

# Report

**Proposer:** Edinburgh Branch Committee (decided on: 06/20/2021)

**Title:** Branch Committee - Annual Report

## Report

### 1 **Edinburgh Branch committee report**

#### 2 *Annual Report 2021 (September 2020 to June 2021)*

3 It's been a busy 10 months for the Branch Committee. We've focused our efforts  
4 on the Holyrood 2021 campaign and keeping the branch activities going despite  
5 ongoing covid-19 restrictions. We would like to extend our massive thanks to  
6 everyone who has been involved with the branch over the past year, particularly  
7 during such difficult times.

8 We have changed the time of our AGMs to fall in line with when other branches  
9 across the country have their AGMs, this report covers 10 months from September  
10 2020 - June 2021.

#### 11 **Holyrood Election 2021**

12 The biggest area of work for the Edinburgh Branch Committee over the past 9  
13 months has been our Holyrood 2021 election campaign!

14 Despite uncertainty and restricted campaigning because of Covid-19 lockdown and  
15 social distancing measures we had a record campaign in Lothian with returning  
16 MSP Alison Johnstone and party co-leader Lorna Slater, both elected as regional  
17 MSPs. The 50,000 regional votes cast for the Greens is by far the highest-ever  
18 and the 12.7% vote share surpasses the 12.0% secured in 2003 to make it the  
19 biggest Green vote ever in Scotland. Alison Johnstone has since gone on to be

20 elected as the first ever Green Presiding Officer at the Scottish Parliament.

21 As part of our campaign, volunteers across Edinburgh and West Lothian made more  
22 than 200,000 deliveries of Holyrood election materials, and fundraised tens of  
23 thousands of pounds. We saw the number of impressions of the branch Twitter  
24 account rise by an average of 500% in the final 3 months of the campaign, and  
25 hit a 4 year high for membership figures across Edinburgh and West Lothian.

26 We have also put in a large amount of effort to complete a thorough debrief and  
27 review process, including writing handover and “lessons learned” document for  
28 future elections, based on feedback from members, local teams, staff members,  
29 candidates and the campaign board team.

30 We’d like to thank all of our volunteers for the amazing work that they did  
31 during this Holyrood election campaign. It was a phenomenal effort with an  
32 amazing result.

### 33 **By-elections and preparations for 2022 local elections**

34 In the past nine months we also contested two local authority by-elections. Our  
35 first election was the Craighentiny & Duddingston by-election in Nov 2020- the  
36 local team worked incredibly hard and secured a great result for Scottish  
37 Greens, increasing our vote share by 4.1% and only 20 votes off Scottish  
38 Labour’s result. Our second by-election was in West Lothian in Livingston South  
39 constituency, our candidate here was Cameron Glasgow and we won 2.4% of the  
40 total vote.

41 At our 2020 AGM we selected 16 candidates for Edinburgh Council elections in  
42 2022. Over the past year, the 12 target candidates have been supported with a  
43 Target Candidate Development Programme, which is designed to give target  
44 candidates the knowledge, skills and tools to run local campaigns and be a good  
45 councillor once elected.

### 46 **Branch events, meetings and trainings**

47 All of our events continue to be online due to covid restrictions this year. Our  
48 events included:

- 49 • Big Burns Night In (BBNI) - organised by South East Edinburgh Greens sub-  
50 branch. BBNI was held at the end of January 2021. It was a Burns night  
51 celebration complete with music, poetry and speeches, a piping in and

52           toasting of the haggis, a prize draw raffle, even a ceilidh room. In total  
53           over 144 households attended, and we raised £3,400 for the Holyrood  
54           campaign. See videos here

- 55           • Also in January, we held a new members event, attended by more than 50  
56           members, which was an opportunity for new members to meet representatives  
57           from their local teams or representative groups, find out more about  
58           Edinburgh Branch and how to get involved in the Holyrood election.
  
- 59           • In Feb 2021, we worked with Rainbow Greens to hold a session on the Green  
60           Party's policy on trans-rights, what it means in practice and how we are  
61           campaigning for trans-rights to be recognised in Scotland.
  
- 62           • As part of the Holyrood election campaign we held two topical branch  
63           meetings on key policy areas in our 2021 manifesto - one on rewilding the  
64           city with Alison Johnstone and Nadine Andrews, and one on warm homes for  
65           everyone with Ben Parker, Kate Nevens and Mridul Wadhwa. In addition we  
66           hosted a fabulous launch event with our top three candidates Alison  
67           Johnstone, Lorna Slater and Kate Nevans and our co-leader Patrick Harvie.

## 68   **Membership and local teams**

69   As of June 2021 the number of SGP members in Edinburgh was 1,678 and 126 in West  
70   Lothian. At the beginning of last year we saw a small drop off in numbers, this  
71   has largely been attributed to people moving out of Edinburgh and some glitches  
72   with the central system, something many local team members discovered when  
73   contacting volunteers for the Holyrood election campaign. During our active  
74   Holyrood campaign months our membership steadily grew month on month, taking it  
75   to the record four year high reported above.

76   The membership and local teams working group led the In-Real-Life (IRL) part of  
77   the Holyrood campaign. A key part of this was producing a number of briefings  
78   ranging from our target to win election strategy to how to use Bulk SMS to send  
79   text to members of local teams. A number of phone banking sessions were also  
80   arranged to help find and match volunteers to local teams.

81   In addition to the Holyrood campaign, the local team officer helped support the  
82   creation of West Edinburgh Greens - a new local team, and began working with  
83   them on how they can be better plugged into Edinburgh Branch's work.

## 84   **Communications**

85 In Autumn 2020, we launched a brand new and beautiful Edinburgh branch website.  
86 One Hundred thanks to Alison Neathey, for its creation and keeping it up to  
87 date. Alison also led the coordination for the content for our two Green News  
88 editions in winter and spring 2021.

89 Our policy officers Yasmin and Tristan have worked with our elected councillors  
90 and MSPs to submit and share monthly reports on their work with Edinburgh Branch  
91 members. Thank you Yasmin and Tristan.

92 Our communication co-convenor, Harriet Hall, has worked tirelessly to produce  
93 regular, monthly Edinburgh Branch email updates to members. Harriet has also  
94 helped to increase our social media use across all of our platforms (Twitter,  
95 Facebook and Instagram) to communicate events, opportunities, and election  
96 messages to members, voters and the local community - including coordinating our  
97 multilingual get out the vote videos, see here. Big thank you to Harriet.

98 Gavin Corbett has continued to support elected members and the Branch to  
99 generate local media coverage of Green Party impact and policy, including  
100 regular Councillor columns in the Edinburgh Evening News.

101 The talents of photographers, website designers, editors, graphic and video  
102 makers in supporting the development of our communications content have been  
103 much appreciated throughout the year. Special thanks to Gordon Craig for his  
104 rapid editing of videos, particularly through the Holyrood campaign and to Jenny  
105 Smith for all her support with Branch social media content.

#### 106 **Other committee business**

107 Other areas of committee business in the past ten months have included:

- 108 • Establishing an Accessibility, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group
- 109 • Ensuring our activities were COVID-safe and online meetings were held at  
110 times more accessible to those with caring responsibilities
- 111 • Ensuring timely communications with branch members around the resignation  
112 of Andy Wightman MSP in December 2020 and the resignation of Alison  
113 Johnstone MSP upon her election as Presiding Officer in May 2021.
- 114 • Representing the Edinburgh Branch at all National Council meetings

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- Sharing information, documents and advice with other SGP branches to support them with their activities, including on our AGM processes and debrief from the Holyrood campaign