

# LondonGreenNews

ISSUE 4 • NEWSPAPER OF THE LONDON GREEN PARTY



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## • Greens aiming high in this year's European elections

# Jean's euro-vision

By Deborah Maby and Al Gordon  
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With the European elections fast approaching, hopes are high that 2009 could see the Green Party achieve its best ever results.

The Greens have always done well in European elections, and this year here is a real chance that not only will they keep their existing seats, but that they might increase their share of the vote.

Jean Lambert, one of the Greens' existing MEPs, has no doubts about standing for a third term: "there is still so much to do", she explained.

Darren Johnson, Green Party London Assembly Member praised her, saying, "at a time of huge potential change I feel we need someone of Jean's experience to help get us through the recession and come out greener at the other end."

### ECONOMY

And that is a crucial plank of the Greens' approach – that green policies can be good for peoples' finances,

society and the environment.

"I really feel we can offer something in an economic downturn by getting people to recognise the connections between employment migration, social inclusion and climate change," explained Jean.

### HEATHROW

On a local level, Lambert has been a leading campaigner against the irrational expansion of Heathrow Airport and she recently joined hundreds of protesters outside Downing Street to voice her concerns.

As well as the environment, Jean's interests include democracy and human rights, refugees, anti-discrimination and the development of a green employment strategy. In 2005, Lambert was named MEP of the year for her work on justice and human rights.

Jean is also a tireless campaigner on Disability and Gay and Lesbian Rights, and is the spokesperson for the Green group on asylum and refugees.

She is one of the first politicians to look properly at the links between climate change, environmental damage and migration and is now working to develop effective responses.

Another of her key areas of interest is work-life balance. Jean is the author of *Must I Work Harder?*, a report that highlighted the relationship between long working hours and mental and physical health problems.

### LONDON

Amidst all her travelling, Jean needs to keep a balance between representing London and representing Green interests.

"I try to connect London and Parliament," she says. "If I'm talking about working time, I raise issues constituents have raised. If I'm working on a report, I will try to visit relevant organizations in London. I also try to link issues with Green colleagues in the Assembly. You can only make a difference if you make the links and push for change."

*"I feel we need someone of Jean's experience to help get us through the recession and come out greener at the other end."*  
-Darren Johnson



# Think Green

London Green MEP Jean Lambert (right) with European candidates Ute Michel (left) and Shahrar Ali (centre)

*"One of the most positive things you can do, particularly if you're a potential Green voter, is register to vote!"*

- Jean Lambert MEP

## London Greens go on-line

The London Green Party's European election campaign has been taking a leaf out of President Obama's book – using online technology to make it easier for people to re-elect Jean Lambert MEP and other Green representatives in June. Unlike the bigger parties, Green candidates aren't funded by big companies or multi-millionaires – we rely on ordinary people. For that reason, online involvement is extremely important. Why not get involved today?

You can follow the Euro campaign online in a number of ways, including:

- On Facebook; just visit [www.tinyurl.com/jeanlambert](http://www.tinyurl.com/jeanlambert)
- Through the campaign blog; click on [re-electjean.blogspot.com](http://re-electjean.blogspot.com)
- On the London Green Party website; [www.london.greenparty.org.uk](http://www.london.greenparty.org.uk)
- And you can even contribute directly, by donating online through Paypal: <http://tinyurl.com/8rh9qh>

If you have a blog or website and would like to find out how you can promote the work that Jean is doing in the European Parliament, as well as her campaign to get re-elected, please do get in touch at [reelectjean@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:reelectjean@hotmail.co.uk)



# Use your vote on 4 June 2009!

Don't lose out on your chance to vote Green in the European Elections on 4 June 2009.

Visit [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) or ask at your local Town Hall

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Barnet bus blues



Finchley Green Party is supporting local calls for a new bus route that would link North Finchley, Memorial Hospital, Leisure Centre, East Finchley and the Royal Free Hospital.

The Green Party's Darren Johnson, Deputy Chair of The London Assembly, has lobbied Mayor Boris Johnson to instruct Transport for London to institute the new route.

"We should have bus routes that cover areas where people need them" says East Finchley Green Party spokesperson Noel Lynch. "More and more people are being referred to the Royal Free and it is difficult to get there by public transport. Also, the East Finchley/North Finchley section is badly served by the 263."

Barnet Green Party have an ongoing petition which can be received from Noel Lynch noellynch@lineone.net

### Don't cut Lewisham Hospital services

Greens are saying a firm no to any plans to cut services at Lewisham Hospital as part of the health re-organisation in Southeast London. Paediatrics and A&E services are to be saved following public outcry but the future of other essential services is less secure.

Green councillor, Romyne Phoenix, said, "While the impact on University Hospital Lewisham could have been much worse, I am still concerned over threats to Lewisham's maternity services and night-time emergency surgery. None of these cuts would have been necessary if billions of pounds of were not being squandered on botched privatization schemes. That is why Lewisham Greens are fighting hard to keep our NHS as a public service and prevent more back-door privatization."

### Croydon Greens save schools

Activists have been working to stop school closures in Croydon and raised the issue with the student Council at Haling Manor.

The Conservative council intends to close the school which is in the top 3% in the value added league table for the whole country and reopen it as a Harris Academy – making it the third in the area. Residents are complaining about the undemocratic nature of the change.



Commenting on the meeting, Shasha Khan of the Croydon Green Party said: "The pupils at the school will be the ones most affected by the changes so it is absolutely right that they fully understand what is going on."

### Camden fights for living wage

The Camden Green Party has vowed to continue fighting for a "living wage" to be paid to all people working for Camden council, despite opposition from other parties.

Maya de Souza, the leader of the Green group on council, said: "The national minimum wage of is clearly inadequate for anyone living in London. That's why a London Living Wage – currently £7.45 an hour – has been calculated."

## Green budget calls for cycle network and renewable energy Mayor's budget costs families and environment

Boris Johnson's new budget will cost the average London household £180 a year in increased fares and will not make London a better place to live, say the Green Party Assembly Members.

The increase in living expenses comes as the Mayor drops a large number of green programmes from his budget.

Specific things which have been cut include the green homes scheme, the London Cycle Network, and the Climate Change Agency. He has also abandoned the Cross River Tram and gas-guzzler congestion charge.

Although the Mayor has promised not to increase Council Tax, his policies will be costing a typical household £180 a year in increased fares.

After promising a greener more affordable city his policies will make London more expensive and more polluted.

In response, the Greens have issued their own budget calling for full funding for the cycle network along with greater investment in energy efficiency, renewable energy and household insulation.

## Capital residents losing chance to save money London lagging behind on keeping warm



Londoners are missing opportunities to save energy and money as basic insulation targets are not being met.

At current rates it could take at least 65 years to insulate all of London's homes, making it almost impossible to meet the Lord Mayor's goal of a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025.

At the same time, installing basic insulation would save the average household between £250 and £350 from their fuel bills.

That's the message in a new report released by the Chair of the London Assembly's Environ-

ment Committee Darren Johnson.

The report goes on to call on Boris Johnson to put in place plans to expand home insulation rapidly and to simplify the process for getting insulation.

At the moment a number of separate insulation support schemes make the situation complicated and confusing. As an example the report mentions a highly successful scheme in Huddersfield where the local council is providing free insulation for every home that needs it, with installers working their way through every single street.

## Greens seek lasting solutions EU support needed in Gaza



In the last few months the Gaza Strip has witnessed a terrible upsurge in violence, leading to the deaths of many innocent civilians caught in the fighting

between Israel and Hamas.

Jean Lambert, London's Green MEP, visited Gaza a year ago, as part of a European Parliament mission to assess the humanitarian situation. She found that the blockade on the movement of goods and people had led to a deficit of the most basic supplies, including food and essential medical equipment. People had become reliant on the use of tunnels, and dependent on those who controlled them.

Jean, who was previously named MEP of the Year for her work on Justice and Human Rights, said: "The blockade has lasted months and has totally failed in its stated purpose. It has instead con-

solidated the power of those parts of Hamas that don't want a political settlement and weakened the possibility of peaceful, democratic progress."

In the European Parliament, the Greens pushed for action from the Council and Commission and this was followed by the adoption of a cross-party call for the blockade to be lifted and for EU humanitarian and reconstruction aid.

Jean, and her fellow Green MEPs, have also called on Member States to end the sale of arms to the region and have campaigned for the EU-Israel Association Agreement to be suspended if human rights abuses continue.

## Assembly calls for Fairtrade boroughs

The London Assembly has called on Boris Johnson to urge all boroughs to support the Fairtrade campaign, in a move opposed by the Tories and the BNP.

Towards the end of last year,

Assembly Members agreed a motion congratulating the 20 London boroughs that have already achieved Fairtrade borough status and welcomed the Capital's achievement of Fairtrade City status.

However, the Assembly called on the Mayor to encourage the remaining 13 London boroughs to work with all groups to increase the availability and take up of Fairtrade products.

Proposing the motion, the Green Party's Darren Johnson AM said: "I am pleased that more than half are now fully-fledged Fairtrade boroughs. We now need a final push to encourage the remaining boroughs to play their part in this worthwhile scheme. Fair trade can literally transform the lives of millions of people."



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## • MEP joins protest on airport Greens condemn Heathrow expansion

The London Green Party has attacked the government's plans to build a third runway at Heathrow Airport, saying it is based on false economics and would pollute the air and contribute to climate change.

Speaking before a protest outside Downing Street, Green MEP Jean Lambert said: 'We've been told that expansion is crucial to the economy, but the contribution that aviation makes is frequently overstated. Eighteen million passengers arriving at Heathrow never leave the airport, simply using it to transfer to another international flight.'

Crucially, the runaway expansion of air travel makes it extremely difficult to reduce carbon emissions, and



so tackle climate change. Aviation is one of the fastest growing sources of greenhouse gases.

There is also concern for the people who live near Heathrow, both from increased air traffic and the extra passengers it will bring.

Jean Lambert: "The government

has chosen to ignore the millions of London residents who will be adversely affected, through the destruction of local communities, increased road traffic, air pollution and noise, all of which could lead to serious health problems."

One way to tackle the problem, would be to reduce the amount of tax-payers money which is handed out to the airlines.

"The aviation industry does not pay its way. It receives tax breaks which other transport industries do not get. It doesn't pay the damages of the noise and pollution it causes, it pays no tax on aviation fuel and it is zero-rated for VAT", said Mrs. Lambert.

## • Fares increase to help motorists Mayor fails on transport for London

Scrapping the Western Extension of the congestion charge zone will lead to higher tube fares, more traffic, dirtier air and a rise in carbon emissions, according the London Assembly Member Jenny Jones. At the same time she pointed out that the Mayor is failing in his commitment to make London a more bicycle friendly city.

Jones, a member of the Green Party, pointed to a £70 million funding gap that would be caused by the Mayor's decision to remove the Western extension – the area of charging in Kensington and Chelsea.

Jenny Jones: "This will be a straightforward swap, from motorists paying to

bus and tube passengers paying. This is bad news not only for pedestrians and cyclists, but also for anyone travelling in London and everyone who breathes London's air."

A survey by Transport for London of 2,000 Londoners found that 45% of individuals surveyed wanted to keep or revise the Western Extension scheme, a higher percentage than the 41% who wanted to scrap the scheme altogether.

In a separate statement Jones also hit out at the Mayor's failure to fulfil his promises to increase the number of cycle lanes in the city, after he slashed £10 million from money available to Boroughs to promote the use of bikes.



Instead the Mayor allocated an extra £11 million to 're-phase' traffic lights.

Speaking about the news, Jenny Jones said: "The cycling Mayor was meant to be on the cyclists' side, yet he has now halved the funding for London's biggest cycling scheme."

## • Victory for personal freedom DNA breached Londoners' rights

Thousands of Londoners could be having their human rights abused as police hold DNA records of innocent people.

In a recent decision from the European Court of Human Rights, it was ruled that the Metropolitan Police acted wrongly by keeping the DNA of two men who were arrested but not charged

with any crime.

The decision is good news for those who have become increasingly concerned for the millions of people whose DNA is currently held by the police, despite the

fact that they have never been convicted of wrongdoing.

The Green Party's Jenny Jones, who has raised this issue in the London Assembly, will ask the Mayor to implement any changes this new ruling may demand. This could mean thousands of DNA samples being destroyed and removed from the National Database.

Jenny Jones said: "The Court has made the right decision. It is clearly wrong that the records of innocent people are held on a database on the assumption that they may be guilty of a future crime."

"The Met take around 80,000 DNA samples every year. I have asked the Commissioner to detail how many of the records held come from people who have never been charged or convicted. It is vital for public confidence in the police that the Met implements the changes that must flow from this decision as soon as possible."



## • New report says kids are okay Mayor demonizes London youth

Young people in London are suffering from an unfairly negative image backed up by the Mayor and the media, says the Green Party's Jenny Jones.

Far from being a generation of knife-wielding thugs, most young people in the capital are law-abiding citizens.

The news came in a report published by Jones to coincide with Boris Johnson taking the chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority for the first time.

Speaking about the report Jenny Jones said: 'Boris Johnson rode to power on the back of rising fear of youth violence embodied by those stories – a fear he stoked with paranoid rhetoric on soaring gang-membership and rising knife crime. This report shows that rhetoric to be baseless. Youth violence fell by over 10% between May 2007 and April 2008, while just 2000 of London's 1.72 million young people are involved with gangs.'

'Boris Johnson must promote a

positive attitude to the young, and to do so he must challenge the myths he started.'

Alongside the Jenny Jones report, the Mayor has also published his own document on how to tackle youth crime. While Jones welcomed the intention to provide support for all young people, the Mayor's report failed to tackle the underlying causes of violence among young people, a problem not helped by constant negative stereotyping.

## No plane sailing for Heathrow



©brokenstone

By Deborah Maby

You could be forgiven for thinking the government's decision to give the green light to a third runway at Heathrow signalled the end of the fight and a major setback for environmentalists and the residents of west London. But happily, you would be wrong; not only is the battle far from over, but major concessions have been won, not least runway 'alternation' by which west London residents get a respite from 3pm every day.

The downsides of the proposed runway are well-documented – a 2km long stretch of tarmac that would leave the village of Sipson bulldozed, and an additional 600 flights a day – all in the dubious cause of promoting London's position as a major transport hub and the business and finance capital of the world – aims that sound slightly hollow today.

Green Party leader Caroline Lucas MEP was quick to denounce the government go-ahead as "irresponsible, deceptive and environmentally disastrous". The decision, she went on to say, "demonstrates a complete contempt for the environment, for the health of UK citizens and for our democratic processes."

In fact the only real beneficiary would be BAA itself, which is facing the break-up of its monopoly of seven airports and needs to increase its market share by expanding Heathrow, which it will retain. Equally, the extra travellers brought in by a new runway would be transit passengers, profitable to BAA, but of little benefit to the UK economy.

Indeed, the runway seems increasingly obsolete. By the time the it is built, the era of cheap travel will be over and recession will have pushed a number of airlines over the brink. As other industries reduce their carbon emissions, aviation will contribute a higher and higher proportion, unacceptable to any government with pretensions to take climate change seriously. Friends of the Earth highlight the ludicrous nature of this position in its case against airport expansion, pointing out that "by 2050, based on its own forecasts, the Government might well argue that a fifth runway and eighth terminal should be in place".

The last, cheering word should, however, go to Hacan Clear Skies, which has campaigned tirelessly in the interests of those who live under the Heathrow flight paths or near the airport since the 1960s. "We have never felt so confident we can win. Opposition is widespread and growing. The opposition parties. Because it will take several years for BAA to draw up plans, it will not be this Government but the next one which has the final say-so. This announcement is not defeat, but victory delayed."

## • Supermarket danger Troubles with Asda



Brent Greens have been campaigning to put a stop to Asda lorries endangering the lives of pedestrians outside their Wembley store. Delivery lorries have been found blocking access to a pedestrian island on a slip road on many occasions over the last few months.

Brent Greens have collected photographic evidence of the road traffic violations and made representations to Asda, Brent transportation unit, local councillors and the police.

The Greens have solicited a response from Asda head office and held a meeting with the manager of the local store. Unfortunately, despite Asda's undertaking to resolve the issue, lorries continue to flout no stopping lines to block the bus stop and to force pedestrians into the main road. Our road safety campaign continues.





# Continental shift

**With the European elections** rapidly approaching, *London Green News* takes a timely look at some of the green initiatives which have been making waves around Europe. From Finchley to Freiburg and Southwark to Sweden, green ideas and politicians are transforming the lives of their constituents, providing a high-tech vision for the future and a better quality of life.

## London

As one of the world's most important cities, London should be at the forefront in the development of the green economy. The congestion charge, when first introduced, was held up as an example to the world, leading to a host of similar schemes being discussed elsewhere. Sadly, despite the best efforts of environmentally minded politicians, the extension of this scheme has been scrapped, and important investments in public transport slashed by the Mayor. By voting Green in the European elections, Londoners have a chance to show they are willing to take the lead in promoting a green future, securing jobs, new industries and a better standard of living or years to come.



## Barcelona

When thinking of Green destinations, not many in Britain would choose Spain, yet the Mediterranean nation is quickly becoming a world leader in a host of important ways. From solar electricity to wind power, Spain is one of the top markets in the world, and the solar Pergola in Barcelona is a visible example of what has been achieved. Built in 2004 for the World Forum of Culture the massive structure contains enough solar cells to power nearly 1000 homes, and is a powerful reminder of a bold vision for the future. Altogether, renewable energy sources now provide more than 10% of Spain's electricity, and they are expanding all the time.



## GREENS DRIVING EUROPEAN CLIMATE POLICY

The Greens in the European Parliament are continuously pushing to ensure that urgent action is taken to prevent catastrophic climate change.

With greenhouse gas emissions from aviation rising fast, the Greens have been at the forefront of building support in the European Parliament for rigorous measures to address the impact of flying. They succeeded in securing cross-party backing for the Parliament's legislative proposal to include aviation emissions in the EU emissions trading scheme.

The Kyoto Protocol signalled a major step forward in efforts to stop dangerous climate change, but maintaining international commitment has been an uphill struggle. The Greens have been at the forefront of negotiations for a post-2012 regime and Green proposals for the next steps after Kyoto have gained support and momentum.

Meanwhile, the Green MEPs have also ensured that the nuclear industry

does not receive credits as a result of international climate agreements. They want to make sure that climate policy does not lead to nuclear proliferation or terrorism.

As well as supporting cleaner, renewable sources of energy, it's essential that energy efficiency in the home is maximised. This means saving energy, as well as saving money for consumers.

Currently, there is a wide discrepancy in the energy consumption of appliances that have the same functionality. The EU Eco-design legislation requires minimum standards to be set for all major energy-consuming products and appliances. Thanks to Green amendments, the Commission has a duty to develop such requirements in a transparent process, in consultation with stakeholders beyond industry. The European Parliament can also have a final say to ensure that the level of environmental ambition is sufficient.



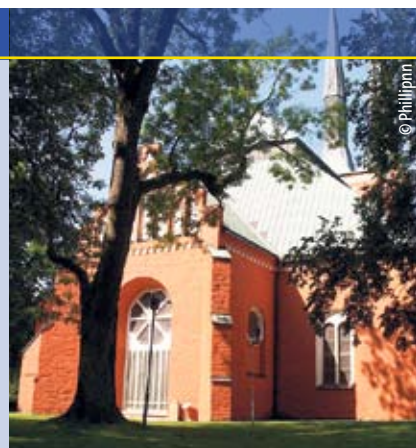


## Växjö

In the cool forests of Southern Sweden, the small city of Växjö has gained a reputation as one of the Greenest cities on earth, thanks to its 1996 decision to wean itself away from fossil fuels.

Thirteen years later and the job is already half done. Coal and fuel oil are gone from the town, replaced by biomass boilers and power stations burning sawdust. Petrol too is being phased out, replaced with alcohol made from plant material. Just as important as the technology though is the change in peoples' attitudes. New housing estates have been re-designed to reduce to make them people friendly. In the local government offices, private vehicles have been replaced by car shares and bicycles.

Thanks to these measures, and many others besides, the people of Växjö have turned their city into a model for the world, reducing their carbon footprint to less than a fifth of the average North American or Australian.



## Copenhagen



One of the first things which a visitor to Copenhagen will notice is the huge wind turbines spinning gently just outside the harbour. In fact, travel around Denmark and you soon realise that the country is dotted with sleek white windmills. As one of the first countries to seriously adopt wind power, Denmark has led the world in innovation and now gets more than 20% of its electricity from the air. Not only has this helped reduce the country's carbon emissions, but it has provided a huge economic boost. More than 23,000 people are employed in the Danish wind sector and as wind picks up all over the globe they are selling their skill, and turbines, to the highest bidder.

## Freiburg



Nestling in the heart of the Black Forest (yes, as in the Gateaux), Germany's solar city has an enviable reputation as one of Europe's most environmentally friendly and is a stronghold of eco-politics, with the Green Party getting more than 25% of the State vote. Freiburg is far from being some chocolate box village however. The town has managed to blend its medieval city streets with cutting edge manufacturing and a thriving economy based on environmental technology. Home to world renowned solar research centres, top class manufacturing plants, sustainable community housing and even buildings that turn with the sun, Freiburg must surely be one of the most environmentally friendly places in the world.

## Living in a Solar Power Station

Charles and Lynn Williams pride themselves on doing their bit for the environment. They have installed solar panels at the front and back of their house to produce electricity and heat their water.

The excess electricity the solar panels produce on sunny days goes back into the national grid. Charles is delighted to supply energy from a renewable source, "You are allowed to be a small supplier now, you don't have to be a big power station. You can register with Ofgem, so we are an official power station." They have also signed a deal with their electricity supplier who buys their surplus energy from them. Charles says that living in a micro power station is surprisingly quiet, it doesn't really make any noise and the solar panels blend in with the roof. "It's a wonderful system it's called a fit and forget system. Once it's in it's guaranteed for 20 years. There are no moving parts and you just forget about it" Charles and Lynn wanted to be less reliant upon oil reserves.

They also grow a lot of their own vegetables, re-cycle as much as they can, re-use plastic bags and collect and save rain water. They have a strict rule not to use tap water in the garden. The solar panels that Charles and Lynn use to produce electricity are called photovoltaics, or PV for short. The company that supplied the couple with PV is a London based supplier Chelsfield Solar Ltd who have installed several hundred systems on homes in and around the South East over the past 8 years and can also help you with the Government grants available. For more information please see [www.chelsfieldsolar.co.uk](http://www.chelsfieldsolar.co.uk). A PV system is an environmental purchase that will provide a good return on investment that is comparable to a high interest savings account. The downside is that payback is quite slow, but with ever increasing energy costs, this is a good way to help future-proof your electricity bills and reduce your carbon footprint. Prices start from around £7,000 and there is a grant of up to £2,500.



< Charles Williams.  
Happy PV owner.  
Photo courtesy of the BBC.



< Charles Williams' Solar Power Station

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## Italian waste disposal

Sadly, waste disposal in Italy usually conjures images of rotting garbage in the streets of Naples and mafia controlled companies dumping in the sea. It is against this backdrop the Italian greens have been working to implement a number of important changes in the way the recycling and waste disposal are viewed in Italy, and particularly in the areas where they are strong. So the inclusion of this entry not so much a recognition of a clean town, as it is of an achievement on a particular issue. By getting a politician appointed Environment Minister, the Italian Greens were able to bring in Italy's first comprehensive waste law in 1997.



# Meet your Euro-Greens

On the 4th June Londoners will be joining voters from all over Europe to choose their new representatives in the European Parliament. Members of the European Parliament, or MEPs take crucial decision which affect the lives of everyone in the UK, developing new laws and holding the government to account. The Green Party has a strong record in Europe, where they sit with Greens from all over the continent and work to improve the lives and the environment of Europeans. Meet the Green Party's candidates for London.

All together the Green Party will be fielding eight candidates in the London area. They are: **Jean Lambert MEP, councillor Ute Michel, Shahrar Ali, Joseph Healy, Miranda Dunn, Shasha Khan, John Hunt and Caroline Allen.**

JEAN LAMBERT MEP

Jean Lambert is London's Green Party Member of the European Parliament – a position she has held since 1999. Jean works on a range of social and environmental concerns to build a better future.

Jean has worked on a range of issues, including green jobs, climate change and housing, environment and refugees, work-life balance and energy and waste. She has also worked with young people from London and other European cities on environmental justice issues. A member of the Parliament's Employment and Civil Liberties committees, and the Subcommittee on Human Rights, Jean won the 2005 award for MEP of the year for her work on human rights. She was Vice President of the European Parliament Green Group for 2002–2006.



UTE MICHEL

Born in Germany, Ute gained experience of European politics in Brussels and France before moving to London in 2002. Once here she settled in Lewisham where she has been working to expand access to NHS services. In 2006 she was elected as a Green Party Councillor in Lewisham.



Following her election, Ute has gained a better understanding of how politics affected our day to day lives, and how decisions can be improved. As a councillor she has pushed for increased funding for social services, initiatives to support local shops and the introduction of 'smart meters' which allow households to save energy by monitoring their electricity use.

SHARRAR ALI

Shahrar Ali was enlivened to Green politics almost a decade ago, after working as a researcher in the European Parliament. He trained as a biochemical engineer, and has campaigned against GM products and for locally-sourced, better quality food. He currently serves on the Food Commission's food security working group. Shahrar also has a PhD in philosophy and teaches courses for lifelong learners.

Locally, Shahrar has campaigned in Brent for better public transport, pedestrian safety and preservation of our local heritage. In 2008, as London Policy coordinator, he led production of the GLA manifesto. Nationally, Shahrar has spoken out against aggressive wars abroad and the assault on civil liberties here.



JOSEPH HEALY

Dr. Joseph Healy was born in Dublin and became a leading activist for gay rights in the 70s and 80s. After moving to London in the mid 1980s he worked with the tenant's movement in Southwark and campaigned against the poll tax. In 2007 he joined the Executive of the Green Party as International Coordinator and has been involved in developing links with other Green groups across Europe.



As a committed internationalist Joseph believes that the EU must be close to its citizens and that it can play a central role in working towards the maintenance of peace and the achievement of social justice in our continent. Currently he works for a pan London disability charity working to make transport across London accessible for older and disabled Londoners.

## WHY VOTE IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS ON 4 JUNE?

### It's your choice!

By voting in EP elections, you choose who influences your future and the daily life of close to 500 million fellow Europeans. If you don't bother, somebody else will - and decide who represents you at the only directly elected Pan-European assembly. Elected MEPs shape the future of Europe for 5 upcoming years. Get the Europe you want! If you **don't vote, don't complain.**

### It's important!

The European Parliament is a major and powerful player in European Union's decision-making. Its votes shape final EU legislation that influences your everyday life, be it the food on our plates, the cost of your shopping trolley, the quality of the air you breathe, or the safety of your children's toys.

To find out more go to [www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu)

### It's your right to vote!

As a European citizen, voting in EP elections is **your fundamental right** and the means to have a say in how the EU works. As an EU citizen you can vote (or stand for election!) in whatever EU country you live, even if you are not a citizen of that country.

### Your vote counts!

MEPs are elected using a proportional representation system. This means that you vote for a party and **every vote counts**. The seats are then divided among the parties according to the number of votes they receive.

This means every vote really does count and five parties now represent London's voters.

### MEPs

#### Your voice in Europe

In most cases, MEPs have as much weight as the Member States in EU decision-making. And **it's not just laws**: money for new roads, cleaner beaches, research, education, development aid. MEPs help decide where our EU money goes.

### It's politics!

#### It's democracy

Love the EU? Hate it? Want it to turn to the right? Or the left? Or Green? Is there some issue you care passionately about? Are there changes you want to see? Action that can't wait? Elect MEPs who see it your way and you could make it happen. That's what democracy is all about. **Make the difference.**

## NOW FOR ACTION!

Remember to register to vote. It's simple, just go to the website of the Electoral Commission [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) or ask at your local Town Hall.

**AND USE YOUR VOTE ON THURSDAY 4TH JUNE.**





# Local food for local people?

You may be surprised to learn that a tenth of London is farmland, and another fifth is private gardens. Yet despite this, up to 80% of London's food comes from abroad. The upshot of this is that the city's food supply is at risk from volatile world prices and oil shortages. Importing food also in-

creases its impact on the wider environment. There are options however. Recent work by the Green Party shows that London could grow at least a quarter of its own fruit and vegetable requirements by making more use of farmland and greenbelt land, allotments and gardens, river and railway banks, school and hospital grounds, and commercial greenhouses on derelict concrete spaces. While naturally it is unlikely that all spaces will be utilized, even a small change could hugely increase the amount of tasty, locally produced food available. Thanks to the Party's efforts in the Assembly, the Mayor has now announced a study of the planning system and how it can protect and encourage food growing sites in London.



## Food, fun and festivals

As environmental issues move relentlessly up the agenda, a number of events have begun to spring up all around the country aiming to show off the fun side of the green lifestyle.

High among these events is the Big Green Gathering, held in summer each year. Part music festival, part activists workshop, the BGG lasts for five days and delivers a mixture of live music, environmental workshops, discussion forums, food and drink. For organizations and campaigners alike it has become an important recruiting ground, as well as an excellent way to meet new people and have a good time.

This year's Big Green Gathering will be held from 29 July – 2 August. For more information, check out [www.big-green-gathering.com](http://www.big-green-gathering.com)

In the same way that other environmental issues are attracting attention, people are increasingly interested in impact of their diets on the environment and many have come to view the Vegan Lifestyle as the greenest lifestyle choice available.

In response to this demand, the last few years has seen an ever growing number of veggie and vegan shows springing up around the UK, and this year will see a series of new and established entrants on the scene.

In London, Viva will stage the 'Incredible Veggie Show' at the Royal Horticultural Halls, while Brighton, apparently the veggie capital of the world, will host the first Brighton Vegan Fayre on 21st of April. Billed as flamboyant, boisterous and informative the event will feature live acts such as The King Blues and SohoDolls, along with Mark Chadwick from The Levellers, reggae superstar Macka B and Incredible String Band founder Mr Clive Palmer and his band. There will also be the usual mixture of food stalls, workshops, street theatre and the all important smoothie making demonstration.

Organized by Yaoh – the same team behind the successful Bristol Vegan Fayre (this year's will be held 30-31 May 2009) the Brighton event aims to showcase the best of vegan lifestyle.

## June election chance for Greens

With the European elections coming up on the 4 June, green politics have never looked more important. The global economy is in its worst state for 50 years. At the same time many experts believe that climate change is progressing faster than ever and we are constantly warned that without drastic action we could face devastating consequences, perhaps sooner than we think. The two are not unconnected. By relying on an outmoded economic system that consumes fossil fuels and converts them into cheap products made in poor countries, nations like Britain have built up huge debts, both financial and environmental, and sooner or later these will have to be paid back.

But there are alternatives. By caring for our environment and investing in new green technology we can produce our own power, reduce our consumption of natural resources and revitalise our economies and communities. This process is beginning to happen and in the future it seems likely that only those countries which most fully embrace this clean, modern industrial revolution will be able to prosper and develop.

This summer voters across Europe will be given a choice about what kind of future they want. A vote for the Green Party is a vote for a better future.

Al Gordon  
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## LONDON GREEN NEWS

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**The Big Green Gathering is**  
**29th July-2nd August**  
**[www.big-green-gathering.com](http://www.big-green-gathering.com)**  
the world's premier Green Festival  
music, dance, sustainable homes, green forum,  
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campaigns & more...

Tickets £125/£100 Concession,  
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Cut out and send with cheque payable to:  
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**The Incredible Veggie Show**  
Saturday, April 18, 2009  
10am to 6pm  
The Royal Horticultural Halls, Lawrence Hall & Conference Centre, Greycoat St, London SW1P 2QD  
For further details/location map/ticket bookings: [www.viva.org.uk/london](http://www.viva.org.uk/london)  
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## Join the Green Party



The Green Party has both the policies and the track record of implementing them honestly and transparently in the European Parliament, the London Assembly and local Councils.

There is only one party that is campaigning for a Green New Deal to cut fuel bills, create thousands new jobs in Green industries and safeguard us all against climate change.

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Join online today for as little as £10 at **[www.greenparty.org.uk/join](http://www.greenparty.org.uk/join)**

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