

# Foreword

JENNY JONES

The next parliament is crucial for a secure future. We face three crises, each of which will come to a head in the next five years.

First, our planet is threatened by rapidly increasing climate change. Unless we can reverse the growth of emissions within the next parliament and reach international agreement, it will become ever harder, and perhaps impossible, to keep the problem within manageable bounds.

Secondly, the financial crash and austerity policies have worsened inequality, increased poverty and driven many people to the edge of despair. Unless these policies are reversed, and soon, there will be great destruction to our social fabric. Many people will suffer poverty and even starvation, and there's a real threat of major unrest.

Thirdly, our political institutions are shown to be increasingly inadequate. The first-past-the-post system is wholly inappropriate to a politics of five or more parties. The House of Lords is a privileged anachronism. Many Scots are dissatisfied with the Union. Besides this, overall democracy is threatened by the increasing power of corporate interests, operating both as political lobbyists and in negotiating treaties that will give them a veto power over national and EU institutions.

All of these things may have gone past the point of no return by 2020. But there is an alternative. Increasing numbers of people are mobilising against climate change. Increasing numbers of people

reject the austerity agenda. Increasing numbers of people see the inadequacies in our political system. These people often think that all the parties are the same and that there is no one to vote for.

Fortunately, they are wrong. The Green Party sees the crises clearly and has the policies to address all three of them. Greens would prioritise effective action against climate change; we would reverse the austerity policies of all the grey parties; we would make fundamental reforms to our political and constitutional system. We would help ensure a viable future for generations to come.

If you want to play a part in solving these problems, you must vote Green.

*Baroness Jenny Jones AM*

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## Chapter 1

# Green Values

SHAHRAR ALI

### **Core values**

It has become a truism that to serve the people well a political party must offer change. But we must ask who benefits from this change and how its success can be measured. Success could be measured as the winning of an election, no matter who else loses. In this case, the offer of change is simply a means to winning and therefore a candidate would be willing to say or do anything – falsely promising change – just to get elected. Thus the currency of politics gets devalued. Politics becomes a game that serves only its key players. From the fiddling of expense claims and misappropriation of second-home allowances to the award of a peerage to a favoured party donor, politics is diminished through self-interest and mutual back-scratching.

Green politics is anything but a game. It's a noble pursuit, not a dark art. It's a vocation, not a career. It's about treating people as worthy in themselves, not as a means to an end. It's about caring and acting for future people, non-human animals and other species. The change on offer is to obtain the collective good of the people, by consent. The decisions and actions of politicians are hugely consequential – for people and planet. While competitive instincts can come into play, one could not do justice to the task of governing a

country by regarding the ends as the winning of power for the sake of it. On the contrary, in politics today it is precisely those 'ends' that are now up for grabs.

This volume introduces 'the collection of goods to which Green politics aims', in the words of Greens. If you are a prospective voter then I hope you will find this an invaluable resource that brings together key Green Party policies, and articulates reasons for them, without some of the limitations of an official election manifesto. I have asked contributors not to refrain from using their own voice and I'm proud to share with you what they have produced. I want us to be heard, in all our diversity. There is a consistency of approach and value to be found across green manifestos, which I hope enables you to anticipate where you stand with us, and us with you – a relationship of trust. This volume attempts to start building that relationship by articulating what we stand for.

In this introduction, I refer to the Core Values of the Philosophical Basis of the Green Party of England and Wales. Our sister parties in Scotland and Northern Ireland enjoy autonomy, but their approach is the same, as is the consensus evidenced by green parties internationally. The Core Values consists of ten paragraphs, drafted and agreed by our members and open to revision at future conferences. I've included it at the end of the book and you are invited to refer to it at any time.

Ours is an inspiring declaration of dissent from the status quo, commitment to noble goals and ambition for a revitalised political order. The use of demonstratives – 'should', 'must', 'cannot' – is telling. Ours is not an exercise in short-term political expediency, or a desire to avoid judgements for fear of being labelled do-gooders. Ours is a conviction that politics is, and should be, about universal truths: our dependence on planetary life-support systems; recognition of the consequences of our failure to manage resources sustainably; and obligations to our contemporaries, future generations and other animals.