

Report

Proposer: North Edinburgh and Leith Greens (decided on: 06/26/2023)

Title: North Edinburgh and Leith Greens

Report

1 We are pleased to publish below report which showcases what we have done during
2 the last twelve months.

3 After a very busy period during Edinburgh local elections the branch members
4 were happy to catch their breaths but afterwards got quickly back to work
5 organizing in its local area. Below is a list of our accomplishments.

6 Elections

7 At our AGM 12th June 2023 the following party members were elected to the Sub-
8 Branch committee:

- 9 • Co-Convenors: Tara Coldwell Brock and Mariusz Cebulski. Proposer: Fraser
10 May, Seconder Ian McCormick.
- 11 • Membership Secretary: Ian McCormick. Proposer: Katy McCormick, Seconder:
12 Tara Coldwell Brock.
- 13 • Ordinary Member: Lennie Sefton. Proposer: Susan Rae, Seconder: Mariusz
14 Cebulski.
- 15 • Ordinary Member: Nick Gardner. Proposer: Susan Rae, Seconder: Caro
16 Wilkinson.

- 17 • Social Media Secretary: Michael Tucker. Proposer: Tara Coldwell Brock,
18 Second: Ben Moverley Smith.

- 19 • Secretary: Ben Moverley Smith. Proposer: Lennie Sefton, Second: Max
20 Wagner.

21 **Expansion and renaming of the branch**

22 The Leith and Leith Walk sub-branch started working closely with the
23 neighbouring Fort ward during the local elections, helping the party gain its
24 first councillor there. Even after the successful election it was realised that
25 the local Forth team still needed help in keeping Green presence and momentum in
26 the area. Because of this the two parties continued to cooperate sharing
27 resources and volunteers. At some point the idea of an official merger started
28 to be discussed. After discussing the matter with our members, councillors and
29 Edinburgh Branch a decision was made that the existing Leith and Leith Walk sub-
30 branch should merge with Forth ward. This has been completed March 2023 with the
31 sub-branch changing its name to North Edinburgh and Leith Green Party.

32 **Meetings**

33 The branch continued to run monthly meetings every second Thursday of the month
34 until this year, when after surveying our members, a decision was made to move
35 meetings to second Monday of the month, as that was the preferred day to meet.
36 With COVID restrictions being gradually lifted throughout 2022, the branch
37 started organizing hybrid meetings and continued to do so. In some cases, the
38 monthly meetings were replaced with social events like litter-picks or pub
39 outings.

40 **Events**

41 The branch organized a stall at Edinburgh Climate Festival and Leith Gala in
42 2022 and 2023. The most recent Gala was very successful with a lot of visitors
43 asking about our party and taking part in a survey about short term lets.

44 The branch also started regular litter picks in the area as a way to engage our
45 members, promote the party and help local environment.

46 Finally, the branch might have taken its first step in direct action when we
47 stopped drivers doing an illegal turn on Leith Walk, alongside other community
48 organizers.

49 **Membership**

50 The membership of Leith and Leith Walk seems to have flatlined at 393, almost
51 the same as it was at the start of this committee's term (390). This is not the
52 full story as the national party went through all membership data in 2023 and
53 removed people not paying their dues and thus no longer members of the party.
54 This means that our last year's membership number was overinflated, which
55 obscures the fact that 56 members have joined since June 2022. Forth ward has 81
56 members and has grown by 9 members in the last twelve months. The total
57 membership of Norh Edinburgh and Leith Green party currently stands at 474.

58 The co-membership secretaries Ian and Tara continued to engage new members by
59 sending welcome emails, calling them and organizing new members meetings. They
60 have provided a warm welcome to all members which helped engage them with the
61 party.

62 Achievements of the membership committee are:

- 63 • The committee agreed a job description for the post of membership
64 secretary.
- 65 • The membership secretary wrote a new member welcome procedure to ensure a
66 structured approach to contacting new members.
- 67 • The membership secretary created a new member tracking form on Greenbox.
68 It is being used to improve new member communications.
- 69 • All 57 new members were contacted with at least an email welcome and where
70 appropriate, a phone call.
- 71 • A new member social event was organised in May with two new members
72 attending. All new members from January were invited including a hand
73 delivered invitation.
- 74 • A Leith and Lieth Walk member survey was undertaken to engage members and
75 find out the type of activities they were interested in and any barriers
76 they faced. The survey received 42 responses (about 11% of membership).
- 77 • A report was produced summarising the results of the member survey.
78 Actions taken as a result included re-introducing Green walks, running
79 litter picks, and changing the day of meetings.

- 80 • At the start of the year Leith and Lieth Walk sub-branch had 401 members.
81 There are currently 467 members in the combined North Edinburgh and Leith
82 sub-branch.
- 83 • The membership secretary gave a membership report at every sub-branch
84 meeting to keep members aware of issues and successes.

85 **Membership goals for this year are:**

- 86 • Review job description taking regard to other committee positions filled
87 following the AGM.
- 88 • Review member welcome procedure in order to improve process and increase
89 the number of new members we speak to.
- 90 • Continue to use tracking form in order to ensure that all new members
91 receive an appropriate welcome.
- 92 • Consider hand delivering a welcome letter to new members as a matter of
93 course.
- 94 • To organise a new member social event every three months.
- 95 • Carry out 2023 membership survey in July/August for Leith, Leith Walk and
96 Forth. Review and refine questions in questionnaire. Aim for better
97 response rate.
- 98 • Better analysis of the survey in order to encourage greater member
99 engagement.
- 100 • Develop actions to increase membership. In particular to organise an
101 invite a friend to join campaign in January.
- 102 • Aim for all reports to be written and stored on Greenbox.

103 **Finances**

104 The branch expenses were driven by room hire in Leith Community Center and Out
105 of the Blue Drill Hall (200 pounds) and sending bulk text messages to our
106 members to encourage them to volunteer (83 pounds). We've also paid 50 pounds to

107 reserve our spot at Leith Gala but those were covered by donations taken at the
108 event.

109 **Green News**

110 Our party newsletter "Green News" continues to be one of the best ways of
111 spreading our message to voters. We've organized deliveries both in Autumn and
112 Spring delivering about 15 thousand leaflets in our sub-branch area.

113 **Councillors and MSP work**

114 The North Edinburgh and Leith Sub-branch is proud to have 3 elected councillors
115 as well as be home to MSP and Scottish Government minister. All four were happy
116 to share their work and achievements from the last 12 months.

117 **Lorna Slater**

- 118 ◦ We have now had Greens in government for two years, and there has
119 been some difficult times recently with the DRS and the obfuscation
120 by the UK Government. There is expected to be more tough times ahead
121 with the introduction of new Green policy and the anticipated
122 reaction of the Press. However, to get real change, we just have to
123 keep pushing as a party.

124 **Kayleigh O'Neill**

- 125 • Portfolio: focus this year on access and mobility. Work has been put into
126 income maximization for the people of Edinburgh, making sure people due
127 income support have the info required. Funding has also been approved for
128 a dropped kerb programme in Edinburgh. This is needed as of 17,000 kerbs
129 which need to be dropped only 50 have been done so far. A policy motion
130 has also been approved that the new city plan will have a gendered lens
131 that puts women at the forefront of policy.
- 132 • Ward: this year has mainly been dealing with requests and information on
133 bins, parks, green spaces. Kayleigh also took on the task of doing a
134 dropped kerb audit of her ward.

135 **Susan Rae**

- 136 • Policy: Susan has been working with councillor Ben Parker on housing

137 policy where they have split the portfolio. Susan has taken on social
138 housing where due to her work £5.5 million has been awarded to fix all the
139 lifts in the high-rise buildings around Edinburgh. Susan has also been in
140 contact with Edinburgh University to try and get a response regarding the
141 university's housing policy over the summer months.

- 142 • Licensing board: Susan has mainly spent her time dealing with licences for
143 short term lets, and dealing with adult entertainment venues, where she
144 will be organising sessions on how to organise unions in precarious
145 working environments.

146 Chas Booth

- 147 • Ward: There has been a great response to the save Pride Bridge campaign,
148 where the council has agreed to find a community solution. The paid
149 parking extension has been underway, and although there have been a few
150 bumps, Chas and the council officers have been working through the issues.
151 The LTN has received a positive response, people are very happy about the
152 reduction in traffic and newfound tranquillity at the shore.

- 153 • Planning Committee: There has recently been guidance received on Short
154 Term Lets (STL) planning applications, and it is still difficult to get an
155 STL in mixed areas where it would lower the amenity of the area.

156 Plans ahead

157 The new committee will meet soon to discuss the sub-branches committee for the
158 next twelve months. This will include figuring ways of improving membership,
159 getting members involved in our work, planning or campaigns and events.