European Election MANIFESTO 2014: Eastern England
Executive Summary

Greens are different. We won’t walk away from Europe like some Parties; we want to change it from within. Green MEPs already in Europe form a group larger than those which the Conservatives or UKIP belong to. Green MEPs have won tougher climate-change-reduction targets and secured a cap on bankers’ bonuses. They have stood up for your right not to be overworked and spied on, and battled against public sector cuts. Now it’s time to strengthen their hand by sending a Green from our region.

Together we will work for a Europe much more in touch with the interests of people like you and your family, rather than the international corporate lobbyists who like things run on a politics-as-usual basis. So we’re looking to put communities before fracking, for example, and local businesses before multinationals. After this winter’s floods we all know that we have to stop further deterioration of our environment, and we also want safe food, clean air and proper protection for animals. We want a peaceful, secure future for our children. Greens in Europe can help with all of that to happen. Vote Green:

- Increase the EU-wide carbon dioxide emissions target to 60% initially and eventually 90% by 2030; and introduce binding renewable energy targets for all EU member states.
- Green investment to cut carbon and create jobs - including in insulation of existing and new housing, offshore wind, solar, and other renewable energies, public transport and nature conservation.
- Work urgently to achieve a global agreement at the Paris Climate Summit in 2015.
- Support the rural economy and farm-based livelihoods, protecting the rural environment and protecting biodiversity;
- Strengthen animal welfare protection and the enforcement of international agreements on wildlife trade
- Return the railways to public ownership and re-regulate local bus services.
- Invest in integrated local cycling and walking and car share measures in local communities across the Eastern Region.
- Private sector banks should be split between retail and investment banks and none should be “too big to fail”.
- Control of the European Central Bank should be democratised, through a committee of European Parliament members replacing unaccountable bankers.
- Laws should require companies to report on social and environmental factors, not just financial performance.
- Governments should use planning, taxation, advice, and company law, to help to develop co-operatives and other social enterprises, and local small businesses.
- Laws should be introduced to end discrimination against part-timers, which would enable many people to gain work-life balance whilst at the same time creating new employment.
- Undertake an honest debate about immigration that focuses on equality rather than victimisation.
- Militarily, Europe needs to assert more strongly its independence from the USA and its commitment to case-by-case consideration of situations, rejecting any blanket idea of a ‘North Atlantic alliance’.
- Rejection of the proposed EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which would be a disaster for environmental and social rights.
- The entire process of the EU Council of Ministers meetings, including documents, discussions, lobbying and minutes should become open to public and parliamentary scrutiny
- Require far greater openness about lobbying in Brussels, including a full register of lobbyists.
- Introduce a strong EU-wide data protection law.
A Different Europe

The Greens find it impossible to be simply ‘pro-’ or ‘anti-’ Europe. We want to stay in the European Union, but we want to change it radically. In this manifesto, we will set out why and how.

For the Westminster parties the European Union offers the opportunity for profits and growth; for the Green Party, Europe is about hope, peace and a genuine prosperity for all. As we mark the centenary of the First World War we should celebrate the achievements of a union that has prevented wars for seven decades, but we also acknowledge that the crisis facing Europe today is adding to tensions between nations.

As Greens we work in the European Union to reinforce co-operation between nations, but we are also critical of the growing power of corporations and the inequality that this has given rise to, which we identify as a key source of tension within and between nations. In spite of its many achievements, in recent years the European Union and its member states have been failing many of its citizens.

The idea of Europe has been met with growing frustration, fear, even with anger, as a result of the economic crisis which meant that many social, democratic and economic achievements have been threatened or destroyed. People have grown fearful and have lost the sense of security that the Union once guaranteed.

Europe is in crisis for many reasons. We have allowed unacceptable risk-taking and greed by unleashing and deregulating financial markets, resulting in high unemployment, stagnation, increased social division and injustice. The current economic model is not sustainable and is undermining the natural world, whose resources we need to create prosperity. The lack of serious agreement at global climate conferences in recent years has shown how dangerously far we are removed from avoiding catastrophic climate change.

The real wealth of Europe lies in our skilful people and the abundance of our environment. The European Union currently does much to protect these, through environmental regulations and support for workers’ rights, but they are under increasing threat from the increasing power of corporations and their rapacious exploitation of people and planet in pursuit of profit.

We invite you to join us in our efforts to turn anger about all this into new hope. Europe must change. Europe, indeed, needs fundamental transformation. We hope to share with you our vision of a Europe that returns to its original mission of achieving peace and prosperity for all, a Europe for the common good.

An Economy for the Common Good

The single market lies at the heart of ‘corporate Europe’. As Greens we value the protections offered by the regulation surrounding the operation of this market, such as the banning of GM crops or basic animal welfare standards. But we believe that our security would be better served by more locally-based economies and that trade is often socially damaging as well as producing unnecessary carbon dioxide emissions from excessive transportation.

Five years after the outset of the financial crisis, our system remains dominated by banks that are too big and/or too interconnected to fail and therefore too dangerous. Bank bail-outs have cost billions to the European taxpayers; private debt in the UK has reached record levels - and banks continue to be convicted of misselling and fraudulent practices. The Green Party has a simple message on banks: the banking services we all rely on for our daily lives should be separated from the risky casino activities of the financial giants.

Green MEPs are leading the way in reforming Europe’s banking sector. Green MEP Philippe Lamberts won the battle to introduce a cap on bankers’ bonuses, meaning no banker can earn a bonus worth more than 100% of his or her annual salary. This is a small start but even that was fought tooth-and-nail by Osborne and his friends in the City, who have also opposed the introduction of a Financial Transactions Tax.

The Green Group in the European Parliament is also leading the attack on the dangerous and secret trade talks to extend the single market to include the US. As Greens in an area with a strong agricultural sector we fear that livelihoods will be threatened if standards of regulation fall. In the Eastern Region we focus on high-quality produce and high animal welfare standards. In the new trade regime it is likely that big corporations that focus on volume rather than quality will be able to undermine the high welfare standards that we have in the UK. In the dairy industry this may mean that we will be forced to accept milk produced from cows that have been given the BST hormone, even though consumers do not want such milk and we have worked strenuously in the EU to oppose the use of BST.

A US-EU Trade area (‘TTIP’) would create special courts with the power to overrule laws if trade was deemed to have been obstructed. This subordinates democracy to the international markets, and may force us to accept harmful hormones and cruel farming practises that we have fought strenuously in the EU to oppose. Thus Greens will oppose TTIP in the European Parliament.
European structural funding has brought great benefits to the Eastern Region. If used wisely, European structural funding could create thousands of green jobs in the East. This would achieve the triple win of enabling people to find satisfying work, building our green infrastructure for the future, and reducing our impact on the environment. In a time of recession we need EU funding to have the maximum impact in terms of jobs.

At present a large proportion of funding is spent on building new roads and expanding airports, the infrastructure of the past that is environmentally destructive and also undermines local economies - and this must end. Spending on public transport, energy efficiency and environmental restoration projects would create more employment while also protecting our environment and making us more resilient in the face of human-influenced climate change.

Summary:

- Introduce a Financial Transactions Tax as a first step towards making banking work for the common good not the private interests of shareholders;
- Reinforce consumer protection, especially in the area of the treatment of animals;
- Abandon the secret trade talks with the US that could undermine our democratic rights and market regulation;
- Laws should require companies to report on social and environmental factors, not just financial performance.
- Short-termism in stock markets – which puts extreme pressure on companies – should be fought by restricting shareholder voting rights to those who hold shares for a minimum of one year
- Laws should be introduced to end discrimination against part-timers, which would enable many people to gain work-life balance whilst at the same time creating new employment.
- Support for current moves within the EU to improve resource efficiency.
- Changes to rules for EU structural funding so that it achieves environmental improvements.

‘One of the most important political issues, in the wake of the financial crisis, is getting a grip on the bankers. I’m impressed by the work Green MEPs have done to get finance working for us all rather than for the benefit of a tiny minority. The ONLY effective action so far on capping bankers’ bonuses in Europe has come from Green MEPs.’

Rupert Read, European lead candidate, Norwich
An Energy Policy for the Common Good

The UK has been left vulnerable because of the failure of successive governments since 1979 to treat energy as a key strategic area of our national life. Although much of the debate about energy focuses on producing that energy, it makes sense to begin with reducing our demand for energy, especially by improving the quality of our homes. Energy policy should prioritise energy savings and efficiency and then look at bringing in renewable energy. For detail, see Rupert Read’s ‘An energy revolution in the East’ report, launched last month with Jonathon Porritt, in Great Yarmouth and Sizewell: http://eastern.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/easternfiles/energy_revolution.pdf

The move towards a clean energy future offers exciting opportunities for the East. According to data from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the East had 77,721 low carbon and environmental jobs in 2010-11, compared with motor trades (49,400), financial services (91,800) and telecommunications (18,400). There is huge potential to increase this sector so as to achieve environmental and social benefits, as well as economic ones. Between 2007 and 2010 the East of England saw a 38% increase in installed renewables capacity and generated 663 GWh of power through renewables in 2010.

Energy is not just about how electricity is generated but also who profits from it. More than 45% of the energy bill is accounted for by a broken energy market, controlled by the Big Six, who can set prices at will to make profits. £5m was taken home by British Gas boss, Sam Laidlaw, last year. The privatisation of energy has failed and 68% of British people now think that energy should be publicly owned.

Greens are making a strong argument that more generation should be locally owned and energy supply should be decentralised. Here in the East, Greens on the Norfolk County Council have fought hard Tory opposition to establish the Norfolk Energy Saving Company, an independently-run enterprise wholly owned by the Council. It has succeeded in installing millions of pounds worth of renewable energy technology in Council properties and will sell power back to the National Grid, keeping this money in the local community.

Building on the success of the EU’s 2020 renewable energy target, we want to achieve a target for 45% of energy to be supplied from renewable sources by 2030. When you realise that Brazil already produces 89% of its electricity from renewable sources this is not an over-ambitious target. And we should end the absurd subsidies for fossil fuels, which received £4.3bn in the UK in 2011. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) suggests the UK is now the world’s fifth largest subsidiser of fossil fuels after the US, Russia, Australia and Germany.

The important role that the European Union will play in energy developments was made clear by the decision by Ed Davey to submit his plan for expansion of Hinkley Point in Somerset to the EU Commission. He was bound to do this because any development that is to receive government subsidy needs to pass the State Aid rules that are part of the EU single market. For the East, this foreshadows the proposed expansion of the Sizewell site in Suffolk, suggesting that development of costly and out-dated nuclear power here will also be impossible without subsidy. We will use EU State Aid rules to oppose any subsidy to Sizewell C.

Summary:

- A rapid programme of home insulation to create jobs and reduce energy demand;
- Political support for on-shore and off-shore wind installations and tidal and wave power generators at Gt. Yarmouth and Lowestoft;
- A high and consistent rate of feed-in tariff for community renewables;
- Invest in European energy networks connecting renewable energy production in different parts of the continent, increasing energy security and cutting costs.


‘Every Time I visit the coast I see with my own eyes the huge opportunities offered by offshore wind power both to address the issue of climate change and to provide for employment. We need more Green MEPs who are committed to the renewable energy revolution.’

Robert Lindsay, European Candidate, Babergh
Protecting our Climate for the Common Good

Europe has led the way in international climate negotiations and it has been the Green Group pushing the European Parliament towards more ambitious and more urgent targets for carbon dioxide reductions. As this winter’s storm surge in North and East Norfolk demonstrated, the East of England is particularly vulnerable to climate change and the extreme weather events it brings.

Greens in the European Parliament are calling for a climate law, built on existing national and regional initiatives, with both targets and sanctions to ensure that the climate goals will be met. This will commit Europe to a path of sustainable economic transformation and away from devastating climate change. With the UN climate summit in Paris in 2015 (CoP 21) hoping to deliver a binding global agreement, the clock is ticking and the EU needs to play a leading role. This means increasing its existing and outdated greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2020 from 20% to 30%. It also means setting a target to reduce these climate-damaging emissions by 60% from their 1990 levels by 2030. Boosting the EU’s Emissions Trading Scheme is one way of achieving this - and this must mean setting a high and rising price for CO2 emissions. Public subsidies for and investments in fossil fuels should be ended.

It is shameful that there was strong UK lobbying unsuccessfully attempting to block binding national renewable energy targets. Greens call for a rapid transition to an economy based on renewable energy. It is estimated that binding renewable targets at the EU level could lead to the creation of 570,000 jobs and save €500 billion through fuel import reductions.

Summary:

• Increase the EU-wide carbon dioxide emissions target to 60% initially and eventually 90% by 2030;
• Introduce binding renewable energy targets for all EU member states;
• Work urgently to achieve a global agreement at the Paris summit in 2015.

Farming for the Common Good

The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy is driven by three main motivations:

• Supporting the rural economy and underpinning farm-based livelihoods;
• Protecting the rural environment and protecting biodiversity;
• Encouraging European farming to be more globally competitive.

It is clear that these objectives are inconsistent and are taken from distinct visions of the purpose and nature of the EU and rural life. They are also understood differently in different EU member-states, which have conflicting views of the role of farmers and agriculture.

The CAP takes up a large part of the EU budget, involving transfers to farmers of about €55bn annually. There is obviously something special and fundamental about the business of farming. This is why we do not leave it to the vagaries of the market but support farm incomes with public subsidies. This recognition of the special place that farming has in our national life also explains why, in a single-market that is ideologically wedded to unrestrained competition, the agricultural sector is still protected by a range of external tariffs and quotas, shielding European farmers from global competition.

This special treatment, which as Greens we accept and support, places a duty on farmers to use the land for the common good and not just for their individual advantage. We are seeking to support a sustainable farming sector that builds local resilience, protects the countryside, reduces water pollution and creates high-quality jobs. To achieve this we believe that we need to use the subsidy system to encourage smaller farms using less intensive and preferably organic systems of production. We seek a system of payments to support farming systems that respond to the desire and capacity of people to work on the land, while also creating jobs through supporting food delivery systems that reduce food miles and connect local producers and consumers.

In terms of practical proposals to reform the CAP system we would argue for:

• Accepting the maximum limit on individual and corporate CAP payments of €300,000, as proposed by the Commission, and consider reducing this further in future years.
• Abolishing the distinction between Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 payments and requiring all CAP payments to be based on the achievement of environmental benefits.
Protecting Animals: ‘the Common Good’ includes them, too...

Greens have the strongest policies on animal protection of all the parliamentary political parties and a proven track record of action in Europe. Greens ARE the voice for animals in Europe. No party has stronger policies combined with a record of action on animal-protection issues.

Greens strongly support the introduction of an animal-welfare framework law covering all categories of animal that are subject to some form of human control – including companion animals, exotic pets, farmed animals and captive wild animals – demonstrating that the EU is serious about animal protection. There must also be comprehensive and accountable Europe-wide implementation of existing rules, such as the Pig Directive, where some countries are turning a blind eye to producers who flout current rules. We also demand that animal welfare be included as a consideration in all trade agreements.

Greens are completely opposed to factory farming which is a highly inefficient way of producing food. It damages the environment, creates pollution, overuses water, requires intensive application of drugs to combat infection and disease, reduces food security and treats animals as machines, not as sentient beings.

Illegal wildlife trade, combined with unsustainable legal trade, is devastating species across the globe. The EU must strengthen and enforce the multilateral agreements on wildlife trade and timber, and use its influence to ensure other countries are enforcing their own rules.

Greens are also committed to strengthening EU regulation for companion animals. Companion animals are increasingly being traded across country borders, yet companion-animal welfare is regulated at national level. Greens will push for coordinated action on stray animals and legislation to ensure countries across Europe deal with stray animals in a humane way, using programmes based on neutering and not culling, and for European legislation to regulate the breeding and sale of cats and dogs.

Summary:

An animal-welfare framework law covering companion animals, exotic pets, farmed animals and captive wild animals

• Strengthen and enforce the multilateral agreements on wildlife trade

• Include consideration of animal welfare in all trade agreements

Fisheries for the Common Good

Fisheries are traditionally an important part of the life of the Eastern Region.

The Green Party has pledged to protect long-term crab and lobster fishing at Cromer by supporting the introduction of a Marine Conservation Zone around the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds. This will prevent the depletion of stocks by industrial “super-crabbers”, and may also act as a useful barrier to the reactivation of licences for Underwater Coal Gasification that exist in this area. This process, which is similar to fracking, would pose an enormous threat both to fishing and marine biodiversity in general.

Under the supervision of Commissioner Maria Damanaki a new EU fisheries policy was agreed during the first half of 2013. Many of the objectives of the Green Group were achieved by the new proposal, although their more ambitious proposal to protect marine environments was not adopted in full.

The Greens have played a lead role in pushing for a more sustainable Common Fisheries Policy. The policy of throwing unwanted fish back into the sea was a massive waste of food and income and will now be curtailed. Fish stocks will be better managed and the capacity of the fishing fleet better regulated. Consumers will now be able to see not only where their fish came from but how it was caught. Much remains to be done to implement these reforms and to ensure that loopholes are not exploited. We will continue to fight for better controls over intensive fish farming, which is highly polluting, and for fairer treatment for small-scale, local fishing inside and outside Europe.

Our policies to reduce carbon emissions will contribute not only to combating climate change, but will also act against the acidification of the oceans, which is currently threatening fish and other marine life.
A Transport Revolution

[See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oW9kpt_B4U ]

[For detail on this section, see Rupert Read’s report calling for a ‘transport revolution’ in the East, launched with Natalie Bennett and Caroline Lucas: http://eastern.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/easternfiles/Transport_revolution.pdf ]

The Green Party in the Eastern Region of England has a vision and a plan for an efficient, reliable, clean, and green transport system across the region. Instead of investing in vanity projects such as the HS2 high speed rail link between London and the North which will only serve the needs of big business travellers at the expense of the rest of us, and will do nothing whatsoever for our region, the Greens have a plan for investment in an integrated public transport system across Eastern England that would be more effective in supporting local businesses, commuters, families and all travellers. Greens across the region are already campaigning and supporting local people and groups to improve public transport, for example to save subsidised bus services under threat in various areas. But more than just saving existing services and campaigning for incremental improvements, with a Green MEP we can do more to work for a bold, integrated, co-ordinated transport system. This is because a Green Parliamentarian can achieve change directly through the EU (via the budget, and via the rules governing transport systems in Europe), and also because he can seek where necessary to help ‘knock heads together’ and lobby for change within the region.

Our Vision for Transport in the East centres on the following 5 point game-changing transport solutions.

- Return railways to public ownership.
- New Eastern Region EASTERN card, modelled on the OYSTER card that has proven so successful in London.
- Electrification of railways, improvements to networks, re-opening lines.
- Re-regulation of local bus services - again, copying the superbly-successful London model.
- Investing in integrated local cycling and walking and car share measures in local communities across the Eastern Region.

True economic prosperity (which is not the same as discredited GDP-growth) comes from communities and people being less dependent on having to travel to large distances for work and, less reliant on goods produced on the other side of the world and with lower needs for food travelling thousands of miles before it reaches us. Green Party transport policy emphasises the need for us to travel comfortably, reliably and sustainably, while our economic policy is based on a shift towards high quality good and services being produced more locally.

EU transport policy goes basically in the right direction - towards reduced emissions, improved public transport etc - but not where its ‘Single Market’ policies interfere with that direction, because the neoliberal Single Market implies (i) a need for the maximum amount of transport interconnection in order to facilitate (maximise) the free movement of goods, and (ii) a market for firms across the EU to compete to provide transport services anywhere in the EU. The EU TEN-T network, although it’s mainly rail schemes, mixes in with them some long-distance road schemes. The EU Transport White Paper emphasises the need to reduce emissions, but also wants to deal with the ‘problem’ (sic.) of constraints on the capacity of airports. So there is a pattern of ‘interference’ here in current EU policy between the sustainability emphasis and the single market emphasis.
Europe for the Common Good of the World

The EU was created to ensure peace after devastating wars. Today it must contribute to ensuring peace not only in Europe but throughout the world. Greens want to promote non-violence and a culture of cooperation. The EU has played and can continue to play an important role in conflict prevention, civil conflict-resolution, peace-building and peacekeeping. It must help developing pillars of peace by promoting freedom and eradicating poverty and by increasing mutual understanding between cultures. Greens have won a much larger EU budget to be spent on peace-building through the Instrument for Stability and Peace. We have also supported the idea of an EU Peace Corps and the creation of a Peace Institute. We are opposed to financing military research from the EU budget, to the development of European drones and to Europe being a nuclear warehouse. We will continue to campaign for nuclear disarmament.

The European arms trade with the Middle and the Far East is exporting insecurity to these regions. Greens want to cut down this trade and prevent such exports, including surveillance technology where it could be used against freedom movements and civic protest.

Increase the EU’s peace-keeping budget.

- End the destructive arms trade and work for nuclear disarmament in Europe.
- Militarily, Europe needs to assert more strongly its independence from the USA and its commitment to case-by-case consideration of situations, rejecting any blanket idea of a ‘North Atlantic alliance’.
- Tackle the causes of immigration – e.g. dangerous climate change; war and instability abroad; economic hardship abroad; unscrupulous bosses seeking a quick buck through use of underpaid foreign labour – rather than victimising immigrants.

Making Democracy Work for the Common Good

More democracy, not less, is the answer to the current crisis of confidence in the European Union. We believe that a shift towards more citizens’ participation, accountability and transparency is crucial to gain legitimacy for future European co-operation.

Although ‘subsidiarity’ may be an unattractive word it sums up a Green view of the political process: power should be devolved to the lowest appropriate level, where it can be exercised more effectively. Greens believe that power is generally much too centralised at present. Pollution knows no frontiers: thus environmental issues are an obvious case for international action of the kind undertaken at the EU level; but power over many other decisions should be decided locally.

By choosing the Members of the European Parliament, citizens have a say on how many crucial issues of our times will be tackled, from climate change to bank regulation, from the refugee crisis to youth unemployment. We also want to give the European Parliament itself a stronger role in EU crisis management and economic policy making.

The growing influence handed to the European Parliament by the Lisbon Treaty must be exercised responsibly and not undermined by commercial lobbying interests, which currently have far too much influence in Brussels, where they are shielded by weak and ineffective rules on lobbying. In the Council of the European Union, as well, more transparency and accountability is needed.

To get a broader and more open debate it is necessary that the national parliaments take more responsibility by imposing better control over governments’ actions in European affairs. We also want to extend the national parliaments’ opportunities to react when the EU exceeds its authority by not following the rules on subsidiarity.

Summary:

- Create legislation for EU-wide referenda.
- Make subsidiarity happen by devolving power down towards Europe’s regions.
- Lower the voting age to 16 for European Elections.
- Democratise the European Central Bank by making it accountable to a committee of MEPs.
- Give the European Parliament the power of legislative initiative; reduce the power of the Commission.
Making the EU Work for the Common Good

Any corrupt behaviour by EU officials or parliamentarians in their relations with lobbyists must be challenged urgently. Much of the excessive power of corporate lobbyists is exercised on the Commission. A regulation must be enforced also to tackle the problem of ‘revolving doors’ where senior bureaucrats and politicians in European institutions join private organizations which they were responsible for regulating.

We want to provide the Court of Justice of the EU and the European Court of Auditors with stronger tools to control the way in which the EU resources are spent and to act against corruption both within the EU institutions and, in the case of serious problems, within the member states. Parliament should be given more power to act against wastefulness, for example to end the travelling circus between Brussels and Strasbourg and have a single location for the Parliament.

Our proposals for more democracy, more transparency and more accountability at the EU level require clear changes in the functioning of the EU. The European Parliament should have the right to initiate legislation. It needs more legislative co-decision powers while national veto-rights should be diminished. Some decisions must, on the other hand, be taken much closer to the citizens.

The Greens in the European Parliament are at the forefront of the fight for digital rights. They helped stop the ACTA-treaty and we fight for a strong European data protection law and strict net neutrality. Now is the right time to go all the way and take civic rights into the digital age. Your personal data should belong to you, not to companies or governments. Your privacy must be respected. The data retention law, which obliges telecom providers to store data about whom you communicate with, is a serious mistake and must be abolished. Governments have to abide by their own laws. Whilst national security is important, personal freedoms and liberties must not be overridden.

- Ban the Brussels revolving door between lobbyists and the Commission;
- Require far greater openness about lobbying in Brussels, including a full register of lobbyists;
- Give the European Court of Auditors stronger powers;
- EU Parliament to be given the power to initiate legislation;
- Introduce a strong EU-wide data protection law.

'Young people feel shut out of the political debate both in Britain and the European Union. I’m working hard to find ways to engage young people.'

C’lir. Ash Haynes, Norwich, Young Greens activist and Green Party MEP-candidate

Let’s Make it Our Europe!

As Greens we believe that Europe is our common home and our future. That future is under threat. If we give room to xenophobia and nationalism then we will fall back into the competitive conflicts that marred our shared history and led to two world wars. In a globalised world, facing the daunting social, environmental and security challenges ahead, we need to work in partnership across Europe for a peaceful, secure and sustainable future.

We need an economy based on fair shares and cooperation rather than profits for the few. We need to ensure that we focus on the quality of our lives rather than economic growth, and that our economy respects ecological limits. The Europe we believe in is not self-satisfied, but ambitious. We refuse to condone failure in European policies - but we need to change Europe for the better, not just walk away to isolationism.