

Summer 2011

News from the Scottish Green Party

Greenprint



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Wednesday 11th, with the affirmation process. I worked for Robin Harper in Holyrood for many years and that time has been invaluable but it still feels a little bit different being here as an MSP.

Now, six weeks into the new Parliament, Patrick Harvie, my fellow Green MSP, and I are working hard on our election commitments of making Scotland both greener and fairer.

We expect to have an even harder job than Robin and Patrick faced during the last four years but we know that in those years the Scottish Green Party has increased in members and in strength. We are in a good position relative to the parties that were decimated by the seismic shift to the SNP and we're better prepared for government than some of our new SNP colleagues, who were as surprised by their success as Labour and the Liberal Democrats were by their defeats. However, the SNP

Westminster, this particular piece of Osborne legislation is unlikely to have been the biggest concern for many.

We told voters that Greens believe it is possible to protect public services, build the inclusive, good society in which people in Scotland want to live, and invest in the skills and infrastructure we need to move away from the short-term unsustainable model that has gone before. Patrick and I will be doing all we can to represent not only the people who voted for us in our regions, but the 87 060 people across Scotland who voted Green because they believe the same things. More than ever before though, members of the Scottish Green Party must also use their day to day activism to help represent those Green voters and to attract new ones. We can't afford to wait. We must pursue our manifesto commitments with as much passion as we promoted

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE IS THE BEST CHECK ON A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT IN POWER

Britain's first Green parliamentarian and its newest Green parliamentarian, Robin Harper and Johnstone MSP

Early on Friday 6th May, we found out that Lothian had not only voted to keep a Green MSP, but that our share of the Lothian vote was slightly up on 2007.

I was overwhelmed by messages of support and

congratulations over the weekend, and I'm still trying to get round everyone who helped with the campaign to say a heartfelt thank you! Meanwhile, with impressive efficiency, my 'new MSP' pack arrived on the Saturday. On Monday I was in Parliament and my new job began officially on

has a majority in Parliament, therefore the strongest opposition to them will be the voice of the public, between elections, as well as in next year's council elections.

The SNP is already losing some of its election glow with news of the First Minister's proposals to limit North Sea oil and gas tax hikes. For the voters who chose SNP to stand up to

them in the run up to the election. Every one of us has a role to play in helping keep the new government accountable to the people of Scotland. And by presenting a strong Green alternative on doorsteps, in community groups, and in local media, in the council elections, European elections and Westminster elections, together we will all make Scotland a greener and fairer place. [AJ](#)

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Message from the editor

First things first: massive congratulations to Alison Johnstone and Patrick Harvie and the Edinburgh and Glasgow teams. For the rest of us, not doing as badly as most other Scottish parties is small consolation but already thoughts have turned to next year's council elections. Such is the mix of emotions reflected in this issue's collection of articles.

It's great to have our new MSP on the cover and to read about her plans for Holyrood. Next, we have the heartache of missing out by a small margin in the Highlands and Islands. Martin Ford is stoic after an impressive campaign that increased the Green vote by about a fifth in the First Minister's home patch. Kirsten Robb thanks Central Scotland's activists and supporters and ends on the note of "onwards and upwards". And so we turn a corner. We have our first reader-commissioned article on how to mobilise members when you're a very small local group. Our round up of news from the branches shows that any post-election doldrums are well and truly over and there's good news from England, Canada and Germany if any more inspiration is required. So we dust ourselves off and resolve to build up our strong base of Green councillors. To help new members swing into action, there's a short 'how to' on canvassing. And while we head out to knock on doors and scribble on clipboards we'll probably be wondering what this rapidly changing new Scotland means for Scottish Greens. Justin Kenrick gives us many questions to consider and suggests answers that are bound to cause some lively debate. At the end of this journey, Peter McColl sends us off on a lighter note.

If you're a member of the Scottish Green Party, in the members' supplement you'll see a second article from Alison on the secrets of the Edinburgh teams' success.

Oh, and remember: book early for our October conference – we've lots to talk about!

Varihi Scott

Holyrood 2011 election results

Scottish Greens didn't compete in the constituency contests but we did stand candidates in all eight regional contests.

The figures shown here are taken from <http://www.betternation.org/sp> where you can find results for all parties and constituencies.

| Region | votes | % | +/- % | seats |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|----------|
| Central Scotland | 5,634 | 2.4% | -0.1% | 0 |
| Glasgow | 12,454 | 6% | +0.8% | 1 |
| Highlands & Islands | 9,076 | 5.1% | +0.4% | 0 |
| Lothian | 21,505 | 7.6% | +0.5% | 1 |
| Mid-Scotland & Fife | 10,914 | 4.2% | +0.5% | 0 |
| North East Scotland | 10,407 | 3.9% | +0.7% | 0 |
| South Scotland | 8,656 | 3.1% | -0.3% | 0 |
| West Scotland | 8,414 | 3.0% | +/-0% | 0 |
| Total | 87,060 | 4.3% | +0.33% | 2 |

Think you could make these pages look better?


I hope so!

Greenprint is looking for a new designer. We have skimpy branding guidelines and an eclectic readership so if you like creative freedom and quick turnarounds, keep reading. It's a volunteer position for a member of the party and we produce four issues per year. If you're still interested, contact communications@scottishgreens.org.uk

More

First we were two, then one. To allow for holidays and other unforeseen events, we'd like to back up our editor and designer team with a few more people who have great words and pictures skills. If you're not looking for a serious commitment but would be willing to help out occasionally, contact communications@scottishgreens.org.uk

Always

We need contributors and lots of 'em. If there's an article you'd love to see in these pages, write it and send it in or tell us and we'll try to find someone to write it for you. If you have an idea but you're not sure if it's article-shaped, get in touch and we'll help you wrestle it onto the page. If you're wondering why there's never any mention of what you're doing in your area, tell us immediately and it will be in the next issue. A few weeks before each issue comes out, we post a call for contributions on a few party mailing lists. If you don't do mailing lists, consider this a permanent invitation. Send all contributions, ideas or feedback to greenprint@scottishgreens.org.uk 

Ten pm on May 5th. As Myra Carus, convenor of the Highlands and Islands Greens, and I stood waiting for the ballot boxes to open, we agreed that we'd run our best ever campaign and that we couldn't have done more with the resources available to us.

By Eleanor Scott



Donnie, Patrick, Eleanor, press photographer and the Soay lamb

The Highlands and Islands

Seventeen hours later we had to hold firmly on to that thought, as the results were announced and our 9,076 votes meant we'd missed out on getting an MSP elected by just 379 votes.

As usual we had a small band of activists – more than previously but still a small band – covering a huge area and as usual they worked their socks off. In areas where we have active members, we had lots of placards and the week of poll cards (an excellent innovation) got delivered, but of course in many areas we don't have people and that didn't happen.

There was a lot of pressure on the top candidate this time – at least I felt it! I think partly that was due to the decision – about which I still have reservations – to feature the top candidate so prominently on the campaign materials. In Highlands and Islands there are constituencies where one of the other candidates has arguably a higher profile so focusing me on all materials may not have helped us. Elaine Morrison, who has built up a good profile in Argyll, was distracted from campaigning by the arrival of son Frazey in mid-campaign but still did a lot!

Candidates in other parts of the country have noted the large numbers of hustings this time; I myself did sixteen regional ones and one national. I travelled to Tongue on the north coast, as far west as Tarbert on Harris, and down to Campbeltown, which is further south than Edinburgh. Fabio Villani did a couple which helped but as the face on the freepost leaflet, I felt that I should do them if possible.

So, things that were good: our intrepid placarders; the week of poll cards and those who delivered them; Patrick and Robin's visits; Donnie Macleod providing a Soay lamb for Patrick to hold (even if a tabloid described it later as a goat); Ed Tyler's conducted tour of Tarbert, Argyll; Niall Shaw driving me and Andy Wightman from Tarbert, Harris to Stornoway after a hustings and putting the world to rights; canvassing in Findhorn with Fabio; the support of H&I activists, fellow candidates and in particular Myra, who combined the role of election agent and

campaign manager, (something we've vowed never to land anyone with again).

And lessons learned: I think there are some practical local ones but also an overall lesson in realism. In the 1999 election, one Green was elected; in 2007, two Greens; in 2011, two Greens. The aberration was 2003 when there were seven of us elected, and we've come to think that that is the result we can reasonably expect. But the 2003 election looks increasingly like an odd one, with not only seven Greens but six SSP, three independents and a Senior Citizen Party MSP. We have not seen a parliament like that before or since. Unfortunately the 2003 experience led us to think that we can and should achieve a crop of MSPs across Scotland without having a corresponding crop of councillors. We can't. So for me the big lesson is that next year's council elections are crucial – not just in themselves, but for us to have any chance of a breakthrough in 2016. **ES**



Martin with Michael Forbes at Menie

In the face of an overwhelming nationalist tide we held our own. Our vote in the north-east went up by about a fifth, from 3.2 per cent in 2003 to 3.9 per cent this year. 10,407 people voted for us. The increase in the Green vote in the north-east was exceeded only by the increase for Patrick Harvie in Glasgow. All the other main parties lost votes to the SNP - but we didn't. But the SNP vote share was so huge they got

I think we are all entitled to feel proud of our campaign and disappointed at the result.

By Martin Ford

North East Scotland

a north-east regional list position - despite winning every individual constituency in the region.

While nothing is ever perfect, I believe we ran about as good and intensive a campaign as was practicable with the resources we had. Our literature was excellent, our platform clear. There was a lot of interest in what we had to say and good will towards us. The campaign has made us stronger organisationally and in the eyes of many amongst the public. It has made it more likely we will win future elections. **MF**

Central Scotland



Kirsten Robb

A big thanks to the Central Scotland team and the wider staff and party for their phenomenal practical and personal support during the Holyrood campaign.

By Kirsten Robb

We developed our team and organisational skills, more members became activists and new people joined. It will always be a challenge for a small team to cover a large region but where we focussed our efforts on target to win wards, we saw an increase in the vote. This bodes well for next year's council elections, but it also has lessons for regions with fewer members than some.

If we are to win council seats next year and more MSPs in future, branches and activists must focus our few resources on working house to house in wards: people need to know about us. When they do I'm sure we will get at least one of their votes! And as we recruit more activists we can cover more wards. The challenge in some areas is to find and support that candidate to bite the bullet and commit to leading ward teams over the next year. Inspired by Ian Baxter's timely canvassing workshop, Lanarkshire now has a plan to run a similar training event and canvas every voter in our East Kilbride target ward over the next year. The best way to start canvassing is just to do it and next year's elections give us the focus we need to get on with the job.

But it's not all door knocking. We've organised a trip to our local brewery on September 3rd, plan to visit our local recycling plant and will continue doing car boot sales over the summer to top up the funds.

Onwards and upwards! **KR**

By request

In the call for contributions to this issue we asked if there were any topics readers would like us to cover. We received two requests: one for how to set up a local group and what a small group can do, and one for campaigning in rural areas, where going door-to-door is not practical. We hope the next article helps with the first request..

Keep the suggestions coming!



A-board on George St., Oban

Big geographies and mobilising members

In the sub-branch of Argyll and Bute we have three members on Mull, two on Islay, one on Tiree and eighteen spread across the mainland between Tighnabruaich and Appin, a distance of 90 miles or a two and a half hour drive.

By Elaine Morrison

It doesn't make for easy organising. Much of our communication is by email but even then only limited numbers participate – maybe seven regularly.

With the need for ferries, diesel and overnight accommodation, it is simply too difficult or expensive for us all to

get together, so how do we manage to campaign? The short answer is that a few of us do everything, the rest do what they can locally - even if it's just putting up a poster, it is something and it matters.

During the Holyrood campaign, one member in Oban distributed all the materials we could post to him and put up placards and A-boards at polling places. There is no doubt that it brought in votes. Others did similar in their communities.

Outwith election times, there is no denying that it is more challenging to motivate and mobilise, but all it needs is a handful of willing members to take on a task and the rest will support them in whatever

way possible. Another member took on the organisation of a Green Fair in Dunoon last November and it was an astounding success. It raised our profile and it raised funds. It may not be very Green to get in the car alone and drive 200 miles, but you have to weigh up the benefits of supporting another member.

We plan our meetings to coincide with events such as street stalls to avoid multiple meet ups. This summer I will be travelling to meet clusters of members in Mull, Islay, Cowal and Oban, as well as Mid Argyll/North Kintyre. If anyone else can manage to come with me great, but if not, at least members get a local meeting of sorts.

Our experience tells me that you have to accept limitations and do what you can. If you can be seen to be active

in communities it will attract more members and with more members you can do more. We aren't at that stage yet in Argyll and Bute, but as we head towards the council elections next spring, it is an opportunity to focus our limited resources on gaining visibility in key communities and gaining more members in the process. There is no shortcut, only hard work, but it will pay off. And always remember to say thank you to the stalwarts who carry on, because it matters. **EM**



Dunbartonshire lives!
After a dormant period
for the local branch, the
election this year has
shaken us back into life.

By Ross Greer

Dunbartonshire - up and running

With a wee membership boost we now have ourselves a new convenor in Hasan Nowarah, a vice convenor in myself, a treasurer in Charlie McGraw and the ability to function as a branch once more. We would like to wish our previous convenor, David Doherty well in Oban and thank him for his work for Dunbartonshire branch over the years. There is a lot to do with both new members and we need funds imminently but the local profile we built during the Holyrood campaign will serve us well as we strive towards making our first gains in the local authorities next year.

It all works hand in hand, as fundraising events will – fingers crossed – bring in new members as well as funds and in turn these new members can help us build our local profile, combining to allow us to fight a bigger campaign than ever next year.

Membership has been a problem with Dunbarton in the past: we have just scraped by the quorum for a few meetings and this is something that we need to address immediately. A functioning branch relies on a strong membership and whilst our current group is a fantastic bunch, we are but a few and some extra bodies sure would help. Bearsden and Milngavie are areas where we have seen our

best support in the past and in fitting with our target to win strategy (soon to be reviewed and kick-started), this is where I feel our potential lies for both membership and election success.

As I write this, our first post-election meeting is pencilled in but yet to take place so of course our plans could be set to change but one thing that will not lose priority is branch finances. Fundraising outwith election time has not taken place for a while here but we are excited at the prospect of getting right back into it with quite a few event ideas being knocked around. Keep a look out on the Dunbartonshire Greens website (dunbartonshiregreens.org). As soon as I figure out how to work it I'll be keeping it updated with all our local activity.

The Scottish Green Party has huge potential in Dunbartonshire to build a strong local party and lead on to electoral success. We have a great team here to do that and I am confident that the next few years will bring some great successes to the party so if you know any Green minded individuals in the Dunbartonshire area, pass them a membership form or tell them to get in contact with a growing and re-animated local branch! **RG**

Conference 2011

By Debra Storr

This year's conference and AGM are in Aberdeen on 29th and 30th October. After a busy year in the run up to the Holyrood elections and while we are preparing for the council elections in 2012, it is worth taking time to meet and learn from other Greens from across Scotland and participate in our on-going policy making.

Early booking is at reduced rates. If you are a member, you will receive forms in the post, if not a member, keep an eye on the Scottish Green Party website. **DS**

Aberdeen by-election

Good luck to Richard Brian, who is standing for the Greens in the Aberdeen by-election for the Airyhall/Broomhill/Garthdee ward. Election day: June 23rd.

Long walk for fair trade

For the first eleven days of June, Ian Baxter was walking from Glasgow to Inverness to raise money for The Scottish Fair Trade Forum so that it can do more to promote fair trade in local areas.

Local currency for Edinburgh

Edinburgh Councillor Steve Burgess's recommendation for a study on the practicability of an Edinburgh pound has been unanimously approved by the council's Economic Development Committee.

Save the Egyptian Halls

Glasgow Greens are striving to protect the city's Grade A listed Egyptian Halls, on Union Street. Councillor Nina Baker has objected to demolition plans and MSP Patrick Harvie, has lodged a motion calling on the Scottish Parliament to protect the property, which is regarded as the finest example of the work of architect Alexander Thomson.

Parks for people

Lanarkshire Greens are opposing South Lanarkshire Council's plans to close 118 local playparks. Greens argue that rather than neglect the parks for years and then sell them off, the council should give communities the opportunity to maintain and develop the areas, as has worked well with the local Hillock Park.

VS

March of Menie

Greens from across Scotland were among the walkers and speakers at the March of Menie on June 5th. The event was a show of support for residents neighbouring the Trump golf development. A private security company monitored proceedings.



Greenprint

Continuing crackdowns on peaceful protesters

Alasdair Thompson of Bright Green was arrested on May 15th for taking part in a peaceful protest by Edinburgh Uncut against tax avoidance by retail tycoon, Philip Green. Protesters moved their protest to outside St Leonard's police station, where Alasdair was being held. He was released later that day. In March, fellow Bright Green, Adam Ramsay was one of several UK Uncut protesters held overnight for a protest at London's Fortnum & Mason. **VS**

Other Green Election News

English local elections

Greens stood in 205 out of the 280 local elections. 130 Green councillors were elected to 43 councils, an increase of 14 councillors and 1 council. Brighton and Hove City made Greens the majority party on their council, while two Green councillors hold the balance of power on Reading Council.

Welsh Assembly elections

Wales Green Party just missed out on securing a first seat in the Welsh Assembly but achieved their best Assembly election results so far.

Northern Ireland Assembly elections

Northern Ireland's first Green MLA retired from the Assembly and the party's youngest leader, Steven Agnew, retained the North Down seat for the Green Party of Northern Ireland.

Green Lord Mayor

Elise Benjamin became Oxford's first Green Lord Mayor on 19th May. Elise has been a Green councillor for ten years, was Sheriff of Oxford from 2009 to 2010 and was deputy Lord Mayor three years ago.

Green first for Canada

On May 2nd, Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party of Canada, became Canada's first Green MP. Elizabeth represents the Saanich-Gulf Islands in British Columbia.

Green victories in Germany

A Greens-led alliance with Social Democrats won the German state of Baden-Württemberg in March's state assembly elections. The victory followed Germany's biggest ever protests against nuclear power and displaced the Christian Democrats, who had ruled the state since 1953.

At the end of May, Germany became the biggest industrial power to announce plans to give up nuclear energy. Environment Minister, Norbert Rottgen, said that all reactors would be shut down for good by 2022. The previous German government, a coalition of Social Democrats and Greens, had made similar plans but these were scrapped last year by the current government. **VS**

Bonnyrigg canvassing

workshop

By Varihi Scott

On a grey Saturday in May about a dozen of us crowded around Ian Baxter's dining table for a tightly packed workshop on canvassing. Jim Jepps explained how each step of the process is linked to our core political activities and Ian gave us local examples from his tireless work in Midlothian, before sending us out to practice on surrounding streets. Here are some highlights:

Objective

- The main objective of canvassing is to collect data; building a candidate's profile is secondary
- Collect data on individual voting intentions and the issues that concern voters

Who and when

- People who didn't vote in the Holyrood elections are unlikely to vote in the council elections
- Postal voters are more likely to use their vote
- The electoral register will tell you which addresses have registered voters

How to canvass

- Use canvassing between elections to find out what people want to talk about
- Use short surveys in the run up to elections to cover an area quickly
- In remote areas use phone canvassing
- Wear a party rosette so that people can quickly identify who you are
- Avoid leading questions and discussing your priorities; you need to find out their priorities
- Write down only what's relevant, e.g., lack of bins for dog waste yes; individual dog's medical history, no
- If someone is politely keeping you chatting about nothing relevant they could well be an activist from another party
- If you're leaving a short survey, include the time you'll return to collect it

Following through

- Find out how you can tackle the issues that concern people; if you want to be their councillor, do what the best councillors do and help people improve their communities
- Write ward newsletters showing how you are addressing the issues that have been raised by the people you've canvassed
- Use targeted mail that reflects what you've collected on voting intentions
- Get someone from outside the party to proofread your letters and newsletters for party jargon
- When you find Green supporters, ask them to get involved and show their support
- Always carry spare membership forms and information about the party and your local branch

The next stage

- By polling day you should have enough information to run a small polling station operation

For more information, contact Jim Jepps or Ian Baxter. **VS**

The traffic lights of political change -

Red >> Yellow >> Green!

By Justin Kenrick

In Robin McAlpine's superb analysis (1), this election was about a much longer term process in which:

"a broadly left-of-centre consensus has interacted with a more specific left-focussed strand of the electorate, and this has generated continuing change in Scottish politics which underlies the visible politics of parliament and party. There is plenty to suggest that 2011 is part continuation, part acceleration of this process."

So, people trusted Labour to be the party that focused on the well-being of all, and the party drifted from them as (at Westminster) it took to power, to nuclear weapons, to war and seemed to be dazzled by the rich. Then people turned to the SNP, because it shared their concerns about inequality in education and health, because of its focus on renewables and renewing hope, and its opposition to nuclear weapons, nuclear energy and war.

If this 2011 election is part of a broader process of dramatic and ongoing political and cultural change, then is there a way we can respond to the political opportunities and the ecological necessities through developing a movement that focuses less on party politics and more on the need for transformative political change? Is there a need for those of us who are peripheral to the party, and those outside but sympathetic to the party, to look at how we can help broaden and deepen support for Green politics, primarily and perhaps paradoxically by not focusing on trying to build the party but by focusing on building a broader movement of which the party is a part?

Do we need an open meeting to look less at electoral strategy than at culture shift strategy, and maybe connecting

this to addressing the democratic deficit?

Culture Shift: Do we need to develop a culture story that is ahead of the SNP but – in some senses – going in the direction and beyond where they are heading? We can't wait for the SNP to fail. In fact we should expect and hope that they succeed; not in terms of their road building and misguided faith in corporations, but in terms of persuading people that the closer to home decisions are made the better: that we can trust ourselves. Should we be building the story and space for people to see that deepening self-determination for Scotland so that it becomes self-determination for communities takes empowerment to the next level?

Alongside this, it may be counter-productive to define ourselves as anti-capitalist, or define ourselves as being for higher taxation. We need to be for a healthy social economy which taxes for clear social purposes. We need to be for an economy of trade and production, innovation and specialisation. But this can't be a reactive socialism that is forever focused on capitalism. Nor can it be 'capitalism-lite', which still maintains capitalism's addiction to growth, and its inevitable boom and bust as financiers gamble and cash in on the rise and fall of prices, psychopathically focused on the one 'rational' goal of profit maximisation, and ignoring the devastating harm this causes to people and planet, and even to their relationship with their families and themselves.

Community and Activist Inspiration:

Probably all of us are heavily involved in community level work such as Transition Towns and/ or activist work such as UK Uncut. In my community people like Peter McColl throw their

energies into speaking out as Green Party activists while I throw mine into Transition here and with indigenous communities in Africa. Can people like me do our work in our communities in a way that helps build electoral support for Green politics, rather than having to do the ground level party work we don't have time for? Can we show the links between our actions and party policies and effectiveness?

Supporting the Disenfranchised: In terms of knocking on doors, political media events, and internet mobilisation, do we need a broader movement that is not focusing on persuading people to vote Green, but is simply seeking to persuade people to vote at all? Huge swathes of people – especially the young, the poor, the marginalised – didn't even bother to vote. They don't need anyone to speak for them, but can we make spaces for them to speak out and reengage? It may seem as though this would be over-stretching ourselves (and done the wrong way it would) but could it also be a way of linking with a broader range of activists and mobilising an almost invisible constituency?

Perhaps we need space to really clarify and deepen our underlying story so that it connects people's everyday experience with the deeper cultural story of how the system as a whole is changing and needs to change. JK

(1) Robin McAlpine, *After the election... where next for Scottish Politics* <http://brightgreenscotland.org/index.php/2011/05/after-the-election-where-next-for-scottish-politics/>

At time of going to press, plans are underway to arrange a weekend for discussing these ideas and more. Keep an eye on the Scottish Green Party mailing lists for details. If you don't subscribe to the mailing lists, your local branch will be able to let you know when a date and place have been confirmed. Contact Elaine Morrison of Argyll and Bute Greens for more information.

And finally...

Reflections

from the

Campaign Trail

By Peter McColl.

The first three years

The highlight of any Scottish political activist's life is the four yearly jamboree that is the Scottish Parliament election. In Edinburgh, our preparations for this year's election started in autumn 2007. We created a four year plan which, we hoped, would win us back our 2 MSPs. Our really focused planning started with a couple of committee away-days in July last year.

Hustings zinger

My campaign highlights included some rather nice coverage in the Herald diary column for my hustings performance at the Law Society of Scotland. It was on the day that Greens polled ahead of Liberal Democrats for the first time. One opponent was outgoing Edinburgh South Liberal Democrat MSP, Mike Pringle. He was putting forward the central Liberal Democrat idea of not having a single national Police force. For emphasis he said that only the Liberal Democrats were against moving to a single police force.

Given the opportunity to answer the question I pointed out that Greens also opposed the move to a national police force. He butted in to say: "the liberal democrats are the only main party..." I couldn't help but point out that they'd not be a main party after the election, to widespread laughter from the audience.

One of the many skills required of a campaigner in Edinburgh is putting up and taking down placards. Placards are the area where Greens in Edinburgh have outperformed all the other parties. So for us it's important. So important we start putting them up at 11pm on the Friday before the election, a whole hour before we're allowed to.

No caption required

Almost as important as getting placards up is taking them down. Having been up all night at the election count on Thursday into Friday, I was a little woozy taking down placards on Friday afternoon, so the sight of a sign outside the abandoned and dilapidated former Social Work building on Shrub Place made me look twice and then again. It said that this was the "Big Society Headquarters." It certainly made me chuckle. **PMcC**

Membership and Donation Form

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Signed:

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