

LU YOUNG GREENS: STUDENT NEWS

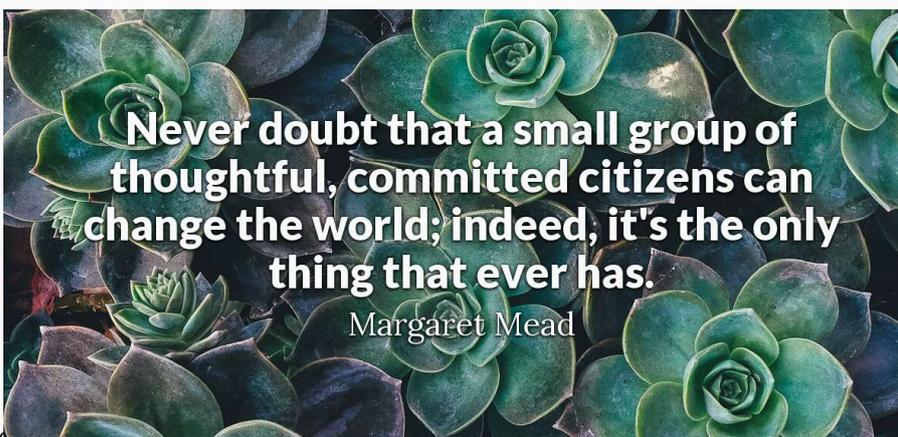
Official Newsletter of The Lancaster University Young Greens

Restarting A Society in a Pandemic

BY CATHERINE STOTT

Dear Reader, welcome to our first newsletter! If you told me in October 2020, after putting a post on the Furness College Facebook Page looking for students to restart the university Green Party Society, that I'd be writing the introduction to our monthly newsletter by the next term, I would have scoffed and rolled my eyes at you.

But that post sparked three responses and it turns out that's more than enough to get the ball rolling. Since then, we've added new members to our ranks, affiliated with the Young Greens, held a social with Manchester University Young Greens, spoken on two Lancaster University Politics Society panels, and we're now supporting Hamish Mills in his campaign to represent the University in the upcoming local elections (see page 3-4).



There is a lot more left to do, (securing recognition as an official group by the Student Union being one thing), and establishing ourselves during a pandemic has definitely limited us. But hopefully reading this will show you that we've got a lot planned, and you can be part of Lancaster University's effort to secure a sustainable, prosperous future that puts people and planet before profit. With that in mind, enjoy!

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Climate Activism During COVID

BY JAMIE PAYNE

Needless to say, 2020 wasn't an easy year for climate activism. The scenes of climate protest we had become used to seeing through groups such as Extinction Rebellion became simply unfeasible, and it could've been possible for activism to be put on hold until normalcy returned. This, of course, wasn't the case though. Those passionate about climate and social justice found new and innovative ways to spread their message whilst keeping safe and, for as long as the pandemic continues, we can all learn to utilise these methods in order to demand climate justice. Social media was, undoubtedly, the driving force for climate activism in 2020.

We've all seen through our own social media the number of individuals posting and sharing information about the climate emergency, and individual action undeniably keeps the movement rolling forward and sustains pressure on those in power to make meaningful change. However, aside from individual activism, major events were able to shift online in 2020, with successful results.

Overall, even in trying circumstances, those passionate about climate justice were able to make their voices heard. Whilst online activism of course played a huge role in 2020, the widespread Black Lives Matter protests highlighted that social distancing measures can be observed during in person protests. Whilst there may have been isolated incidents of unsafe practices, I can speak from personal experience (shoutout Kettering) in saying that it is perfectly possible to adhere to social distancing guidelines during in-person activism so long as appropriate measures are put in place. This provides hope that, even if social distancing rules remain in place for the foreseeable future, activism may not have to remain solely online.



It should be noted that LU Young Greens wholeheartedly supports BLM and all other forms of social justice – social and environmental justice are overlapping; one can't be solved without the other. Overall, despite being rather disappointing on the most part, 2020 has introduced new ways of thinking about activism which can be utilised beyond just during the pandemic. The creation and subsequent growth of LU Greens during the pandemic, alone demonstrates that activism and the student voice is alive and well. The climate emergency won't stop for a rest, so neither should we.



Meet Hamish Mills

BY HAMISH MILLS & CATHERINE STOTT

COVID-19 has stopped many things over the past year, but local elections is not one of them. Come May 6th, thousands, students included, will be heading to the polls to cast their vote for their chosen county/city council candidate. Of course, before students can make that choice, they need to know who they are voting for. Hamish Mills is the Green Party county council candidate for the Lancaster Southeast Division, which includes the university. I spoke with Hamish to find out more about his motivations for running, what he believes are the key issues facing Lancaster, and why Lancaster University Students should give him their vote this May.



Green Candidate, Hamish Mills

So Hamish, tell us the basics?

I am Hamish Mills, 18 years old and the Young Greens Coordinator in the North Lancashire Green Party. I have been active in the Green Party since the 2019 European Elections.

How did you get involved in climate activism and the Green Party, and what motivated you to run?

I have always been involved in the Green Party as my parents have been activists for over 25 years, but I delivered leaflets as a child and slowly got more and more involved with campaigns and actions. I became active in climate campaigning with the student strikes in January 2019 when me, my sister and some university students got a petition with 1500 young people’s signatures which asked for the council to declare a climate emergency (which they did in a unanimous vote). After that, I was very involved in Lancaster Youth For the Environment, coordinating and organising the Student Strikes for Climate in Lancaster; holding monthly protests and action days. I campaigned hard to get my mum re-elected as a city councillor and I have been involved with the local party ever since. I became motivated to run after hearing all the work the Greens we’re doing on the city council and decided I’d very much like to help the communities in the ways the other Green councillors do.

It seems the passion for climate issues runs in the family! To you, what are the key issues facing Lancaster, climate-related or otherwise, and how has this shaped the local party’s campaigning?

The biggest issues facing Lancaster today are housing and urban sprawl, flooding, the response to COVID-19 and inequality. 8 of the 10 Green city councillors voted against the local plan because their amendment, which would have allowed more scrutiny into, and opportunity to stop the development, was not passed. The local party often makes comments on and helps the public have their opinions about developments be heard by giving them a platform or helping them engage in consultation. Abi Mills, my mum and a City Councillor helped set up an emergency centre for flood events in south Lancaster.

We have commented on the impact of new developments on flooding and have worked on making sure it's a top priority. The City Council has worked very hard and had a brilliant response to COVID-19 but there are many people who aren't earning money and have slipped through the gaps. To combat this, Green City Councillor, Tim Dant, recently passed a motion which would see Lancaster trial Universal Basic Income. This is just one of the ways the Green Party is tackling wealth inequality in Lancaster.

The 2019 European elections saw unexpected surges in support for Green groups across Europe and Green Party presence at the local level has grown rapidly across the UK in the last couple of years, but why do you think Green candidates have struggled to achieve representation at the local and national level in the past?

Many agree with Green policies but unfortunately, this doesn't translate at the polls, since voters are reluctant to vote any other than Labour or Conservative for fear of a wasted vote. This is in part down to the voting system in the UK, which discriminates against the smaller parties. Nevertheless, in Lancaster, there have been Green councillors in Lancaster since 1999 and there is a ten-strong group in the City Council currently, including Lancashire's only Green County Councillor. Lancaster boasts one of the strongest Green Party presences in the country. More than anything, this demonstrates the realisation amongst voters that the Green Party is the party of not just environmental justice, but social justice, and can provide the secure and sustainable future that the UK needs. This is the kind of party I want to represent.

How would you best represent the interests of students at the university?

First and foremost, I would listen to the concern of the students and, along with the University Young Greens, do my utmost to resolve them. Moreover, as a young person myself, and as a local, I believe I can relate to and understand the current challenges facing students. This, as well as my previous experience in local politics, makes me a strong candidate to represent the students at Lancaster.

And finally, the all-important questions...

Dragons or Vampires?

It would be a lot more fun to be a Vampire, but I think rather cooler and more dramatic to meet a dragon.

Which college would you choose to join if you were a student at the university?

Based on not very much understanding of the colleges and just the names and what the buildings look like I would have to go with Grizedale as it is the coolest place to be named after and, in my opinion, has the best building

To give students the opportunity to find out more about Hamish, we'll be doing a series of interviews to feature in future , but we want YOUR questions. Message the Facebook or Instagram page with your questions, and we'll include them in the series.

Small But Mighty: Doing Your Bit

BY AMELIA JONES

The thought of an individual making change seems daunting at first, but everyone has the power to make change. We all leave our own footprint on the Earth, and collectively, the things we do today can help create a better future. Here are some changes you can make to make your footprint a greener one.



Think global, act local.

Collective change starts with the foundation that is your home, business, school or town. By campaigning for more sustainable initiatives and engaging in local groups, active change can be implemented. Advocating for less waste or energy usage is the first place to make change in your immediate surroundings. So get researching and see which groups you can join to make your voice heard.

Personal change

Although large corporations are responsible for the systemic issues we face today, we can still have an impact by reducing demand for the things that degrade our planet and invest in things that aid it. Changing your transport methods can be beneficial. Even something as simple as adopting meatless Mondays has a huge ecological impact. "Shop stopping", only buying things when you need them, makes all the difference too. And when you do have the "urge to splurge", check out the second-hand options or sustainable brands first. There are plenty of [resources online](#) on how to reduce

Check out:

socialassociation.org

getgreennow.com

Cosmopolitan: What is sustainable fashion?

For more information,

your carbon footprint and live more ethically. Adopting a conscious mindset towards how you treat the environment is one of the most influential things you can do. Although it might not feel like you're making a difference, when we all do it, small actions add up to have a big impact.

Activism

Becoming mobilised and engaging with local groups, political parties and campaigns is crucial for change. The Lancaster University Young Greens believe everyone has the right to raise their voice on things that matter. If you care about the environment and ethics, join us, we'd love to have more people help the local area become more sustainable and welcoming.

Updates, Upcoming Events. and More...

Events

Tues, 16th March 7.00 pm: "Threats to Democracy" with former Green MEP Molly Scott-Cato, hosted by North Lancashire Green Party

Tues 23rd March 6.00pm "Brexit Reality": hosted by Leeds Young Greens

Sat 27th Feb - Sun 7th March: The Green Party Spring Conference, [Register Here](#)

You can find all these events and more on our social media pages:

Twitter- @LUGreenParty
Facebook - @LUGreenSociety
Instagram -
[@lancunigreenparty](#)

In Other News..

Latest Developments on the [Cumbria coal mine](#)



It's #LGBT+HistoryMonth

As much as this is a time to celebrate identity and diversity, we cannot ignore the struggle that trans people endure daily, simply to have the right to be themselves.

Head to the LGBTQ+History Month [Website](#) for news, events and resources and to find out why the fight for LGBTQ rights involves all of us.

Across the month @lgbtiqagreens are publishing a series of articles related to and curated by trans individuals. Give them a read.
<http://lgbtiqa.greenparty.org.uk/voices>

'Disclosure' on Netflix gives an eye opening account of Hollywood's depiction of transgender people and the impact of their stories on transgender lives and American culture. Well worth a watch