decision of the UK to back Brexit, against the wishes of the majority of people in Northern Ireland, has created huge uncertainty.

Seven years of Tory austerity has created much inequality. Public services have been put under great strain as a result of this agenda. This has led to a chronic underfunding of our schools, hospitals and other vital public services.

With all of this going on, other parties are attempting to use the uncertainty and division to their own advantage, and to suit their own agendas.

Meanwhile, the Green Party is putting you first.

We are standing in this election to promote your interests in the Brexit negotiations.

We are standing seven candidates across Northern Ireland to protect your vital public services.

We are standing a majority of women candidates to promote equality for you.

The Green Party has shown tremendous growth over the past number of years. Our membership has increased dramatically. We are attracting more voters across Northern Ireland with every election. We have had candidates elected when commentators said it would never happen.

We are part of a global Green movement. There has been a resurgence in Green politics across these islands in recent times. European Greens have taken on right-wing populism and enjoyed electoral victories in recent years, most notably in Austria and the Netherlands.

You can continue this growth by voting Green on June 8th. We have never been in a better position to contest a Westminster election, and you can play your part in electing Green MPs who will put you first in Westminster.

If you want to see a truly progressive, non-sectarian party represent you in Westminster, then the only way to do this is to vote for your local Green Party candidate.

Steven Agnew
Green Party Leader



We are standing a majority of women candidates

#PuttingYouFirst

Brexit

A Referendum on any Brexit Deal

Democracy did not end on the day of the EU referendum in 2016. The Brexit process is still ongoing, and we are now well into the two-year negotiation process outlined in Article 50 of the EU Treaty.

The Green Party is:

- Taking the “Dublin case” in the Irish Courts to establish that Article 50 is reversible.
- Calling for a referendum on the final Brexit deal.



Our Five Key Asks for the Negotiations

The Green Party wants to put the best possible choices before you in a referendum on the final deal. We have five key priorities for the negotiations:

Representation for Northern Ireland within the senior UK negotiating team

- Northern Ireland’s voice has not been heard as loudly as it should when it comes to Brexit.
- The Green Party will look to rectify the failures of the traditional parties on Brexit and put you first by ensuring that Northern Ireland is represented at the top negotiating table.
- We will empower the First & Deputy First Ministers to nominate a representative to the negotiations. In the absence of a functioning Executive, this responsibility will fall to the Secretary of State.

Access to the Single Market for Northern Ireland

- Many different industries and sectors operate on an island-wide basis. It is vital that those industries maintain access to the Republic of Ireland market. This will require Northern Ireland to remain a part of the Single Market.
- Agriculture will be particularly affected by Brexit, and the ability to move livestock and produce across the border freely needs to be maintained.
- Transport, haulage, energy and tourism could also see very detrimental effects from Brexit.
- Even a relatively ‘soft’ border could have massive impacts on these sectors, as both tariff and nontariff barriers could be put in place, and border checks reintroduced.

Guarantees for the rights of EU citizens living in the UK

- It is shameful that people’s lives and livelihoods are being used by the Tory government as bargaining chips in the EU negotiations.
- We will immediately ensure that anyone currently living legally in the UK is given reassurances that they will be allowed to remain here in the event of the UK leaving the EU.

Ensuring free movement of people across the UK and Ireland

- Free movement is not just about tourism and convenience. For many people in Northern Ireland it is vital to their way of life, especially in border communities. Families are spread across the border; people live in one jurisdiction and work in another; and even parts of the same property can be in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland.
- We need to make sure that Brexit does not impact on people who rely on the free movement across the border on a regular basis.

Maintaining existing environmental, human rights and workers’ rights protections

- The EU has played a massive role in advancing equalities, rights and protections. Much of the rhetoric around Brexit has been on rolling these protections back, claiming they are “red tape”.
- The Green Party is clear, we put you first. To this end, we will ensure that all existing protections that we have from the EU are protected in domestic law.

Your Public Services

Health

The Green Party is a proud supporter of the National Health Service, and is committed to putting you first in providing a world-class health service for the UK, free at the point of use.

The Green Party will:

- Oppose the privatisation of healthcare services.
- Provide the £10bn short-term increase in spending that the British Medical Association says the NHS needs across the UK to ease the current funding crisis. We will listen to the experts and put you first.
- Provide a real-terms budget increase year-on-year to meet the demands of an ageing population.
- Look to rebalance health spending with focus on prevention, reducing the need for costly treatments in the future.
- Promote community healthcare as a key part of the healthcare system. Local medical practitioners are best placed to identify the key health issues and solutions in their communities.
- Ensure that intervention is provided earlier, leading to better health outcomes for a lower cost.
- Train enough new medical and nursing students to ease the current staffing crisis in the NHS.
- Require NHS staff to declare financial conflicts of interest, including private healthcare work they undertake, to ensure that they are putting you first.
- Treat drug addiction as a health problem, not a criminal one.



Education

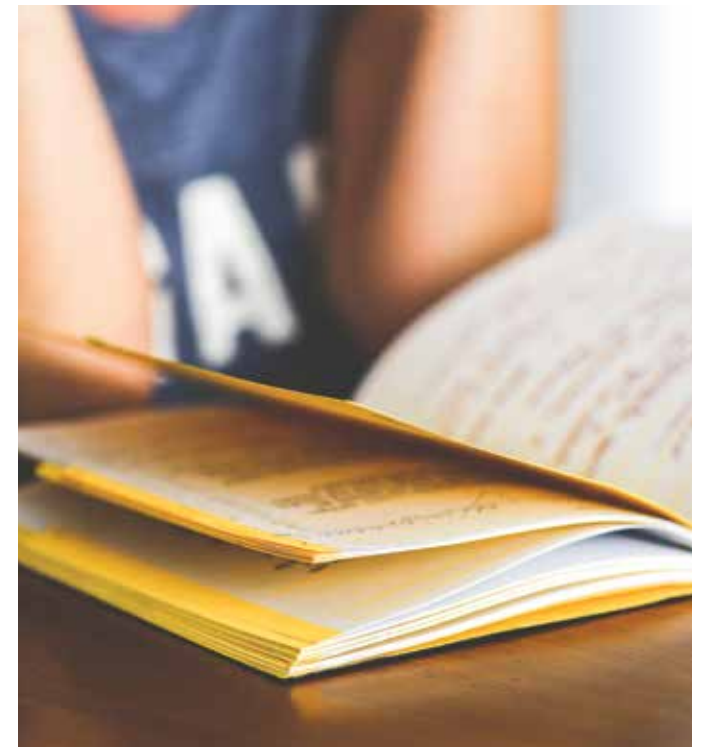
The Green Party sees education as a right; something that should be accessible and freely available to all.

The Green Party will put you first in delivering increased investment in schools and universities.

However, education is more than just formal education. All the evidence suggests that the years between birth and starting school are key for learning and development.

The Green Party will:

- Introduce a universal early years provision, so that all children receive high-quality pre-school education.
- Introduce a flexible school starting age, recognising that a one-size-fits-all approach to education does not put children first.
- Increase school funding by £7bn.
- Introduce free, nutritious school meals for all primary school pupils.
- Remove charitable status for private schools.
- Recognise that an academic route is not for everyone. We will revalue our Colleges of Further and Higher Education. The skills, crafts and trades that they teach are of vital importance. We want to prioritise training in the skills needed for a future low-carbon economy.
- Require 'social clauses' in all government contracts, to ensure skills training and apprenticeships.



THE GREEN PARTY WILL END UNDERGRADUATE TUITION FEES AND REINTRODUCE A STUDENT GRANT

- End undergraduate tuition fees and reintroduce a student grant.
- End tuition fees for taught postgraduate courses, which are now becoming an essential requirement by potential employers, which, given there is limited financial assistance, perpetuates intergenerational income inequality.

Housing

The UK is facing a housing crisis. Young people are particularly affected, thanks to rising house prices, high cost of living and punitive student debt. They find it much harder to get on the property ladder than previous generations. Government after government has failed to put you first on housing, instead focussing on enabling property developers and investors to profit from your needs.

The Green Party will:

- Provide 100,000 new units of social housing, including at least 2,000 in Northern Ireland, per year.
- Maintain the social housing stock by freezing the Right to Buy scheme.
- Protect the budget for supported housing.
- Reduce VAT on housing renovation and repair work to 5%, to incentivise renovating existing buildings, rather than building new buildings, and to make energy efficiency retrofits more cost-effective.
- Reform the private rented sector by introducing longer tenancy agreements and rent control caps limited to inflation. We will also put you first by abolishing landlord perks, such as tax deductions on mortgage interest relief.
- Abolish the “bedroom tax”.
- Bring Housing Benefit, for all age groups, in line with average market rents.
- Ban discriminatory letting practices whereby landlords refuse to accept people in receipt of Housing Benefit, students and those with pets.

Benefits & Welfare

The Green Party will continue to oppose the unnecessary and ideologically driven welfare cuts and their extension to Northern Ireland. The Green Party wants to put you first, and demands a society where everyone earns a fair wage, and those in need receive the help and support they deserve.

The Green Party will:

- Set a national minimum living wage for all ages. This will be equal to the living wage, as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation.
- Establish an affordable system of high-quality pre-school childcare, integrated with early years education.
- Raise Child Benefit.
- Ban exploitative zero-hour contracts. We will also end the exploitation of interns, placing a maximum limit on the period of time unpaid internships can last. This will also make the job market more accessible to those from low-income backgrounds.
- End workfare programmes, which act as a subsidy for unscrupulous companies who don't want to pay staff a fair wage.
- Promote shared parental leave after the birth of a child. This helps the child's development and removes gender barriers in the labour market. We will also extend parental leave for the parents of premature babies.

Tax

Tax should be fair and fall on those with the greatest ability to pay. Instead of allowing the wealthiest to avoid tax and giving large corporations tax perks, the Green Party will put you first and deliver radical reform to the tax system to make it truly progressive.

The Green Party will:

- Implement a Wealth Tax of 2% per year on the wealthiest 1% of people. This will ensure a fairer distribution of wealth. The super-rich must pay their fair share.
- Introduce a Robin Hood Tax on bonds, equities and derivatives, replacing stamp duty on share transactions.
- Invest more resources into collecting existing unpaid taxes.
- Abolish the employees' National Insurance upper threshold on those on higher incomes.
- Abolish the Capital Gains Tax personal allowance.
- Scrap the planned reduction in Corporation Tax, and increase it to 30% for larger companies.
- Radically reform Inheritance Tax, making the level of tax paid dependent on the wealth of the recipient to reduce intergenerational inequality.
- Scrap the two-child limit for Child Tax Credit, and make the horrific “Rape Clause” obsolete.



**THE GREEN PARTY
WILL SCRAP THE
TWO-CHILD LIMIT
FOR CHILD TAX CREDIT**

Your Rights

Human Rights

Human rights are the foundation of a progressive, modern society. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. The Green Party will put you first in defending, promoting and expanding these rights.

The Green Party will:

- Defend the UK Human Rights Act.
- Decriminalise abortion. The UK is not meeting its minimum human rights requirements for people across the UK in this regard, and especially in Northern Ireland.
- Ensure that the UK takes in its fair share of refugees, and meets its prior commitments to this.
- Ensure that treatment for refugees after arrival fulfils good human rights practice.
- Introduce a UK-wide strategy to tackle violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking. This will include consistent long-term funding for a nationwide network of Rape Crisis Centres.
- Immediately ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention on Women's Rights.
- Make human rights compliance a red line in any international trade deals.

LGBTQ Rights

The Green Party has led the way on LGBTQ rights, from bringing marriage equality before the Northern Ireland Assembly for the first time, to fielding the first openly transgender candidate in any election on the island of Ireland. We will continue to put people first by promoting LGBTQ issues.

The Green Party will:

- Introduce marriage equality to Northern Ireland.
- Improve the asylum process for LGBTQ people who face persecution in other countries and who seek refuge in the United Kingdom.



**THE GREEN PARTY
WILL INTRODUCE
MARRIAGE EQUALITY
TO NORTHERN IRELAND**

Workers' Rights

The Green Party is committed to putting you first and protecting and enhancing your rights in the workplace.

The Green Party will:

- Reform Company Law to require board-level worker representation in larger companies. This is a feature in some of Europe's most successful economies, including Germany, France, Sweden and Denmark.
- Require at least 40% of all members of public company and public sector boards to be women.
- Promote carer-friendly employer practices, including flexible and home working where possible.
- End policies which place artificial limits on new regulations, including workplace health and safety, and instead base decisions about new regulations on available evidence, and the precautionary principle.

Animal Rights

We share our planet with millions of other species. It is important that they have the rights they deserve.

To this end, the Green Party will:

- Improve the welfare standards of farm animals by introducing mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses.
- Impose tougher rules on animal transportation.
- Reform agricultural subsidies to incentivise higher agri-environment and animal welfare standards.
- Support mandatory licensing of dog breeders and ban the sale of young puppies unless their mother is present, and tackle over-selective dog breeding that leads to breeds with severe health problems.
- Support an extension of the ban on hunting with dogs to Northern Ireland.

Your Environment

Planning

The natural environment is defined by the impact that human decision-making has on it. The Green Party will put you first by ensuring that all planning decisions take into account the impact on your natural environment.

The Green Party will:

- Designate more areas as Marine Conservation Zones, and offer more areas protection from development through the European Union's Birds Directive, Habitats Directive and Ambient Air Quality Directive. We will also introduce National Parks to Northern Ireland.
- Transpose these Directives, and the EU's Water Directive, into UK law to maintain the same level of protection in the event of Brexit.

Waste & Recycling

Our society throws away far more food than it needs to. At the same time, many people are going hungry because of Tory cuts. The Green Party will put people first by ensuring that all leftover resources are reused where possible.

The Green Party will:

- Legislate to ensure that unwanted supermarket food is given to food banks.
- Ban food waste being sent to landfill.
- Extend the plastic bag levy to all non-recyclable packaging, essentially introducing a Plastic Tax.



**THE GREEN PARTY WILL BRING EU LAW
INTO DOMESTIC LAW TO PROTECT OUR
ENVIRONMENT IN THE EVENT OF BREXIT**



**THE GREEN PARTY WILL LEGISLATE
TO ENSURE THAT UNWANTED
SUPERMARKET FOOD
IS GIVEN TO FOOD BANKS**

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the greatest threats to our society. Its effects include rising food prices, flooding and poor health. To date it has not been given the attention it deserves by any UK government. The Green Party will put you first by taking immediate actions to tackle the threat of climate change.

The Green Party will:

- Ban fracking and other unconventional fossil fuel extraction in the UK.
- Continue to ensure that the UK commits to the targets in the Climate Change Act and cuts carbon emissions by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050.
- End favourable tax treatment for aviation.
- Provide large-scale investment for research into new technologies that will reduce our carbon footprint and impact on the environment.



Energy

The UK needs an energy revolution. Many countries are now powering themselves solely from renewable energy. The UK must join this club.

The Green Party will:

- Ensure that all public buildings and new social houses are powered from renewable energy sources.
- Maintain and improve upon current grants for energy efficiency measures.
- Split up large energy companies, so that they cannot both produce energy and supply it to consumers.
- Recognise that the energy market in Northern Ireland operates on an all-island basis, and ensure that this market is protected in any Brexit negotiations.

Transport

We recognise that the world is more connected than ever before, and transport links need to keep up with that. However, growth in movement of people needs to be sustainable.

The Green Party will:

- Introduce free bus travel for young people and students, creating a life-long habit for using more environmentally friendly means of travel.
- Introduce a pay-per-mile road pricing scheme for HGVs. It is only right that businesses who require roads to generate profit pay their fair share for the upkeep of the road network.
- Subsidise ferry journeys between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, encouraging more people to switch from aeroplane to boat.
- Promote investment in cycle infrastructure and aim to make cycling the norm in urban areas.

**THE GREEN PARTY WILL INTRODUCE
FREE BUS TRAVEL FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE AND STUDENTS**



Your World

International Relations

Brexit and the election of Donald Trump show that we are in a fast-changing world. The Green Party is offering a fresh, progressive voice for the UK in the world, putting people first.

The Green Party is part of a global movement. There is a Green Party in almost every country. We are used to working together with other people. This is the approach we want the UK government to take.

The Green Party will:

- Work with the EU during Brexit negotiations, not take the current government's antagonistic approach.
- Condemn hatred, human rights abuse and demagogism when we see it, not cosy up to it for economic gain.
- Work to reform and strengthen the United Nations, and make it more representative of the whole world, including scrapping permanent seats on the Security Council.



International Trade

With a potential Brexit, international trade agreements will be a key part of the next government's priorities.

The Green Party will:

- Reject any trade agreement that will lead to public services being eroded in the UK, including privatisation of the NHS.
- Make human rights, workers' rights, sustainability and equality red lines in any trade negotiations. We will not enter into agreement with governments who harm their own, or other countries' citizens.
- Increase the international aid budget to 1% of GDP, and allocate resources based on need, not on potential financial gain for the UK.
- Promote fair trade in all trade negotiations.

**THE GREEN PARTY
WILL REJECT ANY
TRADE AGREEMENT
THAT WILL LEAD TO
PUBLIC SERVICES BEING
ERODED IN THE UK,
INCLUDING PRIVATISATION
OF THE NHS**

Defence

The military and security services play an important role; however, this role has often been warped by previous governments.

The Green Party will:

- Scrap Trident and get rid of the UK's nuclear weapons, and other weapons of mass destruction.
- Limit potential future military involvement purely to humanitarian commitments.
- Ban the sale of arms from the UK and companies based in the UK to countries that do not meet international human rights standards.

**THE GREEN PARTY
WILL SCRAP TRIDENT
AND GET RID
OF THE UK'S
NUCLEAR WEAPONS**



Your Democracy

Democratic Reform

The UK has a proud tradition of democracy. However, that is not to say that it cannot improve. The democratic institutions of the UK have often been co-opted by powerful special interests. With the emergence of new political forces, they have not always kept up with changes in public opinion. The Green Party will put you first by promoting radical reform of these institutions.

The Green Party will:

- Move to a system of proportional representation for Westminster elections, and will make the House of Lords a fully elected body.
- Lower the voting age to allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote.
- Require all parties to publish donations they receive, as the Green Party does.
- Create a level playing field for all parties and limit the undue influence that wealthy individuals and corporate backers can have on the democratic process by introducing state funding of political parties.
- Require all parties to field at least 1/3 female candidates in all elections, with a reduction in funding for those who fail to comply.
- Repeal the Lobbying Act and replace it with a new Act which actually tackles the issue of corporate lobbyists, whilst still allowing charitable and community organisations to campaign properly.
- Reform libel law in Northern Ireland, which can be used to stifle open debate and democracy, by bringing it in line with the law in England and Wales.

Devolution

This election comes at a perilous time for Northern Ireland's devolution settlement. The Green Party are fully supportive of the existing institutions, and are committed to devolution for Northern Ireland, which allows us to put you first at a local level.

However, we must also have stable government in Northern Ireland. The failure of the traditional parties to come to an agreement and form an Executive has led to thousands of people facing job losses and massive cuts to public services.

The Green Party will:

- Increase the block grant through the ending of Westminster austerity and the associated Barnett consequential.
- Establish a constitutional convention to reform, refresh and revitalise the existing devolved institutions, making them more democratic and accountable in the long-term.
- Immediately release funding for inquiries into Troubles-related deaths promised in the Fresh Start Agreement, accept the UK government cannot be an independent arbiter and establish an internationally-chaired talks-process involving politicians, civic society and victims to resolve legacy issues once and for all.

**THE GREEN PARTY WILL LOWER
THE VOTING AGE TO ALLOW
16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS TO VOTE**



**THE GREEN PARTY IS STANDING SEVEN
CANDIDATES ACROSS NORTHERN IRELAND
TO PROTECT YOUR VITAL PUBLIC SERVICES**

Your Candidates



East Belfast
Georgina Milne



North Belfast
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Strangford
Ricky Bamford



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