



# NORWICH GREEN PARTY

Manifesto - City Council Elections 2015

## A CITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD

### A Different Approach to Politics

Politics must change if we want society to change. When people own the political process, real progress can happen. We want to see political debates motivated by cooperation on common aims and respectfulness in areas of disagreement. Norwich Green Party works to make politics in Norwich and Norfolk more democratic and participatory:

- Where Greens have common aims with other parties we will seek to work constructively to achieve them together.
- Our councillors are not whipped to vote on party lines. Green councillors try to reach a common position in line with their core aims and beliefs, but their ultimate responsibility is to constituents.
- Norwich residents come from a wide range of backgrounds. We value that diversity and believe that it enriches our collective thinking. Building strong communities means bringing together people from different backgrounds and helping them to participate in decisions that affect their neighbourhoods. Ethnic background, gender, sexuality and disability should be no barriers to participation.

Norwich has a fine tradition of protecting its most vulnerable residents, looking after its green spaces and maintaining strong communities. Government cuts now threaten our ability to care for the city we love. Green Councillors have opposed these cuts at every opportunity.

If elected, a Green Council in Norwich would do everything in its power to avoid implementing them. Greens believe in equal access to the elements of a decent life. Building healthy communities begins with securing the basic human needs of food and housing for everyone. To achieve this, we need councillors who work for the common good.

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### HOUSING

#### HOMES FOR ALL

Homes should be places of comfort and security and everyone should have access to quality housing. Nobody should have to live in fear of homelessness and fuel poverty. Unfortunately, these problems are the reality for many people in Norwich. We promote fair rents for both social housing and private tenancies. We campaign against the unfair Bedroom Tax and other benefit cuts that hit vulnerable people the hardest.

*Our priorities:*

- **House building.** The government needs to support new council house building. All new housing should meet the highest environmental standards to tackle fuel poverty and climate change.
- **House maintenance.** Council homes should be warm, safe and well-maintained, and the council should ensure that landlords keep privately rented homes to a better standard.
- **Council Ownership.** Council housing should remain in council hands. This will give tenants the biggest say in how their homes are managed.
- **Stop the Bedroom Tax.** The Bedroom Tax is destroying lives, and must be removed. A Green Council would not evict anyone because they can't pay this unfair tax.

### ECONOMY AND WELLBEING

#### A FAIR ECONOMY

Everyone should be able to contribute to the life of the city. Meaningful opportunities to work or volunteer should be available for all. New developments in Norwich should benefit Norwich citizens, not just the corporations who build them.

*Our priorities:*

- **Make Norwich a centre of excellence for sustainable technologies.** We encourage investment in local low-carbon industries to create jobs and training opportunities for local people.
- **Promote and improve Norwich market.** The market should be a vibrant, friendly and accessible community hub that supports local traders and the buying and selling of local produce.
- **Support credit unions and community banks** and help citizens to access sound financial advice and avoid exploitative sources of credit.
- **Incomes that people can live on.** We will work towards a Norwich where nobody works for less than a living wage of £10 per hour or on a zero-hours contract. Nobody should be left without income because of Council delays in processing benefit claims.

### COMMUNITY AND DEMOCRACY

#### SHARING DECISIONS

Public services should be run for the good of everyone, not the profits of a few. Too much power has been transferred to unaccountable bodies and a small group of cabinet councillors makes most of the important decisions on matters that are still under direct council control. Decision-making should involve all councillors and the communities they represent.

*Our priorities:*

- **Democratic bodies, not big business, should plan the city's future.** The policies that shape the city should be made in public where they can be challenged by citizens and councillors.
- **Involve more councillors in decisions.** The cabinet should be replaced by a committee system, which gives every councillor influence.
- **Involve communities in council decisions.** The council should make decisions in partnership with residents and communities, and people need to see how their involvement makes a difference.
- **Promote community life.** The city's community centres, residents' associations and community groups should be better supported.

### ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

#### A CITY FOR EVERYONE

A good environment is essential for the well-being of people in Norwich. People want green spaces, lively communities, and cleaner streets. A Green Council would seek to work with the County Council to create a sustainable modern public transport system and cycle network rather than continued road-building for private cars.

*Our priorities:*

- **Protecting Norwich's living heritage.** Communities need support to look after their green spaces. Quality outdoor spaces improve people's physical and mental health and strengthen community ties. Trees are a vital part of our city but have been lost due to council cuts.
- **Re-use and recycle more materials.** Waste is a community resource, but is still being sent to landfill. A Green council would support re-use networks to prevent waste and fly-tipping.
- **A city-wide 20mph speed limit to save lives and cut emissions.** Making streets safe for walking and cycling helps people to stay healthy and save money and gives children freedom to play outdoors.
- **Invest in public transport.** Making public transport cheaper and more reliable would reduce people's need to drive cars in the city.