

Report

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

Title: North Edinburgh and Leith Greens

Report

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

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

Elections

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

- Co-Convenors: Tara Coldwell Brock and Mariusz Cebulski. Proposer: Fraser May, Seconder Ian McCormick.
- Membership Secretary: Ian McCormick. Proposer: Katy McCormick, Seconder: Tara Coldwell Brock.
- Ordinary Member: Lennie Sefton. Proposer: Susan Rae, Seconder: Mariusz Cebulski.
- Ordinary Member: Nick Gardner. Proposer: Susan Rae, Seconder: Caro Wilkinson.

- Social Media Secretary: Michael Tucker. Proposer: Tara Coldwell Brock, Second: Ben Moverley Smith.
- Secretary: Ben Moverley Smith. Proposer: Lennie Sefton, Second: Max Wagner.

Expansion and renaming of the branch

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

Meetings

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

Events

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

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

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

Membership

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

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

Achievements of the membership committee are:

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

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

Membership goals for this year are:

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

Finances

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

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

Green News

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

Councillors and MSP work

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

Lorna Slater

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

Kayleigh O'Neill

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

Susan Rae

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

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

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

Chas Booth

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

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

Plans ahead

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