



The Manifesto
of
The Green Party
for elections to
Worcester City Council
on
7th May 2015

What the Green Party stands for

Our core belief is SUSTAINABILITY. The Green Party believes that we must meet everyone's basic needs for health, safe food and water, clean air, housing, energy, education, an income, leisure, and a caring community, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet **their** needs.

As a democratic party funded by our members, we fight elections to bring people and their governments together to protect the natural environment, locally, nationally and globally and to promote a just society. One cannot be achieved without the other.

The present picture that threatens us all

The coalition government at Westminster has been obsessed with bringing down our national debt and reducing the fiscal deficit with **a brutal and unequal policy of austerity** in order, they claim, to protect future generations from our debts.

The present coalition government has allowed public services to deteriorate, the gap between rich and poor to increase massively, and the natural environment to deteriorate in pursuit of profits and economic growth.

The Green Party aims to address the root causes of these problems, rather than simply tinkering with the symptoms. Our approach looks beyond the short term and single issues, to offer a coherent long-term strategy for a sustainable future.

The Green Party wants to protect future generations by protecting the natural environment, fighting for social justice, and defending local democracy and the NHS, which are under threat of extinction from privatisation.

The Green Party acknowledges that councillors of all parties who have given service to the City are entitled to due recognition. However, we say that the traditional way of running the council is tired, out of date and needs to change so that the council can play its part in the establishment of social justice and a sustainable future.

TIME FOR A CHANGE...

A LOCAL ECONOMY

Worcester has a thriving economy in retail, manufacturing, services, building and tourism, but, in many cases, it is sustained by too many low-paid jobs, following NHS and public sector cuts. We need to ensure that the local economy has a positive impact on everyone.

The Green Party wants to increase the amount of local spending that is retained in the local economy.

Worcester Green Party supports:

- Small business grants and apprenticeship schemes.
- An expansion of recycling schemes, including food recycling, that will see the city move towards 'zero waste'.
- We acknowledge that government cuts have meant that the council has faced difficult budget decisions. However, we reject cuts and outsourcing and want to ensure that as much as possible of the city council's money is spent locally.

TOURISM

Worcester is already a major tourist destination offering attractions that include the cathedral, the Porcelain Museum, the Victorian market and the city's Civil War connections, though there is potential for much more.

- Tourists want to be able to move around the city avoiding congestion, and so this must be part of our transport strategy.
- Worcester Green Party favours a major expansion of tourism based on enhancement of the riverside and promotion of and support for the arts, theatre and entertainment.
- We would have a review of tourism policy to include ideas such as the Cornmarket car park becoming a piazza or marketplace.

HOUSING IN WORCESTER

The Green Party believes that a community with its people securely housed to a high standard of energy efficiency and affordability is a settled community in which individuals and families can prosper.

Houses built, renovated and insulated by local firms that are rented or sold to people living and working in Worcester contribute substantially to our vision for a local economy.

- Worcester has many unoccupied properties that should be used to reduce the need to build on green spaces.
- Worcester Green Party resists the sale of social housing and would promote the use of more flats and dwellings above city centre shops and other suitable under-used premises.
- To help those living in fuel poverty, we favour initiatives to install insulation and other energy efficiency measures in homes.
- We should push developers for higher minimum standards of energy efficiency in new housing that truly benefits the residents.

TRANSPORT AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

The Green Party favours a clean and healthy urban environment with excellent public transport and a road network serving people with disabilities, pedestrians, cyclists, freight and cars safely and cleanly.

Worcester suffers from major traffic congestion and poor air quality. We therefore need to reduce traffic coming into the city centre.

- The city and county councils must work together on a vision to improve the transport infrastructure to deal with problems such as congestion and pollution.
- Separation between motor traffic and people at work and leisure should be achieved as completely as possible. Trees, lawns, benches, squares, parks, open spaces and cafes are both desirable and popular.
- Worcester Green Party will keep parking charges under constant review in line with the needs of visitors and future transit developments.
- We would establish an integrated public transport network, which would benefit residents, businesses and tourists. This would include park-and-ride sites in Worcester and better facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

A HEALTHY POPULATION

Well-being is more than about prosperity; it is also about quality of life. The Green Party favours an effective, preventative approach to health care.

The council should work with health authorities to ensure that local, community-based GP clinics and health services remain publicly run and accessible to all.

Worcester Green Party favours:

- 20mph zones in residential areas to improve safety and air quality and encourage more people to walk and cycle to improve their health.
- Greater support for local food production via allotments, farmers' markets and local producers.

Swimming pool

Worcester Green Party supports the building of a high-quality swimming pool under the following conditions:

- Funding should come largely from external sources and not result in cuts to other vital services and projects.
- Running costs should be minimised to ensure it is not a drain on finances. It should be as sustainably built as possible.
- If it is built at Perdiswell, crossings on Bilford Road, parking facilities and good bus links must be provided.

Football club

Worcester Green Party supports the return of Worcester City Football Club to Worcester. We do not support Perdiswell as the site of the football club. Whatever site is chosen, there should not be a detrimental impact on the local area.

CRIME AND SOCIETY – THE ROLE OF STABLE COMMUNITIES

We need more effective partnerships between social services, the police, education establishments and the public.

A significant factor in reducing crime is building and maintaining stable communities.

Worcester Green Party favours:

- More community policing, with officers on the beat, rather than relying on CCTV surveillance.
- More Neighbourhood Watch and local residents' groups in all areas.
- Improved amenities that give local residents the opportunity to come together to help build a stronger community.

LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Local government can be difficult to understand and often seems remote from everyday life. The Green Party wants power to be devolved to local level and more resources placed under the control of local government, thus giving local people more say in the issues that matter.

The Green Party is committed to openness and freedom of information in all aspects of government.

Worcester Green Party favours:

- Genuine consultation that comes before decisions are made, not after.
- Worcester residents taking on the role of citizens, rather than consumers.
- Giving residents more opportunities to influence council priorities directly.