

# Newsletter

of the *Alliance for Green Socialism* – May 2011  
[www.greensocialist.org.uk](http://www.greensocialist.org.uk)



## Local Election Results

On 5<sup>th</sup> May, across Britain, the LibDems were slaughtered, New Labour benefitted with a big increase in votes, and the Tory vote held remarkably steady. Certainly New Labour succeeded very well in putting across the big lie that they were anti-cuts. People evidently felt comfortable in lapsing back into the traditional “bad Tory government, Labour must be better” position, ignoring the experience of thirteen years of New Labour governing as Tories.

The AGS stood five candidates in seats we had fought before. In four we increased our vote, doubling it in two seats. Our campaign covered both the local election and the seeking a YES vote in the referendum on AV. We put out over sixty thousand leaflets to over thirty thousand homes, a thousand AGS roadside stakes, and a hundred garden placards.

The referendum results were significant. Nationally the YES vote was 31.6%. In Leeds it was 34.4%. But where the AGS leaflet on AV was delivered, it was an estimated 47.6%.

### 2011 Conference

The AGS had a successful annual conference on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. Chris Bem of Bradford Royal Infirmary spoke on health, its underlying philosophy and values, the NHS, and the attempt to privatise it.

Policy motions passed including on housing, anti-cuts strategy, green-left unity, opposing intervention in Libya, the importance of environmental issues, against nuclear power, and opposing basing economic policy on growth. Emergency motions were passed condemning the TUC invitation to Miliband, opposing prison privatisation and the revived plans to sell off public forests.

The new national committee is listed overleaf.

The maximum anyone had to contribute to the pooled fare for conference was (again) ten pounds.

Members enjoyed a convivial evening afterwards hosted by Malcolm & Gwyn Christie.

### Electronic Campaigning

As agreed at the 2010 strategy weekend, the AGS held a day workshop on electronic campaigning last weekend in Leeds, attended by national committee members and other local members.

The idea was to look at a range of electronic tools and to try to assess whether any of these were applicable to AGS campaigning. A couple of outside speakers assisted by presenting some of the tools. The workshop looked at telephone & text, email & email discussion groups, websites, blogging, Twitter, and Facebook. It also covered the technical environment in which these and other tools operated, the kind and direction of communication they provided, and others' experience of using them.

The national committee hopes to arrange a similar workshop in London this summer.

### Epping Forest May Day

Epping Forest Green & Democratic Left, affiliated to the AGS, held a very successful May Day festival in Loughton. Over two hundred attended - and enjoyed themselves. The group raised over a hundred pounds.

**Alliance for Green Socialism,**  
Freepost NEA 5794, Leeds LS7 3YY  
[www.greensocialist.org.uk](http://www.greensocialist.org.uk)  
**Secretary:** Celia Foote  
[celiafoote195@btinternet.com](mailto:celiafoote195@btinternet.com) 0113 262 4667  
**Newsletter editor:** Mike Davies  
[info@greensocialist.org.uk](mailto:info@greensocialist.org.uk) 07811 384888  
**“Green Socialist” Editor:** Bryn Glover  
[editor@greensocialist.org.uk](mailto:editor@greensocialist.org.uk) 01756 730205

## **RECESSION: FINANCIAL POLICY, ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

The Euro was based on the fundamental error of introducing currency union before political union. The poorer countries in the Eurozone have been trapped into a situation where they cannot control their own interest rates and cannot devalue their currency, so they have no remedy when in economic difficulty. When Greece was “bailed out” a year ago it was crystal clear that this could not solve the underlying problem. Now Greece is, entirely predictably, on the verge of leaving the Euro.

When Ireland was hit by the banking crisis, it did everything the financial gurus demanded, cutting left, right & centre. Now, to everyone’s surprise, it finds itself with a shrinking economy, in worse trouble than when it started cutting. Do the financiers apologise? No, they demand more cuts!

Britain is following Ireland’s example.

Cameron has initiated a “bonfire of red tape”. This means putting up for grabs the legislation that, amongst other things, protects us at work. It also includes the Climate Change Act. If it impedes business, then it will go.

If Britain is to have any hope of meeting its targets for cutting greenhouse gases, it needs a massive increase in renewable energy production. The ConDems inherited a mechanism for encouraging this: “Feed In Tariffs” gave a reasonable return for renewable generators who fed their surplus into the national grid. The government has changed the rules to rip the heart out of the scheme, making medium-sized schemes, such as council wind farms, unviable.

**So much for the “greenest government ever.”**

Meetings of the national committee are normally open to any member to observe. Meetings are on Saturdays, most often at the Calthorpe Arms on Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross, London.

11 Jun 2011	Sheffield Quaker Meeting House, S1 2EW	12:00
13 Aug 2011	Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Rd, London	13:15
15 Oct 2011	Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Rd, London	12:00
10 Dec 2011	Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Rd, London	13:15
25 Feb 2012	Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Rd, London	12:00

### **AGS ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Sat 14 Apr 2012 London**

12 May 2012	Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Rd, London	13:15
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## **STRATEGY: DOES AGS POLITICAL LITERATURE WORK?**

The effect of the literature we put out is very difficult to measure. We do get some response slips back from leaflets, but fairly few. People comment favorably on the leaflets, but again in small numbers - and where we deliver house-to-house there is little opportunity for feedback.

It is clear from what people say that, in election campaigns, they are very reluctant to vote for anyone from whom they have not at least received a leaflet. It is also clear that, if we wish to publicise an issue (say, privatising GP surgeries), a leaflet is the minimum starting point.

This year’s AV referendum (see the headline story overleaf) provides an unusual illustration of the effectiveness of AGS leaflets. Our leaflets on AV produced an estimated increase of **13 percentage points** in the YES vote where they were delivered.

## **LEEDS AGS GARDEN PARTY SATURDAY 16 JULY**

2pm to 5pm in Bron’s beautiful garden at  
41A The Drive, Leeds, LS8 1JQ

**The best event of the summer.**  
Accommodation available.

## **2011 National Committee members**

Chair	Mike Davies	m.davies@greensocialist.org.uk	07811 384888
Secretary	Celia Foote	celiafoote195@btinternet.com	0113 262 4667
Treasurer	Malcolm Christie	m_s_christie@yahoo.com	0113 293 1948
Membership	Juliet Boddington	juliet.boddington@btinternet.com	01947 605992
GS Editor	Bryn Glover	brynelaine@theglovers.orangehome.co.uk	01756 730205
Press	<i>vacant</i>		
directly elected	Bob Archer	bobarcher46@btinternet.com	020 8522 1156
directly elected	Ronald Corbin	ronald.corbin@talktalk.net	01200 426391
directly elected	Steve Radford	steve@offbeat.karoo.co.uk	01482 447240
coopted	Mike Butler	miketowyn@btinternet.com	01745 344093
Chichester	Simon Boxley	tinderbox@gn.apc.org	01730 821464
Epping Forest GDL	Pete Relph		020 8508 1817
Leeds	<i>vacant</i>		
North London	Eddie Adams	samstjohn2003@yahoo.co.uk	020 8964 9531
Rugby RGA	Liz Peck	lilibet.peck@ntlworld.com	01788 335534
Sheffield	Brian Turley	briturl@googlemail.com	0114 250 7315
Socialist Alliance	Toby Abse	t.abse@gold.ac.uk	020 7373 7881