

#VOTEGREEN2022

A REAL GREEN NEW DEAL FOR OXFORD

#QUALITYHOMES

#BETTERCONNECTIVITY

#HEALTHIERCOMMUNITIES

#PROSPEROUSECONOMY

#ZEROCARBON

#PROTECTINGNATURE



**Green
Party**



#QUALITYHOMES

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Oxford has the least affordable housing in the UK. We believe that access to affordable, secure and decent housing is a human right, not a privilege. Nobody should be left homeless or have insecure accommodation.

ELECTED GREEN COUNCILLORS WILL:

- ✓ Revise the Oxford City Local Plan as early as possible to reflect the declaration of the climate emergency
- ✓ Utilise brownfield sites, such as old industrial sites, or above car parks, to build new, affordable, zero carbon housing
- ✓ Purchase long-term vacant properties, converting them to social housing, seeking compulsory purchase orders if necessary
- ✓ Use low-cost Council borrowing to build 100% social and zero carbon housing on Council-owned sites
- ✓ Work to improve residential moorings based on the findings of the Collaborative Housing 'Community Led Moorings' report
- ✓ Oppose evictions which result from cuts or delays in benefits or Universal Credit
- ✓ Introduce new Council-backed letting agency offering fairer rents and more secure contracts
- ✓ Offer more support to organisations that offer 'safety net' services such as the Oxford Homelessness Project
- ✓ Pursue a 'housing first' model to support rough sleepers into accommodation
- ✓ Implement in-depth renovation of older properties; delivering affordable, zero carbon homes with reduced energy bills
- ✓ Introduce an improved landlord registration scheme which does not result in costs being passed to tenants
- ✓ Introduce an Oxford Living Rent – promoting affordability in the private rented sector

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#BETTERCONNECTIVITY

While transport is primarily the responsibility of the County, the City Council plays a key role in delivering sustainable solutions including removing the need to travel. In the past, there have been many empty promises.

ELECTED GREEN COUNCILLORS WILL:

- ✓ Support 'Vision Zero' – the eradication of deaths and serious injuries on our roads; making Oxford a safer, healthier place
- ✓ Work with the bus companies to improve services, develop fairer pricing & become one of the UK's first all-electric bus cities
- ✓ Introduce electric shuttles to deliver goods around the city – avoiding HGVs in the City - and expand freight delivery by bike
- ✓ Implement cycle and pedestrian-friendly transport improvements and work to improve/deliver 'Connecting Oxford'
- ✓ Improve cycling infrastructure by creating joined-up cycleways, improving cycling priority and safety
- ✓ Create a real Zero Emission Zone to improve air quality, not the small congestion charge zone introduced by the Council
- ✓ Support current trial Low Traffic Neighbourhoods but with better local consultation and monitoring to determine permanence
- ✓ Support a ban on pavement parking with exceptions for marked parking bays
- ✓ Support the expansion of School Streets – safe zones around schools
- ✓ Support the introduction of car-sharing schemes and peer-to-peer lending schemes; and install more electric charging points
- ✓ Expand the proposed workplace parking levy to fund transport improvements; examine road pricing options
- ✓ Promote online and home working, and improved internet access to reduce the need to travel
- ✓ Ensure that Quickways are introduced only after proper consultation and consideration of how displaced parking is managed

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#HEALTHIERCOMMUNITIES

When it comes to health, Oxfordshire is a two-tier County. Most enjoy above average well-being yet six wards in Oxford fall within the 20% most deprived in England. In these areas, deaths from preventable causes, self-harm and obesity are above average.

ELECTED GREEN COUNCILLORS WILL:

- ✓ Support efforts to 'level up' health across the City by tackling the root causes: poverty, poor education, housing and pollution
- ✓ Work with health partners and the County to increase access to affordable health & social care, improving support for carers
- ✓ Protect and enhance Oxford's open spaces, recognising their ecological value as well as their contribution to well-being
- ✓ Continue to update and extend playgrounds, play equipment and recreational facilities for younger citizens
- ✓ Improve facilities so everyone has good access, including marginalised groups, whatever their level of mobility
- ✓ Adopt the 'Healthy Streets' approach to urban design (www.healthystreets.org.uk)
- ✓ Create attractive public spaces by adding fountains, benches, green spaces and more trees
- ✓ Reclaim road space for community uses - street markets, outdoor café seating and so on
- ✓ Working with the voluntary sector, develop a Food Strategy to address the issues of food inequality, sustainability & health
- ✓ Encourage local production of healthy food through, for example, allotments & community orchards to promote good nutrition
- ✓ Support efforts to introduce 'social prescribing'

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#PROSPEROUSECONOMY

The coronavirus pandemic has turned the world upside down, exposing major weaknesses in our economy and the deep-seated inequalities in our City that meant the most vulnerable people were hit the hardest. As the local economy recovers, we have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to build back better than before.

ELECTED GREEN COUNCILLORS WILL:

- ✓ Work to rebuild society with a transformative Green New Deal, decarbonising the economy in a way that tackles inequality, meets people's needs and enhances lives, creating new, well-paid, secure, jobs
- ✓ Recognise the changing shape of our economy (for example, the growth in home working and online shopping) and maximise the opportunities this presents while mitigating the negative impacts
- ✓ Push for high quality broadband internet access for all
- ✓ Explore community municipal investments (CMIs) as a means of supporting Council services and infrastructure
- ✓ Ensure that policies and investments are fairly applied, rather than propping up big business
- ✓ Support a more localised circular economy with more shared, reused and recycled materials, minimising waste
- ✓ Focus re-building efforts on small, local businesses, cooperatives and the public sector.
- ✓ Work to protect key cultural facilities threatened by the recession, such as music venues
- ✓ Develop a strategy for sustainable tourism
- ✓ Protect and invest in our public services; they must be properly funded, protected from privatisation and available to all



#ZEROCARBON

Under pressure from the Greens, the Council has recently committed to go 'net zero' by 2030 and is part of a Zero Carbon Partnership which has set itself the target of making the City 'net zero' target by 2040. Though worthy, these commitments exclude many sources of carbon emissions and are largely unfunded.

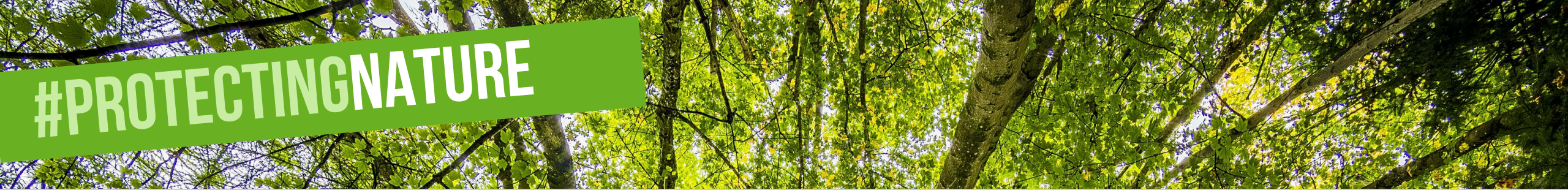
ELECTED GREEN COUNCILLORS WILL:

- ✓ Align the Council's use of 'net zero' with internationally-recognised definitions; incl. Council assets that are currently omitted
- ✓ Introduce carbon measurement/reporting to recognised standards to improve transparency and credibility of Council claims
- ✓ Have all City Council carbon reports independently audited to avoid misleading statements and the frequent 'spin'
- ✓ Plug the £20m funding gap to deliver a true net zero Council by 2030, including all emissions sources currently omitted
- ✓ Redirect the £13m currently committed to speculate on commercial property to invest in renewable energy
- ✓ Support the completion of the Oxford Energy Super Hub and invest in expanding the high voltage vehicle charging network
- ✓ Support new community- and cooperatively-owned energy schemes such as those developed by Low Carbon Hub
- ✓ Implement and support the in-depth renovation of older properties with a new 'zero carbon conservation code'
- ✓ Amend the Local Plan to require all new residential and commercial properties to be 'net zero' carbon
- ✓ Align the City's waste strategy with its carbon targets – aiming for waste reductions, increased reuse and recycling
- ✓ Develop more local, renewable energy & prioritise energy conservation to reduce the devastating impact of energy price increases
- ✓ Offer more support to residents hard-hit by energy price increases through the introduction of a hardship fund

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#PROTECTINGNATURE

All species on Planet Earth are the life support for all others. Greens have long warned of the threat posed by the loss of species – a threat parallel with climate change. Both are linked in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill, which Green MP Caroline Lucas introduced in Parliament.

ELECTED GREEN COUNCILLORS WILL:

- ✓ Continue to lead the way in relation to the City's policies on the natural environment, taking a 'natural capital' approach
- ✓ Support biodiversity by protecting, enhancing and creating a wide range of habitats
- ✓ Protect all Oxford's green spaces - parks, meadows, woodland, rivers. End building on valued greenfield sites & flood plains.
- ✓ Link habitats by green corridors to allow wildlife to move around
- ✓ Enhance green spaces and facilitate access to nature - vital for improving residents' lives; plants, wildlife and green spaces bring direct benefits to residents - from street trees providing shade, through open spaces helping with flood mitigation, to the benefits to physical and mental well-being
- ✓ Implement more tree planting and tree preservation orders, and promote green roofs on buildings, and planting in pedestrianised areas
- ✓ Work with wildlife organisations to improve conditions for wildlife to thrive
- ✓ Support allotments and projects such as the City Farm and the Lye Valley Nature Reserve; these, and projects such as insect-friendly planting of verges and community orchards, benefit both people and wildlife
- ✓ Support the creation of a new national nature reserve to the northeast of Oxford taking in Otmoor and Bernwood Forest

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#CYCLESAFETY

“We hear a lot of talk about the ‘road transport hierarchy’ but time after time the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are given a low priority.”



The Greens have long campaigned for improvements to cycle infrastructure within the City but much, much more needs to be done before Oxford can claim to be a safe, cycle-friendly city.

Green successes have included better signposting of cycle routes and improvements to cycle lanes on major roads and improved cycle parking. We have also backed calls for safer routes to school, speed restrictions on residential roads and improvements to The Plain working alongside local cycling organisations such as Cyclox, who represent many thousands of cyclists within the city.

Whilst the County and City Councils are planning many cycle improvements, the Greens are calling for more ‘joined up’ thinking following the tragic deaths of two cyclists on Oxford’s roads this year alone.

The Green Party is calling upon the County and City Councils to join London and leading European cities in adopting ‘Vision Zero’, a goal of zero pedestrian, cyclist and driver road fatalities within Oxford. We need to limit heavy vehicles entering the City, create safer junctions and roundabouts, enforce speed limits and provide segregated spaces for cycling.



#ACITYOFREFUGE

Green MP Caroline Lucas has proposed a number of Parliamentary motions calling on the Government to end the promotion and export of military equipment to authoritarian regimes.



Oxford is an international city, its residents hailing from across the world. With so many personal, family, business and organisational links to the wider world, we are in a unique position to build solidarity, share solutions and ideas, and end global conflict and environmental degradation.

Our past as an imperial state has shaped how many see the world, often in ways that are negative and destructive. The foreign policy of both Conservative and Labour governments has been counterproductive, hypocritical and helped make the world a more dangerous place.

Greens stand for a safer world and international solidarity. We have taken a clear and consistent stand for peace, justice and equality. If the whole world is not safe, none of us are safe. We oppose the immoral trading of UK armaments for oil that keeps regimes like the Saudi monarchy in power. We oppose the dangerous transit of nuclear arms through Oxfordshire.

Greens were behind the declaration of Oxford as a City of Sanctuary, and we will continue to welcome refugees and asylum seekers. More can be done through our city twinning programme to influence the actions of others.

We stand with Ukraine 



#LOCALDEMOCRACY

"Democracy is not a spectator sport, it's a participatory event. If we don't participate in it, it ceases to be a democracy."



Our democracy is in bad shape. The country is deeply divided with many feeling unrepresented and out-of-touch with the political process.

The first-past-the-post voting system stifles new thinking. At the last European elections in 2018, held under a Proportional Representation voting system, the Green Party received the second highest vote in Oxford, more than Labour and Conservatives.

Oxford City Council, elected via first-past-the-post, fails to fairly represent the views of electors. Despite receiving less than half the votes in the last three local elections, Labour holds 70% of the seats.

Democratic reform has to start locally with the empowerment of communities. We will continue to press for:

- ✓ More opportunities for members of the public to engage in local decision-making. For example, citizens' assemblies, enhanced speaking rights at Council meetings, with participatory budgeting
- ✓ Replacing the first-past-the-post system with a fair and proportional voting system so that every vote counts and we have a Council that is much more representative of opinions in the city;
- ✓ The right to vote for 16- and 17-year olds



#CLIMATEEMERGENCY

“No more broken promises. The City Council has said a lot about climate change but achieved very little real change.”



We are facing a climate and ecological emergency. This is the decisive decade during which we must act to avert the worst impacts of climate change, habitat loss and ecological collapse. In Oxfordshire we are especially aware of threats of worse flooding. Elsewhere in the world the impacts are already devastating in some countries, for both people and their environment.

In January 2019, the Greens successfully proposed a motion to Council declaring a climate and ecological emergency in the City. More than three years later there has been a lot of talk but little action. This is not the first time the Council have procrastinated on environmental issues.

In response to on-going pressure from the Greens, Council plans have now committed to a 'net zero' Council by 2030 and a wider 'Zero Carbon Oxford' partnership have signed a charter that aspires to make the whole City zero carbon by 2040. Though welcome, these plans are vague and unfunded. They ignore many significant sources of emissions.

Only the Greens are in a position to hold the Council to account and make sure they deliver on these aspirations.



Climate protests, Oxford (2019)

#15MINUTECITY

“Access, not mobility, should guide urban planning decisions. The policy landscape is changing as decision makers and advocates become more aware of this.”

The 15-Minute City Project (15minutecity.com)



Greens believe Oxford City planning should be based around the concept of a 15-minute city, where everything you need on a regular basis is within a 15-minute walk for those who are able, with ample provision for those who need mobility support.

There are numerous advantages to this approach:

- Less motorised traffic
- Improved air quality
- Stronger and healthier communities
- Increased support for local businesses
- Less commuting – more time
- Improved access to services for vulnerable people

Many of the other transport, economic and health policies elsewhere within this manifesto will enable a 15-minute Oxford to become a reality.



#AUNIVERSITYCITY

*"Humans are constantly learning and the world is an experiment.
Our task is to light the way" Ernst Bloch*



Life in Oxford is intricately wrapped up with the city's two universities. However, with their special relationship comes responsibilities. The expansion of the universities has been a contributing factor in the housing crisis in the city, and as many colleges are major landowners, they have a direct interest in development around the city.

Students are a vital part of our communities - sustaining the local economy, contributing to local culture and often staying here to work themselves. But many who work during their studies do so in low paid and harsh working environments, and many have poor quality accommodation.

Greens will strongly scrutinise planning applications from the universities and colleges and insist on full transparency.

We will require students to be supported on equal terms by Council services, ensure that housing policies reflect the needs of students, and work with unions and employers to promote fair pay and conditions for all workers, including students.



#RACIALJUSTICE

“A lot of the time when people talk about colonialism they think of it as a past event that happened. They don’t think about it as something that manifests itself in everyday life at institutions like Oxford.”

Oxford law student Ntokozo Qwabe



Decolonisation is a process of dismantling white supremacy and the legacy of colonialism. Prevailing issues that need to be tackled at the city level include racism, prejudice and lack of diversity.

Achieving Diversity and Inclusion requires voice, participation and representation for all in decision-making spaces. This means moving beyond equality and striving for equity for Black, Asian and other minority groups.

Meanwhile, Oxford City Council’s own Workplace Equalities Report (2021) shows an ethnicity pay gap which is above both the regional and national average. Black and ethnic minorities are also under-represented in the Council’s workforce.

- Around 20% of Oxford’s residents are from black or minority ethnic groups (compared to 13% in England) yet....
-only 12.4% of Oxford City Council’s workforce are from these groups (2021)
- The ethnicity pay gap in Oxford City Council is high (11.8%; 2021) and rising. The comparable national figure is 2.3%.



Green Councillor meets with Maasai warriors in 2020 to discuss return of appropriated artifacts from Oxford’s museums.