

Colchester Green Party For the Common Good

Our Manifesto for 2017

Colchester Green Party reflects the values, principles and policies of the national Green Party of England and Wales.

The Green Party will work for:

- ☞ An economy that gives everyone their fair share
- ☞ A society capable of supporting everyone's needs
- ☞ A planet protected from the threat of climate change
- ☞ A more democratic political system

The Green Party is the only Party that offers a **genuine alternative** to the other Parties to develop the local economy, to protect the local environment and to create a new kind of democratic politics.

1. Local economy

* We will work to ensure that the growth of our town is matched by appropriate investment in infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals and public transport links.

*We will support local businesses, encouraging schemes which keep money circulating within the local economy, instead of letting it be siphoned away by multinational corporations.

*We will prioritise the development of the town centre rather than out-of-town shopping centres.

*We will explore ways of reducing the overheads of small businesses in the town centre.

*We will seek to attract businesses to Colchester that focus on recycling, generating renewable energy, energy saving and home insulation. This would bring investment and new jobs to the area.

*We will promote the building and upkeep of greener homes, favouring design and build with low carbon materials and methods.

*We actively support our local foodbanks for as long as people are in need of them but our policy is:-

-No-one who is working should be paid less than a living wage. The National Living Wage is discriminatory in that it excludes under 25s. This section of the population are the most prone to insecure zero-hours contracts. We will push for employers in the Borough to pay their staff **at least** the National Living Wage

regardless of age.

* We will encourage and support fairer alternative credit services such as Colchester Credit Union.

2. Our environment

The Green Party has long recognised that climate change is the worst environmental hazard facing us.

* We call for more stringent targets for reduction of global, national and local greenhouse gas emissions and for the establishment of effective enforcement mechanisms. **Our local policies** in areas such as transport and planning reflect this commitment.

* We will protect green spaces from development and utilise brownfield sites.

* We are opposed to the Council's use of dangerous herbicides on our pavements.

* We will work with the Essex Wildlife Trust to promote bio-diversity.

* We will strive to protect Salary Brook Valley from development and oppose plans for a 'West Tey' huge new town site on green fields.

* We will improve the cleaning up of litter by identifying litter 'hot spots' for more regular cleaning and by ensuring that all streets are thoroughly cleaned up every two weeks.

* Surveys show that air quality is now poor in many areas of the town. The central corridor-which runs from Mersea Road down to North Station- has some of the worst quality air in the Borough.

Air quality is one of our top priorities-

* We will use local council powers to tackle air pollution by:-

-reducing traffic flow at key points

-providing better alternatives to driving for local journeys

-curbing speeds

-introducing 20mph speed limit areas to decrease the release of air pollutants and to reduce traffic accidents

-working with bus companies to run cleaner and more reliable vehicles in Colchester

-provide more cycle lanes

* We are opposed to One-Size-Fits-All waste collection and the limit of 3 black bags per fortnight per household. We will make sure residents know about recycling options and about methods to reduce household waste.

* We will lobby companies to use environmentally friendly packaging to reduce waste.

3. The NHS

Our NHS is the most effective public service ever created in the UK.

The Green Party will lobby national government to end the creeping process of

privatisation that is eroding it. We believe the NHS should remain a unified public service and we oppose Private Finance Initiatives.

- * We will rigorously campaign to persuade national government to match growth in local population sizes with greater NHS investment.

- * We will lobby to establish Community Health Centres that will provide community-based services.

- * We are the only Party to consistently oppose cuts to local council services and the NHS.

- * We will fight to ensure there are sufficient numbers of qualified staff.

- * We will lobby national government to ensure that mental healthcare has parity with physical healthcare.

- * We can reduce the cost of healthcare by building a healthier society-tackling air pollution, reducing the stress and stigma of unemployment, reducing inequality and overcrowded housing and ensuring that everyone can have access to healthy, affordable food.

4. Housing

- * We all want warm, safe and secure homes. The Tories have presided over the worst housing crisis in living memory. At present house building is to meet market demand, not local need. Social housing is essential to address this crisis.

- * Colchester Green Party will work to build and refurbish homes to meet everyone's need for secure and comfortable housing. Council and co-operative housing will be prioritised for funding, housing associations democratised and protections for private tenants improved.

- * We will lobby central government to fund the provision of new council housing and for an end to blocking local councils from increasing their stock.

- * We will utilise brownfield sites for new housing rather than our countryside and ensure that such sites are not left undeveloped for many years or developed into luxury flats and PFI expensive student accommodation, which do not address the real local need.

- * We will work to ensure that private landlords maintain their properties to a very good standard.

- * We will push for Colchester's derelict buildings and shops to be brought back into use, including those above shops.

5. Leisure and tourism

- * We will work to restore and make more accessible our heritage sites and to improve their advertising and sign-posting.

- * We will work for the addition of a Civil War Museum and liaise with battle re-enactment groups with a view to staging more public events.

- * We will liaise closely with the Balmerne Tower Trust regarding the options for bringing the Jumbo water tower back into appropriate use.

*We will work to ensure that there is more publicity and improved signposting of our Roman sites such as Butt Road Church and the Roman Circus Museum.

*We will work to support the development of our community and creative spaces.

*We will protect our Library from the further selling-off of resources and the conversion of whole floors as offices. We believe that the library should remain a library rather than Council offices by another name.

6. Local democracy

* Time and again decisions affecting Colchester are made by Essex County Council with no understanding of what Colchester really needs.

***Localism** is central to Green Party politics. We would campaign for more powers to be devolved from County Council level to the Borough, particularly roads.

*We believe that council meetings should be as open and transparent as possible and more accessible to those most affected by decisions made in those meetings.

*We will work to increase the involvement of residents and residents' groups in council decision-making processes by holding consultations at an early stage, before decisions are made by officers.

*The National Green Party is campaigning for a change to a proportional representation electoral system, replacing the undemocratic and unfair 'first past the post' system. We would campaign for Colchester to pilot proportional representation systems for local elections.

7. Transport

*We will campaign to bring the railways back into public ownership, saving money and improving services, a policy supported by 66% of the population.

*We will campaign to return control of our roads to the Borough.

*We will work to end the traffic problems in the town centre with a combination of affordable and efficient public transport, improved cycle routes and by encouraging more walking and car sharing.

*We will work with local bus companies and provide financial incentives to facilitate cleaner, less polluting buses.

*We will lobby for more affordable fares and a proper bus station.

*We will introduce 20mph zones in urban areas. Through these measures we would cut congestion, pollution and reduce road casualties.

*GP councillors will push for safe and properly planned cycle routes and the increased availability of cycle parking and storage facilities.

8. Community safety

*We will investigate why Colchester has a higher crime rate per person than

inner city Birmingham and Liverpool. Solutions are complex but include many things that the Council can influence such as licensing, design of public spaces and youth and leisure facilities.

*We will work to halt cuts to police numbers and insist that any new development has a corresponding increase in policing resources, in the fire department and in ambulance services.

9. Defence

*Colchester is a garrison town. We would campaign to ensure that our armed services have the up-to-date equipment and resources they need to do their job properly and safely.

*We will work to help veterans train and find work and provide support for those suffering from physical and psychological trauma.

*Nationally the Green Party would cancel the replacement for Trident which would save an estimated £205 billion, some of which could be used to ensure that our soldiers have the best up-to-date equipment. The cancellation of a Trident replacement is important because underwater drone technology will make Trident both detectable and targetable and therefore obsolete.

10. No nuclear at Bradwell

*We are strongly opposed to the proposed new nuclear power station at Bradwell on safety, environmental and economic grounds.

*The site is low-lying and liable to flooding, storm surges and other coastal processes which will result from climate change. It lies on a fragile and shallow estuary with Marine Conservation Zone designation.

*Bradwell is already a nuclear waste site for radioactive waste from other power stations. New nuclear development would increase the amount of waste.

*There were radioactive leaks into the ground over a 14-year period to 2009 and a fire in 2011.

*Since 1952 there have been more than 17 major accidents at nuclear power stations throughout the world. Bradwell is only 9 miles from Colchester.

*A new nuclear power station would take 6 times as much cooling water from the estuary as the old one, seriously damaging the ecology of the estuary and the world-famous oyster industry.

*We advocate a tidal lagoon system which releases water at high tide, allowing water to flow out through turbines at low tide, generating electricity. Grid infrastructure formerly used at Bradwell nuclear power station could be utilised for this.

11. Education

*We will lobby central government to end tuition fees for students and replace loans with grants. Students leaving Essex University now face an average debt

of £45,000.

*We will promote a comprehensive system of local schools and lobby national government to bring Academies and Free Schools under Local Authority control.

*We will campaign for increased education spending. Funding cuts and privatisation are seriously affecting Sixth Form Colleges and adult education. Colchester has a large and successful Sixth Form College and we do not want to see it suffer.

*Many children have to travel several miles to school every day because their parents don't have confidence in their local schools or because school places aren't available. We will work to ensure that every child can attend their local school.

12. Animal Welfare

The Green Party has long recognised the need to treat animals well.

*We will ensure that all Council run catering services provide vegetarian and vegan options.

*We will work closely with animal welfare organisations and law enforcement agencies to ensure that reported animal abuse is investigated thoroughly.

COLCHESTER GREEN PARTY

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