

Green Party South West

GREENWORD

Gnomes out ... Greens In!

Communities across the South West have been badly let down nationally by the Liberal Democrats' empty rhetoric and lies. LibDems were the ones who stated that they championed social justice and environmentalism; but where is that now, and where is the care for their local communities? Regional Co-ordinator and Green Devon County Councillor Paula Black leads the rally cry for Greens to start our election campaign.

Clearly LibDem principles have deserted them as banker bonuses rise, desperate homelessness charities throw the vulnerable back on to the streets, libraries are closed, unemployment rises and government remains unaccountable. Here in the South West, once the heart land of liberalism, the disaffected voter needs an effective opposition to champion their needs and causes. Where can the opposition be found?

True opposition to central government lies with the Green Party, at a local level with Green councillors. The May local elections give us in the Green Party the chance to become community advocates to improve our localities. The time has never been so right and the need has never been so apparent to elect Green Party councillors. We know the Green Party is at the forefront of a political change in this country, a true 'Green paradigm' shift of shiny satin, one so desperately needed. A change to a new local politics, where the community could have greater influence over their own locality's destiny, but only if the right councillors are elected.

Too long we have waited for alternatives that will create better living conditions of affordable housing, safer streets, good youth services, care for our elderly and long-term sustainable environmental solutions based upon our local economic structures. These are all issues that councillors at every level can

champion, and create a real positive change to benefit all.

Councillors are powerful and can actually ensure that central government disasters have less of an impact. Yet too often, councillors have created as much positive change for their communities as a garden gnome, concentrating on the needs of the few rather than the many.

What a huge difference Green councillors can make, never shy to campaign for local issues drawing on our policies that inspire a society



Councillors from other parties have often created as much positive change for their communities as a garden gnome

that looks to benefit all through wealth redistribution, environmental protection and social cohesion. Green Party councillors across the country are the ones who actually create the change we all want to be. No other political party looks to the future for safeguarding the needs of all residents, coupled with the protection of what every economic transaction is based upon - the wealth of our planet. Environmental and economic sustainability are mutually inclusive and this is nowhere more apparent than at the most local level.

Let us then shout a rallying call to get out on the streets and champion the needs of our locality, have the courage to stand for your local council and let's get elected.



Paula Black is Regional Co-ordinator for South West Green Party and can be contacted on 01803 868261

SWGP Website Poll: The Results



We've been running a poll on the regional website to find out more about our supporters and their views.

The question was: 'Which policy should south-west Greens prioritise?' The results are as follows

- 51% Fighting the cuts**
- 22% Sustainable 'green' jobs
- 14% Campaigning for AV
- 11% Improved rural and urban public transport

To take part, visit our website - southwest.greenparty.org.uk



Caroline Lucas MP with South Hams and South Devon Green Party candidates

EGM on new constitution

At the recent SWGP AGM, the meeting decided to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting to discuss the proposed new constitution and standing orders. The EGM is to be held on 21 May in Exeter. If you would like a copy of these documents, please email SWGP Regional Co-ordinator at paula.black@mac.com.

Green Party on the Map - Local Elections 5 May

This will be the biggest local election campaign ever in the south-west. Every local party is encouraged to field as many candidates as possible, and to focus on a target ward where they hope to achieve success in the longer term.

Those wards where there is a strong chance of success this May have been designated Regional Target Wards, and members without elections are encouraged to go and help them with their campaigns.

Members are also encouraged to stand for their local parish and town council if they would like to become a councillor at this level (see back page).

Good luck!

Tim Andrewes
Regional Elections Co-ordinator
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Regional Target Seats and Contacts

There are local elections across the South West on 5 May, apart from Cornwall, Wiltshire and Cheltenham. Local parties will mostly be focusing their efforts on a local target ward, however there are 14 Regional Target Wards where we either have a particularly strong chance of winning or already have a Green councillor. If you don't have local elections this year, please help out in one of these. Offers of help to the contacts listed below.

Stroud District Council
Nailsworth (2 seats)
Trinity, Thrupp, Valley, Slade
John Marjoram, 01453 750962, cllr.john.marjoram@stroud.gov.uk

Bristol City Council
Southville
Graham Davey, 0117 909 3491, graham.davey@blueyonder.co.uk
Ashley
Alex Dunn, 0117 9622475, alexdunn@blueyonder.co.uk

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Westmoreland (2 seats)
Jon Lucas, 01225 423832, gpew.jonlucas@phonecoop.coop

North Somerset Council
Congresbury
Tom Leimdorfer, leimdorfer@care4free.net

Torrige District Council
Bideford North
Peter Christie, 01237 473577, councillor.christie@torridge.gov.uk

North Devon District Council
Barnstaple Newport
Ricky Knight, 01271 371732
rickyknight@northdevongreens.org.uk

South Hams District Council
Totnes Town, Dartington
Lydia Somerville, 01364 631555
lydiahsomerville@googlemail.com

Petitioned for a public meeting to discuss cuts to library and youth services

Stroud District and Gloucestershire County

Fi Macmillan - Green Group Leader, Stroud District Council

- Opposed the withdrawal of annual District Council funding of £40k from the Nailsworth Recreation Centre and have worked with a local group to develop new and broader sports provision at the NRC, under a social enterprise scheme.
- Supported local sheltered housing tenants in their opposition to proposals to cut their warden service and voted against cuts in sheltered housing provision.

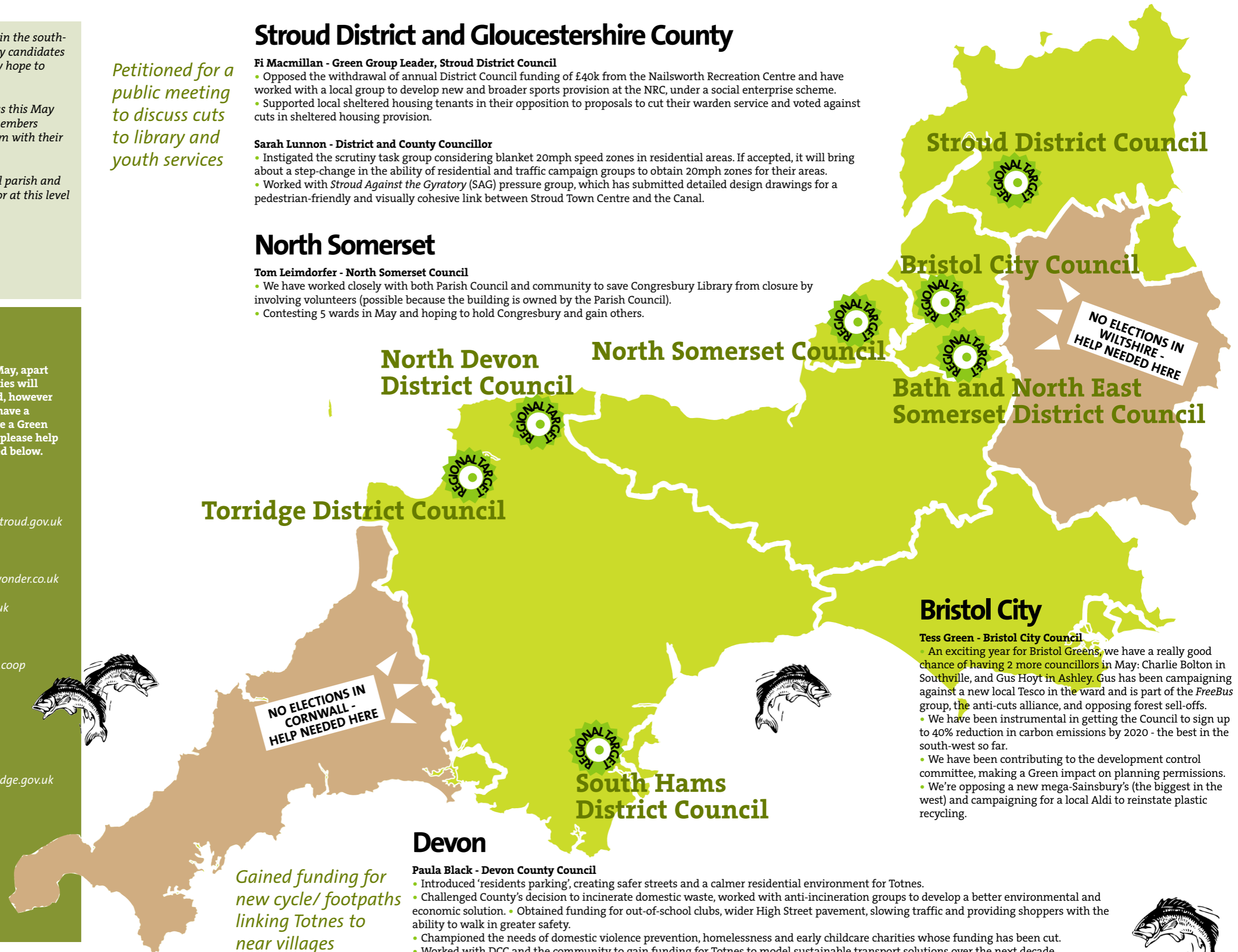
Sarah Lunnon - District and County Councillor

- Instigated the scrutiny task group considering blanket 20mph speed zones in residential areas. If accepted, it will bring about a step-change in the ability of residential and traffic campaign groups to obtain 20mph zones for their areas.
- Worked with *Stroud Against the Gyrotory* (SAG) pressure group, which has submitted detailed design drawings for a pedestrian-friendly and visually cohesive link between Stroud Town Centre and the Canal.

North Somerset

Tom Leimdorfer - North Somerset Council

- We have worked closely with both Parish Council and community to save Congresbury Library from closure by involving volunteers (possible because the building is owned by the Parish Council).
- Contesting 5 wards in May and hoping to hold Congresbury and gain others.



Gained funding for new cycle/ footpaths linking Totnes to near villages

Devon

Paula Black - Devon County Council

- Introduced 'residents parking', creating safer streets and a calmer residential environment for Totnes.
- Challenged County's decision to incinerate domestic waste, worked with anti-incineration groups to develop a better environmental and economic solution.
- Obtained funding for out-of-school clubs, wider High Street pavement, slowing traffic and providing shoppers with the ability to walk in greater safety.
- Championed the needs of domestic violence prevention, homelessness and early childcare charities whose funding has been cut.
- Worked with DCC and the community to gain funding for Totnes to model sustainable transport solutions over the next decade.

Stroud District Council

Bristol City Council

North Devon District Council

North Somerset Council

Bath and North East Somerset District Council

Torrige District Council

Bristol City

Tess Green - Bristol City Council

- An exciting year for Bristol Greens, we have a really good chance of having 2 more councillors in May: Charlie Bolton in Southville, and Gus Hoyt in Ashley. Gus has been campaigning against a new local Tesco in the ward and is part of the *FreeBus* group, the anti-cuts alliance, and opposing forest sell-offs.
- We have been instrumental in getting the Council to sign up to 40% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020 - the best in the south-west so far.
- We have been contributing to the development control committee, making a Green impact on planning permissions.
- We're opposing a new mega-Sainsbury's (the biggest in the west) and campaigning for a local Aldi to reinstate plastic recycling.

South Hams District Council

Making a Difference on your Town or Parish Council

In the 2007 elections, 6 members of West Cornwall Green Party won seats on St Ives Town Council. Here, Tim Andrewes, one of the town's green councillors, looks at what has been achieved 4 years on.

Allotments for St Ives - In 2007, there were no public allotments in St Ives, despite a waiting list of around 20 households wishing to have one. After a long search for available land, the Town Council created an allotment site of 46 plots which have all been occupied. We are now looking to develop an additional site to meet the growing demand for veg growing.

Footpath improvements - Our election manifesto made a commitment to improving rights of way. We have now submitted two applications for new footpaths where informal routes are being threatened by developers. A *Footpath Warden Scheme* has been set up, through

which local volunteers can monitor the state of their local paths and report any blockages or other maintenance issues. A member of staff now works on keeping the main paths clear through the growing season.

Parish and town councils are the most local level of government. A wide range of powers deal with issues that directly impact on the community

Tackling traffic - Summer congestion is a major problem in the town. We have persuaded County Highways to change road signs on the approach to town, in order to direct traffic away from the centre and towards the park-

and-ride car parks. In addition, last summer we employed a Traffic Control Officer (using little known legal powers) whose job is to direct vehicles away from the town centre and control traffic flows at the worst bottleneck.

More recycling - The Town Council set up one of the county's first battery recycling points. We have worked with local businesses to introduce a St Ives-branded re-usable shopping bag. We have lobbied Cornwall Council to get better recycling facilities, particularly for cardboard. We are using the Guildhall to hold six-monthly 'Free for All' events, at which people can bring and share their unwanted goods.

While our most significant achievements are listed above, we have had a lot of influence in other, smaller ways. We have introduced the public's right to speak at meetings, voted for increases in the community grants budget, and supported moves to get more services devolved to the local level.

Parish and town councils are consulted on all planning applications in their area, and we have consistently argued for more sensitive developments, stronger protection for trees and wildlife, and the safeguarding of the town's character.

Although there is a significant group of Green councillors on the town council, we don't have a majority, and we need the support of other councillors to get our policies adopted. Like most Green councillors up and down the country, being in a minority means you have to maintain a positive and co-operative approach, seeking common ground and making alliances to build a consensus for green policies.

Parish and town councils are the most local level of government. They have a surprisingly wide range of powers and often deal with issues that have a very direct impact on the life of the community. These councils may well grow in importance in the coming years, as the Government's 'localism' agenda is carried out.

Tim Andrewes is the South West's *Regional Elections Co-ordinator*. He can be contacted for further information about the role of parish and town councils and how to get elected on 01736 795387 or tim@timandrewes.com



Regular 'Free for All' events take place at St Ives Guildhall

Want to stand as a parish or town councillor?

Contact your local party's election agent to say that you are interested.

Find out about your local council: how often it meets, what it does and what its potential is.

Sound out other local Green Party members and sympathisers about standing as well.

Obtain nomination forms from the Returning Officer (you'll only need two signatures on the form) and you're ready to throw your hat into the ring!

GET IN TOUCH

Paula Black
Regional Co-ordinator

01803 868261 or 07969 089944



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