

Report

Proposer: South Edinburgh Greens (decided on: 06/15/2022)

Title: South Edinburgh Greens

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South Edinburgh Greens (SEG) Annual Report June 2021-22

Introduction

SEG is a sub branch formed of two wards in the south of Edinburgh stretching from Bruntsfield Links to the Pentlands. Morningside has c.200 members and Colinton/Fairmilehead c.50.

Morningside has had a Green councillor since 2007 (Alison Johnstone 2007-12, Melanie Main 2012-22, Ben Parker 2022-).

<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=2657>

Helen McCabe stood as the Green candidate in Colinton/Fairmilehead in 2022.

Morningside has four councillors in total (currently Green, Labour, Lib Dem, Conservative). Colinton/Fairmilehead has three (currently Labour, SNP, Conservative).

SEG Activity 2021- 22

Setting up SEG

In May 2021 Ben Parker (then 2022 candidate for the target ward of Morningside) proposed that a sub branch be formed with the name South Edinburgh Greens. An

EGM was held for members of both wards on 10th June 2021. Members voted in favour of the proposal with the aims of working together to consolidate and strengthen the Green presence in Morningside (including re-electing a Green councillor in 2022); and developing Colinton/Fairmilehead with a view to it eventually becoming a target ward. The office bearers elected were:

Frances Guy and Emma Willson - Co-convenors

Susan Logie and Helen McCabe - Co-membership secretaries.

A new south.edinburgh@scottishgreens.org.uk address was set up. A SEG folder was created on the shared Google Drive. All documents, spreadsheets and other files are saved there.

Communication with SEG members

During the year the team aimed to develop SEG and run the 2022 election campaign simultaneously, with both activities feeding into each other.

We sent c.55 generic emails to members on our mailing list. (This was a very high volume of emails as it was an election year!). We also sent between three and five texts to members via BulkSMS (the number of texts received varied according to where the member lived). We did two phone banking sessions, calling approximately 75% of Morningside members who allow phone contact. In addition we managed the SEG email Inbox and contacted specific members individually by email, phone or text where practical.

In order to raise our profile and network, we encouraged members to tell us about other organisations they are involved with locally. Information about events run by 'green friendly' groups (for example: Critical Mass, Climate Coalition, Bruntsfield Net Zero, Friends of the Earth) was included in SEG emails where possible.

Alison Neathey (SEEG) designed a SEG Welcome Letter for new members. Steve West (SEEG) created a SEG email template for Forest.

We encouraged members to attend meetings and events, participate in election campaign activities, and follow Ben Parker and SEG on Twitter and the branch on social media.

- @benparker18 (now @cllrbenparker)

- @southedingreens (temporary account for the election campaign, now closed)

We created a temporary 'SEG Election Team' WhatsApp group in November 2021 for active members and supporters.

SEG Monthly Meetings 2021-22

We had a combination of zoom and in person meetings depending on Covid restrictions:

Thursday 8th July 2021 - Zoom

No August meeting (summer holidays)

Thursday 9th September 2021 - Drinks at Summerhall

Thursday 14th October 2021 - Zoom

Thursday 11th November 2021- Zoom

No December meeting (winter holidays)

Thursday 13th January 2022 - Zoom

Thursday 10th February 2022 - Eric Liddell Centre

Thursday 10th March 2022 - Eric Liddell Centre

Thursday 14th April 2022 - Eric Liddell Centre

Saturday 14th May 2022 - Celebratory picnic on Bruntsfield Links

Thursday 9th June - AGM - Eric Liddell Centre

2022 Election Campaign

We started planning the Morningside 2022 election campaign in June 2021. Emma Willson became Campaign Manager. We didn't campaign in Colinton/Fairmilehead (or

69 deliver Green News) as it was a non-target ward. A number of members attended
70 national and branch training sessions (including John Palmer's Doras training).

71 We created local content for Green News in Morningside and printed two editions.

72 • Autumn 2021 Green News - c.10,000 delivered

73 • Spring 2022 Green News - c.14,000 delivered

74 During the year campaign activities included social elements where possible, for
75 example meeting at cafes before and after canvassing, Action Days, and 'folding
76 letters and stuffing envelopes sessions'.

77 We organised two 'Action Days' for Autumn 2021 Green News delivery. We invited
78 members, and specifically Scottish Young Green members, to come along to support
79 Ben as a Young Green candidate. One of our aims is to have a diverse membership,
80 including people from all age groups. The campaign really benefited from having
81 more young people involved, especially during canvassing.

82 Action Days and evening canvassing sessions continued in the Spring, pandemic
83 permitting.

84 In total we canvassed c.550 people in our five Greenest polling districts.

85 In addition to Green News, we delivered:

86 • c.9000 campaign leaflets

87 • c.2000 canvassing cards

88 • c.3000 letters to first time voters, postal voters, G1 voters

89 • c.6000 eve of poll cards

90 We distributed c. 200 posters to members (by hand and by post). Plus another c.
91 50 to supporters.

92 On polling day we had A boards at all 10 polling places in Morningside ward.
93 Members stood outside our top five with rosettes during peak voting times, and
94 we delivered GOTV letters to GIs we had identified from canvassing.

95 Throughout the campaign (and the year) we were lucky to have office bearers and
96 members who were prepared to help out in many different ways, including two
97 committed organisers and two very engaged and dynamic ward candidates.

98 Ben Parker was elected on first preference votes.

99 **Green Walks**

100 The aims were: to provide enjoyable events for members; to give people a chance
101 to meet Ben Parker (as Morningside candidate for 2022); and to build up goodwill
102 and numbers of active members in advance of the election campaign. All Green
103 members, families, friends, supporters, and dogs were welcome. We organised
104 eight walks:

105 Saturday 31st July 2021 - Bruntsfield Links/The Meadows

106 Sunday 15th August 2021 - Blackford Hill/Pond

107 Sunday 29th August 2021 - Hermitage of Braid

108 Saturday 11th September 2021 - Polwarth/Canal

109 Sunday 3rd October 2021 - Astley Ainslie (with SEEG team)

110 Sunday 17th October 2021 - Mortonhall (Colinton/Fairmilehead)

111 Sunday 28th November 2021 - Gardens of the Old Town (with City Centre team)

112 Sunday 13th March 2022 - The Quiet Route: Bruntsfield Links to Hermitage of
113 Braid

114 The City Centre local team arranged for Sue Fuller to guide us around the
115 'Gardens of the Old Town'. SEEG arranged for Maggie Carson of the Astley Ainslie

Community Trust to guide us around the NHS site which is under threat of inappropriate development. Walks around Portobello/Craigmillar and Leith had to be postponed until next year due to Covid.

Liaison with the Branch 2021-22

Susan Logie and Emma Willson acted as SEG Co-reps during the year, attending branch meetings and following activity on Slack. A number of SEG members were officers on the branch committee: Harriet Hall, Helen McCabe, Kate Nevens, and Ben Parker. Frances Guy and Helen McCabe assisted with post-election Council negotiations.

We organised the November 2021 branch online meeting (with the help of branch Co-convenor Zoe Clelland). This was a COP26 event and included guest speakers: Frank Hebineza (Global Green Green MP in the Rwandan Parliament), Lottie van Grieken (RSPB Scotland), Emily Blackmore (Stirling University). 2022 Drumbrae/Gyle council candidate Anne Scott hosted the event. Frances Guy chaired the Q&A.

We suggested local teams organise inter-branch Green Walks - to help members from across the branch get to know one another, socialise, and explore the city. The City Centre ward walk went ahead, but the idea was mainly put on hold due to the pandemic and the election campaign.

We took an Edinburgh Greens banner to the COP26 demo in Glasgow on Saturday 6th November, to join up with SGP members from the branch and across Scotland.

SEG-SEEG had an informal Green presence (SGP flag and impromptu members' picnic) at the Meadows Festival on Sunday 5th June 2022.

Membership numbers

Membership numbers were 198 for Morningside and 44 for Colinton/Fairmilehead in June 2021. At the time of the 2022 AGM on 9th June, we have 207 in Morningside and 50 in Colinton/Fairmilehead.

Finances

SEG did not have a budget (or a Treasurer) for 2021-22. We decided to keep things simple and either ask the branch for reimbursement, or ask suppliers to invoice the branch directly. Election campaign leaflets, letters and posters

were covered by the branch. Members contributed to election crowdfunders and covered miscellaneous costs (i.e. refreshments, stationary, stamps, transport). We received funds from the branch for:

Bulk SMS £69.00

Eric Liddell Centre meeting room (4 sessions @ £52.00) £208.00

Coffee £35.30

Paper/printing/ink £37.92

Total = £350.22

2022-23

New style team

The first SEG AGM was held on Thursday 9th June 2022 at the Eric Liddell Centre. At the AGM we gave thanks to Melanie Main, retiring Councillor for Morningside and Susan Logie who stepped down as Membership secretary after five years. The new office bearers elected for 2022-23 are:

Helen McCabe and Leo Levontine - Co-convenors

Emma Willson - Vice-convenor

In addition to the three 'office bearers' (as required by the standing orders), we plan to have a small group of members who are prepared to be additional 'Organisers'. Together they will form an active team who can support each other to run SEG, and support our councillor.

Future plans

1. Build up membership in Colinton/Fairmilehead and prepare the ground for the council elections in 2027 (ideally it would be a target ward).

2. Join in with branch-wide campaigning activity to help deliver Green policy (including action in our wards).

- 172 3. Build relationships with other progressive groups in our communities as
173 far as possible.
- 174 4. Continue the Green Walks in our area (and around the city) - and develop
175 new ideas for other kinds of events that would appeal to a wide range of
176 people.
- 177 5. Try to broaden and diversify our membership.