



Green Party

OUR LOCAL MANIFESTO

FOR A FAIRER, GREENER LANCASTER DISTRICT

2023-2027

Our recent achievements and future priorities for making Lancaster, Morecambe and our rural areas wonderful places to live, work, study and visit.

INTRODUCTION

This manifesto focuses mainly on things that elected Greens on Lancaster City Council are working hard to influence and deliver, giving examples of our recent achievements and future priorities.

Who runs Lancaster City Council?

Lancaster City Council has mainly been in 'No Overall Control' since Greens were first elected in 1999, with 60 councillors split between at least 5 or 6 political groups. Greens have never been the largest group, but we have co-operated with other parties to run the Council together for much of that time.

In May 2021, Greens stepped up to lead the Council, after many years of leadership by Labour. The Cabinet continued to be a shared administration, including the Greens, Labour and two Morecambe-based independent groups.

Greens do politics differently

As Green Council Leader, Caroline Jackson has instigated a better culture of collaborative working, listening, and treating people with kindness and respect.

Greens do not have a political 'whip' - i.e. each Green councillor can vote in the best interests of their community, rather being forced to follow a party line. We stand up for local residents, and argue for responsible use of Council finances.



Greens are needed, now more than ever

These are difficult times, due to climate change, the cost of living scandal and the chronic under-funding of public services by the Conservative Government.

Our district needs councillors who are competent, ethical, responsible and kind, to help local communities through these crises.

OUR LOCAL MANIFESTO - 6 KEY THEMES

1. Urgent action on the climate emergency
2. Cosy and affordable homes - in the right places!
3. Supporting local communities and vulnerable people
4. Green spaces for people, wildlife and food growing
5. Enabling small businesses, tourism and culture to thrive
6. A transport system for clean air and liveable streets

For each theme we outline:

GREEN VISION	What are we aiming for overall?
GREEN PRIORITIES	What will we try to do in the next 4 years?
GREEN ACTION	What have we already done?

For the Green Party's national policies
(e.g. on health, education, taxation and much more):

manifesto.greenparty.org.uk



Morecambe Beach (image by Photoeverywhere)

URGENT ACTION ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

GREEN VISION What are we aiming for overall?

Urgent action is needed to avoid large-scale human suffering and the loss of many more species. We can only avoid catastrophic climate and ecological breakdown by leaving fossil fuels in the ground and rapidly moving towards net zero carbon emissions.

Politicians, businesses and the public must work together to make the big changes that are needed – e.g. to how we travel, produce food, generate electricity, keep warm, and use precious resources. Greens argue that low-carbon living will make people happier, healthier and more secure.

GREEN PRIORITIES What will we try to do in the next 4 years?

- Continue to decarbonise the Council's activities, while supporting people to take action in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities.
- Ensure that the Council is prepared to adapt to the local and global impacts of climate breakdown - e.g. extreme weather, flooding, displacement of people and disruption to supply chains.
- Localise renewable energy production, e.g. more solar and wind farms.
- Get Council caterers to offer more plant-based food, and push for other local institutions and event organisers to do the same.
- Improve the household recycling collection system (e.g. better containers, more materials, more education and enforcement, resume food waste collections) to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

URGENT ACTION ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

GREEN ACTION What have we already done?

Through leading the City Council we have:

- Made the climate emergency a consistent top priority, and set targets for reducing the Council's own emissions to net zero by 2030.
- Built a Council-owned solar farm on Salt Ayre tip, with another planned at Middleton. Salt Ayre Leisure Centre is now carbon neutral (first one in UK).
- Adopted better local planning policies for sustainable development, including high standards of energy efficiency for all new housing.
- Supported the roll-out of electric vehicle charging points in public places around the District, and ensured that new Council-owned vehicles – including bin wagons – are electric.
- Improved our community response and resilience to flooding and other emergencies.

As community campaigners we have:

- Supported the anti-fracking protests at Preston New Road near Blackpool, which helped to get fracking stopped in England.
- Organised student climate strikes, and led the successful campaign for Lancaster University to declare and respond to the climate emergency.



COSY AND AFFORDABLE HOMES - IN THE RIGHT PLACES!

GREEN VISION What are we aiming for overall?

We want to encourage balanced communities with diverse housing types and tenures, including much more social and affordable housing, and more homes that are suitable for our ageing population.

Well-designed or retrofitted housing will minimise carbon emissions, household energy bills and illnesses caused by living cold and damp homes.

Good planning should enable most people to live no more than a 15-20 minute walk from public transport hubs, shops, workplaces and community facilities.

GREEN PRIORITIES What will we try to do in the next 4 years?

- Scale down the development plans for the countryside between Lancaster and Galgate ('Bailrigg Garden Village'). It should be designed to meet genuine local housing needs - not a massive, car-dependent new town, whose size is determined by repaying the cost of major new road-building.
- Apply the highest possible standards for sustainability of new homes (e.g. insulation, renewable energy, water efficiency, etc), and find ways to roll-out retrofitting of older homes, street-by-street.
- Pursue all options available for the Council to:
 - provide more social and council housing;
 - bring long-term empty homes back into use;
 - take action against irresponsible landlords;
 - tackle the over-concentration of student houses in some parts of Lancaster; and
 - ensure that the Eden-led regeneration of Morecambe does not result in local people being priced out of housing by holiday rentals and second homes.

COSY AND AFFORDABLE HOMES - IN THE RIGHT PLACES!

Greens were involved in creating the Lancaster Cohousing development in Halton. These 'Passivhaus' eco-homes require very little heating, and use renewable electricity generated on-site.



New social housing will be built soon in the Canal Quarter. Lancaster is unusual in retaining control of its Council Housing - most other Councils have sold or outsourced the management of social housing to the private sector.

GREEN ACTION What have we already done?

Through leading the City Council we have:

- Reduced the Council's Local Plan target for the number of new houses to be built each year - although due to Government policies it is still much too high, making it difficult for the Council to refuse unsustainable planning applications. We will continue to push for further reductions.
- Led on a better redevelopment plan for the Canal Quarter. Affordable and social housing will be built soon on Council-owned land.
- Embarked on a major programme of retrofitting Council housing, starting in Skerton, to reduce tenants' energy consumption and bills.
- Introduced new planning and licensing rules to limit the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in each street, stop the street clutter of sign boards advertising student rentals, and encourage higher standards by HMO landlords.

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

GREEN VISION What are we aiming for overall?

Everyone should be able to live (and eventually die) with dignity, and access social activities and excellent support services throughout their lives.

Homelessness and dependence on food banks are scandals that need to end. Nobody should have to sleep rough, choose between heating and eating, or be stigmatised by poverty, disabilities or mental ill health.

City Councillors cannot solve these deep social problems on their own, but they can make a difference - e.g. by listening to people with lived experience of social exclusion, advocating for better Government policies, and supporting the local voluntary sector to access funding and other resources.

GREEN PRIORITIES What will we try to do in the next 4 years?

Ensure that the Council:

- Supports organisations that help people to access accommodation and other services to overcome problems that can lead to homelessness.
- Supports community centres, rural parish halls and sports and arts organisations, which provide vital activities for young and older people.
- Responds to the crisis in mental health, e.g. by partnering with voluntary sector organisations who are working to address this.
- Stands up for refugees and asylum seekers, supporting and welcoming them to our district, in partnership with groups such as Communities Together, City of Sanctuary, Stand Up to Racism and Global Link.
- Sign up to the 'Age Friendly Community' process to become a district where all people are able to live healthy and active later lives.

SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

GREEN ACTION What have we already done?

Through leading the Council we have ensured that:

- The poorest people in the Lancaster District do not have to pay any Council Tax. Very few councils have chosen to do this.
- The Council has continued to work in partnership with Citizens' Advice to help local residents to claim the benefits that they are entitled to.
- During the Covid-19 lockdowns, all homeless people were housed, supported, fed and given medical help where needed, and every vulnerable person was called to check on their well-being.

As community campaigners:

- Green candidate Sam Riches has worked hard as a trustee of LDCVS to support the local voluntary sector, including through the pandemic.
- Cllr Dave Brookes is chair of the Friendship Centre for older people.
- Cllr Caroline Jackson has been actively involved in the Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission, Global Link, and the FareShare project (redistributing waste food from supermarkets to people in need).
- County Cllr Gina Dowding initiated 'warm and welcome places' across Lancashire as an emergency response to the spiralling cost of heating homes.
- Green candidate Suhir Abuhajar, vice chair of Communities Together, helps to organise culture-sharing events and support for refugees.



Green candidates Grace Russell & Suhir Abuhajar

GREEN SPACES FOR PEOPLE, WILDLIFE AND FOOD GROWING

GREEN VISION What are we aiming for overall?

We want everyone to live within easy walking distance of at least one high-quality public green space, for relaxing, playing and growing food. Parks and other recreation spaces have positive effects on mental and physical health; investment in them will reduce strain on the NHS.

We must also halt the loss of biodiversity, including plants and insects - both for their own sake and for the services they provide (e.g. pollination of crops).

Much more fruit and veg can be grown locally, and many more people should be able to be involved in food growing (with land, time and skills to do so).

GREEN PRIORITIES

What will we try to do in the next 4 years?

- Continue to improve Council-owned parks, play areas and open spaces, keeping them clean, green and safe, with space for wildlife to thrive.
- Ensure that all new developments include plenty of high-quality and well-connected green spaces, including trees and wildflower areas.
- Encourage more local food-growing initiatives such as allotments, urban farms, school growing plots and community gardens.
- Help to set up a 'Friends of Winchester Fields' group in Bowerham, and other 'Friends of' groups to care for neglected green spaces.



GREEN SPACES FOR PEOPLE, WILDLIFE AND FOOD GROWING

GREEN ACTION What have we already done?

Through leading the Council, we have:

- Changed the Council's mowing regimes to create many more wildlife-friendly verges and wildflower meadows.
- Lobbied the County Council to reduce its use of toxic weed-killers.

As community campaigners we have:

- Set up and led many 'Friends of ...' groups, e.g. Aldcliffe Road Triangle, Greaves Park, Dorrington Woods, De Vitre Gardens, Freeman's Wood.
- Organised countless community litter-picks, bulb- and tree-planting sessions and wildlife-friendly projects.
- Cllr Caroline Jackson set up the Claver Hill agricultural co-operative on the Ridge, which has involved hundreds of volunteers in growing fruit and veg for the local community.
- Cllr Abi Mills led projects to build and later refurbish the play area in Greaves Park, and improve the play area on Dorrington Road.



Greens including Cllr Mandy Bannon successfully campaigned to protect Freeman's Wood, and fundraised for a community buyout of the land.

ENABLING SMALL BUSINESSES, TOURISM & CULTURE TO THRIVE

GREEN VISION What are we aiming for overall?

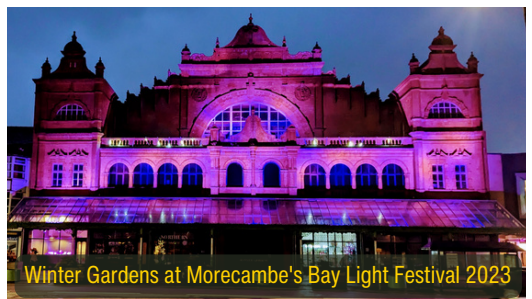
We need a fair and sustainable local economy where wealth is shared equitably, with meaningful work and opportunities for everyone.

The arts, tourism and independent shops are all strengths of our district and must be supported.

We want to see real public participation in the design of major regeneration schemes, to ensure that they are shaped by the needs of the local community, not the greed of big corporations.

GREEN PRIORITIES What will we try to do in the next 4 years?

- Support small businesses, market traders and co-operatives to create local wealth and jobs, e.g. through providing affordable spaces for them.
- Develop the skills of local people to decarbonise our local economy and housing stock, in partnership with local training providers.
- Continue to push for the redevelopment of the Canal Quarter to provide better facilities for arts organisations and small businesses.
- Ensure that the redevelopment of Morecambe (including Eden and the former Frontierland site) benefits local small businesses and residents.
- Deliver the Council's Culture and Heritage Strategy.
- Find cost-effective ways to support local museums, arts venues and visitor information services.



ENABLING SMALL BUSINESSES, TOURISM & CULTURE TO THRIVE

GREEN ACTION What have we already done?

- Ensured that the Council offered support to local businesses during Covid lockdowns, including provision of grants and a temporary relocation of Lancaster's Charter Market to Dalton Square.
- Championed the roll-out of superfast broadband throughout the district, and free Wi-fi in public places such as the City Centre.
- Supported the Musicians' Co-op to remain in the Council-owned building on Lodge Street.

Green councillors and candidates collectively have a lot of experience of running culture and heritage projects and small businesses locally. For example:

- [Sarah McGowan](#) (co-owner of Single Step Wholefood Co-op)
- [Sarah Punshon](#) (founder of One Tenth Human, a local arts charity)
- [Sam Riches](#) (historian, trustee of Friends of Lancashire Archives and volunteer at the Judges Lodgings museum)
- [Suhir Abuhajar](#) (founder of Naba Arabic School and vice-chair of Communities Together)
- [Jack Lenox](#) (Lancaster Cargo Co., Gregson board member and the Green Party's national spokesperson for Culture, Media and Sport)
- [Nick Wilkinson](#) (property management and a director of Lancaster Business Improvement District).
- [James Sommerville](#) (director of Green Rose Community Interest Company).



National spokesperson Cllr
Jack Lenox with Green MP
Caroline Lucas

A TRANSPORT SYSTEM FOR CLEAN AIR AND LIVEABLE STREETS

GREEN VISION What are we aiming for overall?

Essential services (shops, schools, GPs, etc) should be a short walk away from where people live, reducing the need to travel. We also need to make much more efficient use of our limited road space. Everyone will benefit from cleaner air, fewer road deaths and injuries, and more pleasant streets.

We want safe walking and cycling routes integrated with high quality, electric-powered public transport that is affordable for everyone - including free or very cheap buses. Taxis and community car-share schemes can help to reduce the amount of space taken up by parked cars.

GREEN PRIORITIES What will we try to do in the next 4 years?

Transport is not in the direct control of the City Council, but we can exert some influence - e.g. through the planning system, management of Council-owned car parks, and liaising with the County Council (which is responsible for highways, footpaths and bus services).

- Incentivise visitors to Eden Morecambe to use sustainable transport, e.g. park & ride, electric and pedal-powered taxis, priority for buses and bikes on Marine Road. Carefully manage the limited parking in town.
- Keep pressuring the County Council to:
 - protect and improve urban and rural bus services, including frequent faster buses between Lancaster University and Morecambe/Heysham.
 - reduce traffic and air pollution by allocating more space to bikes and buses, including a redesign of the City Centre's one-way system.
 - provide more and better cycle lanes - ideally segregated from traffic.
 - implement schemes to help children get to school by bike, foot or bus.
 - ensure that potholes are quickly repaired.

A TRANSPORT SYSTEM FOR CLEAN AIR AND LIVEABLE STREETS

GREEN ACTION What have we already done?

Through leading the Council we have:

- Refused planning permission for new developments with inadequate sustainable transport plans.
- Got the Council to support a motion for extending 20 mph speed limits to city centre roads. (Residential areas across Lancashire already have 20 mph limits, following successful campaigning by Greens and others.)
- Secured road safety improvements and resurfacing of some local roads.

As community campaigners we have:

- Led ongoing campaigns to improve cyclists' safety on the A6, and to create a traffic-free direct route between Heysham and Lancaster.
- Helped to get several electric vehicle charging points installed across the district, and supported the Co-Wheels car-share scheme.
- Supported several communities across Lancaster to get residents' parking schemes implemented, where a majority of residents wanted it.
- Green candidate Paul Tynan is involved in a project that refurbishes old bikes to enable refugees and asylum seekers to access affordable travel.
- Cllr Abi Mills set up and is vice-chair of the Lancaster District Bus Users' Group, which has successfully campaigned against service cuts and for improved timetables.





Green Party

WORKING HARD FOR YOU

ALL OVER THE LANCASTER DISTRICT

JOIN US AND GET INVOLVED!

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GET IN TOUCH

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