



Cllr. Rupert Read
Green Party lead candidate for Eastern Region in 2009 Euro-elections

e-newsletter May 2008

“Hi! Welcome to my first monthly e-newsletter, the first of many, in which I plan to report back on my activities between now and the Euro-elections in June 2009.

Our amazing night in the May local elections where we became the official opposition on the Norwich council, as well as breaking through onto Cambridge City Council and coming very close in several other wards across the Region gives us a glimpse of exactly what is within our grasp. Green politics are finally moving to the forefront of the national conscious and at long last the electorate are giving us the platform we need to save the planet from climate disaster.

It’s a long road to Brussels but hopefully with a lot of hard work from me along with your invaluable support we can have a successful campaign here in the Eastern Region! And finally get what we deserve: Green representation across the entire Region, via a Green MEP to join and work with Jean Lambert and Caroline Lucas.”



Eastern Region Greens!

Local to Norwich

Rupert says: “To mark the success of the three-year 'Spatial Metro' programme, delegates from all over Europe, including Norwich's twin cities of Koblenz and Rouen, took part in a conference at St Andrew's Hall from Thursday 15th to Friday 16th May.

The Spatial Metro EU project has brought real benefits to Norwich, transforming places like the Lanes and St Andrew's Plain into spaces people want to spend time in. The conference drew on these achievements, other international success stories and the experiences of the Spatial Metro EU project and offered creativity, expertise and practical solutions to improve cities for pedestrians.

The Green Party supports the pedestrian-friendly measures that have happened and supports the Spatial Metro project, but believes that Norwich still has a very long way to go, particularly with promoting pedestrian safety and good crossing facilities across the city.

As our Party's Transport Spokesman, I was pleased that this Conference happened in Norwich, and we are pleased with the real improvements for pedestrians that have taken place in parts of the city in recent years, as a result of certain street closures and pedestrianisation measures. But, until Norwich has 20mph limits in residential areas, until more key zones of the city centre – such as Westlegate – are pedestrianised, and until there is proper funding available to implement pedestrian crossings all over the city where they are needed, then Norwich cannot rest on its laurels. **The Green Party wants to see far more done to benefit pedestrians, and this would be a priority under a Green-Party-led administration...**”

Watch Rupert Read in a video on Norwich Greens' achievements:

<http://www.youtube.com/v/woMhWx5psKU&hl=en>



‘Local Elections 2008: Media squeezes and political styles’

(By Rupert Read on <http://ourkingdom.opendemocracy.net/?s=%22rupert+read%22>)

So, it's Boris. Gulp.

I'm not looking forward to Boris Johnson's Mayoralty, partly for reasons of personal familiarity with his political methods. But one has to congratulate him on the audacity of having stood, and won - a year ago, him winning seemed a very distant prospect indeed.

In terms of the Greens' performance in the London elections: Sian Berry has made a superb impact, establishing the Green Party clearly in the minds of the public and the media as the fourth Party of British politics. A real highlight of the campaign for me was the Polling Day endorsement by the Indy of her for Mayor.

And we have easily held onto our two Assembly Members - just rewards for the estimable Jenny Jones and Darren Johnson.

Nevertheless, it is very clear that we (and, far more so, the Lib Dems) have been squeezed by the overwhelming attention on whether it would be Boris or Ken who would win. If there hadn't been a squeeze, then there is little doubt that we would have won many more Mayoral 1st preference votes, which would have saved our deposit, and that we would have gained an additional Assembly seat. Too bad that the media typically didn't trouble to inform voters that the electoral system (both for the Mayor, with two preferences, and moreover for the Assembly, with the List system) in London of course should have meant that there was no need for such a squeeze.

People had the chance to vote for whoever they wished. But my experience was that many voters didn't grasp this, unless it was explicitly explained to them, in person. So, many people will have voted for Ken 1st, to keep Boris out, not realising that a second preference for Siân would not be registered, or even fearing that a second preference for Siân would count against Ken, and thus not putting down any second preference at all. The same 'logic' carried over to the Assembly election. There is an urgent need for better civics education - at school, and via the media - so that electorates in future can vote for what they want - which is supposed to be the central point of proportional representation - rather than voting according to the non-logic of the 'two horse race.'

Turning to happier news: I was privileged to be present at a historic moment at Thursday night's count, here in Norwich. The Green Party has become the first ever Official Opposition on a Principal Authority Council in Britain. I feel exhausted, my feet hurt from pounding the pavement: but the exhilaration and the pride remain. For a political animal, there is little to rival the ecstasy of an election well won.

Why did we - why *do* we - do so well here? A lot of it is down to nothing more than strong organising on the ground, which can be replicated anywhere in the country with enough leadership and effort. Some of it is down to running on our record of conscientious work as Councillors and of having a number of achievements to our name, even while we have been in opposition. But in terms of what resonated most on

the doorstep: I found that quite a lot of people were coming our way because of our cleaner style of politics. I repeatedly heard comments from potential Green voters along the lines of "It is refreshing that you don't spin or manipulate in your leaflets", or "It seems that all Labour and the Libdems do is to attack each other and you. Whereas you tell us what is going on, and let us make our own minds up." **I am proud that the electorate by and large trust us Greens, and it gives me hope for the future of politics.**

What's next for we Norwich Greens? I honestly believe that the sky's the limit. I myself am hoping to become Eastern Region's first Green MEP next year. And **Labour's Charles Clarke M.P. now has very serious reason to worry about us...**



Campaigning/Speeches

IDHEE Conference

Rupert gave the keynote speech at a major national Conference of heating engineers, the IDHEE, in Eastern Region at the University of Herts. Here is a link to the Powerpoint presentation that formed the backbone of his talk:

<http://www.rupertread.fastmail.co.uk/Talk%20to%20IDHEE>

And here is a quick summary of key policy points in the talk:

The talk focused primarily on what policy government at all levels – Councils, Westminster, and E.U. – needs to put in place, in order to have any chance at all of securing 90% CO2 reductions by 2050 and 60% reductions by 2025 (plus also meeting fuel-poverty reduction targets etc.), including:

- **Free insulation for all.** A government programme to roll out an acceptable level of insulation for ALL houses in Britain – not just newbuild, within 5-10 years.
- **Renewable energy (or CHP) in ALL new developments.** This policy has already been introduced by Norwich Green Party. The Merton Rule should be merely a starting-point, in this regard.
- **A massive programme of grants for renewable energy and energy efficiency measures** for individuals and businesses, to replace the present government's pitifully inadequate grants programmes.

- **Carbon rationing!**

Environmental Refugees

On May 14, 2008 Rupert gave a talk to the **Epping Forest Green Party** on **Environmental Refugees - A Huge Issue For Us All In The 21st Century**. Here is an extract from his speech.

“Darfur is the first climate-change war. And the first countries eliminated by climate change are, tragically, appearing now, in Micronesia.

Unless dangerous climate change is reined in, then you ain't seen nothing yet. The 21st century, unless governments turn to Green policies, will be a century of unprecedented environmental disaster. There will be *hundreds of millions of climate-change refugees*, as powerful storms devastate poorer countries and **rising sea levels simply inundate Bangladesh, Holland – and parts of East Anglia...**

It is the carbon emissions from industrial countries, of which Britain is the oldest of all, which are causing this devastation. So: how will we choose to regard the likely tide of environmental refugees? Will we bar the door to them, just as the Daily Mail and others shamefully tried to prevent any Jewish migrants to this country in the 1930s? Or will our attitude be a humane one: will we welcome in and take care of those whose homes have been swept away by high tides caused by our own profligate burning of fossil fuels?

There are **two great moral imperatives**, in this connection, for the 21st century:

- 1) **To plan to *help* the likely millions upon millions of environmental refugees.**
- 2) **To work now to prevent there being too huge a number of environmental refugees, by *acting fast to defuse and to prevent catastrophic climate chaos.*”**

Environmental Philosophy

On Tuesday 20 May, Rupert was invited to Reepham High School in North Norfolk to give a talk on 'environmental philosophy'. See his blogpost about this, *here*: <http://rupertsread.blogspot.com/2008/05/how-will-green-will-be-our-valley.html>

DO YOU WANT RUPERT TO COME AND GIVE A TALK IN YOUR AREA? IF SO, PLEASE GET IN CONTACT!



Press Highlights

Norwich Evening News 24 – Green Light Set For Lorries I Bus Lane:

<http://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/content/news/story.aspx?brand=ENOnline&category=News&tBrand=ENOnline&tCategory=news&itemid=NOED17%20May%202008%2013%3A37%3A25%3A717>

BBC – Greens Make Gains:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/7381433.stm

The New Statesman – Rupert on Boris:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/200804030004>

Go to www.oneworldcolumn.org to read Rupert's regular columns in the **EASTERN DAILY PRESS**

Sign up for the One World Column RSS feed -- stay in touch with this unique activist resource in East Anglia's mainstream media, including monthly articles by RR!:

<http://new.edp24.co.uk/content/rss/default.aspx?id=edpOneWorld>

Check Rupert's **GUARDIAN** articles:

http://commentisfree.guardian.co.uk/rupert_read/index.html



New Media

Rupert says:

- **Support my campaign** to become an MEP by joining my **MYSFACE** and/or **FACEBOOK** groups:
 - <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Rupert-Read/9128762052>
 - <http://uea.facebook.com/group.php?gid=4929582869>
 - http://www.myspace.com/rupert_read
- I've started **MICRO-BLOGGING!**: <http://twitter.com/RupertRead>
- Check out my **blog**: <http://rupertsread.blogspot.com/>
- Here are my **OPEN DEMOCRACY** posts:
 - <http://ourkingdom.opendemocracy.net/?s=%22rupert+read%22>



Green Read

For those of you looking for a good book to get into this summer, why not try my recent publication '**Philosophy For Life**'. It's full of green philosophy and is very accessible, unlike many other similar works.

Philosophy For Life is available online at amazon.co.uk:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Philosophy-Life-Applying-Politics-Culture/dp/0826495605>

Alternatively you could order it from your local library!



Some Diary Highlights for June 2008

31 st May – 2 nd June	Oxford	Campaigning in the Holywell by-election
3 rd June	Norwich	1st on-ceremonial full council meeting of the civic year
9 th June	Norwich	Join us for GREEN DRINKS, from 8pm on. (Micawber's Tavern, Pottergate)
19 th June	Cambridge	The first full meeting of the Green 'Euro 09' campaign team!
24 th June	Norwich	Norwich City Council meeting



Feedback/Contact Details

All of your feedback is hugely welcome so please feel free to contact me to comment about the newsletter and/or any of my other campaign work.

Email: rupertread@fastmail.co.uk

Tel: 01603 219294

Thanks!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rupert Read". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

[We hope that you have enjoyed this newsletter and found it useful. However, if not: Would you rather not receive this e-newsletter in future? To 'unsubscribe', please send an email saying simply 'Unsubscribe' to James.conway@norwichgreenparty.org]