



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

e-Newsletter June 2008

“Hot on the heels of our first issue, welcome to the June e-Newsletter highlighting the progress the Eastern Greens are making across the region...”

Campaign Team Complete!

The Campaign Team for the Eastern Region 2009 Euro-elections is now complete: Simon Sedgwick Jell of Cambridge Green Party (and formerly Leader of Cambridge City Council, back in his Labour days) has been appointed Campaign Manager, to join the rest of the team that was already in place.

This means that, with a year to go til the Euro-elections, Eastern Region Green Party is in great shape to fight to win, this time, and get an MEP elected in Eastern!

IF YOU WANT TO HELP GET RUPERT ELECTED IN EASTERN REGION, PLEASE CONTACT ASSISTANT CAMPAIGN MANAGERS

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20mph Limits Come To Norwich

The Norwich Highways Agency Committee has approved the principle of introducing a 20mph speed limit across residential roads in the City. The committee agreed a proposal from myself that a blanket 20mph limit, based primarily around signage, should be introduced.

In June 2006 City Councillors unanimously agreed that there should be a 20mph speed limit across residential roads in the city. Since then the Conservative County Councillors, who hold the casting vote on the Norwich Highways Agency Committee, have consistently blocked the proposals - until now. The recent meeting was the first one at which I had the right to vote - by virtue of the Greens becoming the second

party on the City Council on 1st May.

I am delighted that my first formal proposal to the Norwich Highways Agency Committee has resulted in the Committee at last agreeing to this progressive proposal of introducing 20mph speed limits across the city. At every meeting of the committee, local residents and Councillors from different parts of the city submit questions and petitions asking for a 20mph speed limit in their area. They are usually turned down because they are fighting over a small pot of money and because the Committee has up until now taken a piecemeal approach to reducing traffic speeds. Now that the Committee has agreed in principle to this move, it hopefully won't be long before residents across the city can enjoy 20mph speed limits and the safer streets they will bring. This decision that we have taken today means that lives that otherwise would have been lost will be saved.

The next step will be for Council officers to develop the details and likely cost of the scheme. The officers had recommended that the committee did not go ahead with the proposals because of the high cost of introducing traffic calming measures such as speed bumps across the city. However, under the proposal agreed today, the scheme will be mainly based around signage - although we in the Greens are keen for officers to assess alternative and additional methods of enforcement too.

Following this decision, Norwich is set to become one of the first cities in the country to introduce a blanket 20mph limit – following on from recent similar moves in Portsmouth and Aberdeen.

To read more about this historic decision go to:

<http://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/3423>

A Coal-based Future Is - Literally - No Future

<http://new.edp24.co.uk/content/commentary/OneWorld.aspx?brand=EDPOnline&category=OneWorld&tBrand=EDPOnline&tCategory=OneWorld&itemid=NOED02%20Jun%202008%2009%3A33%3A32%3A063>

Estimates vary, but, roughly, the world has only about 40 years of known oil reserves (and 65 years of natural-gas supplies) remaining. At current rates of consumption, that is to say, the world will entirely run out of oil before 2050.

The world has enough coal reserves however to last an estimated 155 years, with some of the largest reserves being moreover in the two biggest oil-consuming countries, the US and China.

Hidden inside these facts and figures is a threat to our future so vast that even now barely anyone thinking about our ecology dares to contemplate it openly. The threat is that of human beings turning to coal on a vast scale to replace oil and gas as they progressively run out – and of liquefying and gasifying coal on a vast scale, to directly replace them. Why is this a threat? Because the carbon consequences would be astronomical.

The threat posed to our climate's stability by the resurgence of coal as a mass-scale fossil fuel is terrifying enough. 'Clean coal' remains little more than handy ad-man's

greenwash: even if and when it becomes commercially viable, it will be a fairly poor option in terms of carbon emissions: but that point is far from having been reached yet, and may never be. By plumping for coal now, Britain and the US and China are playing Russian Roulette with the climate.

But the picture becomes far worse, when one does what virtually no-one yet has dared do: including the (already-technologically-available) processes of gasification and liquification into the picture. Gasification is a problem, because it will be terribly tempting to continue to run our cookers and boilers and so on ersatz (coal-based) natural gas – at a terrible carbon cost. But the biggest single reason why changing the state of coal is a terrifying threat to the human future has to do with the possibility of the production of ‘coal-oil’ on a large scale opening up.

For the big limitation of coal of course appears to be its unsuitability for contemporary transport systems. That is where oil is such a beautiful material. That (along with its fake green credentials) is at the root of the lunatic craze for large-scale ‘biofuels’, which we One World Columnists have been warning about for years, and which the rest of the world seems at last to have caught up with us about. But sky-high oil prices, unlikely ever to descend to their levels of a few years ago (given that oil is indeed running out, becoming more and more precious), render the technology for liquefying coal into ‘coal-oil’ commercially viable. Now.

The carbon ‘hit’ of coal is of course much greater than that of oil. But the prospect of coal-derived liquid petro-chemicals brings in its train the prospect of business-as-usual in the transportation sector – the one sector where carbon emissions are already rising. For there is of course an energy-intensive process involved, to turn coal into ‘oil’. Where will that energy be provided from? In a ‘business-as-usual’ case: once again, from coal...

The Natural Resources Defense Council, a US-based environmental advocacy group, estimates that the production and use of gasoline, diesel fuel, jet fuel and other fuels from crude oil release on average about 27.5 pounds of carbon dioxide per gallon. The production and use of a gallon of liquid fuel originating in coal emit about 49.5 pounds of carbon dioxide, they estimate. That’s almost twice as much. Even some fans of the coal-to-oil plants describe them as carbon-dioxide factories that produce energy on the side.

And here is a worrying straw in the wing: In June 2006, two US Senators from coal-producing states, from Illinois and of Kentucky, introduced a bill to offer loan guarantees and tax incentives for US coal-to-liquid plants. The name of the Illinois Senator? One Barack Obama...

If we put Old King Coal in our tanks, we are stoking the fires of the apocalypse. It’s worth repeating - “If you make gasoline or diesel out of coal, you double global warming pollution from cars and trucks.” - the words of David Friedman, a renewable-fuels expert at the renowned Union of Concerned Scientists.

If human civilisation is to survive and flourish, most of the Earth’s remaining coal must remain in the ground. If we put off the impact of ‘Peak Oil’ by switching to coal-oil, we will bring on climate catastrophe.

There must never be large-scale use of coal for making synthetic oil – if we want there to continue to be large-scale life.

Thanks for help with researching this column to Paul Roome and Chris Keene.

From Rupert's Blog:

12 months to go til the Euro-election!

"The next big electoral test for the government will be the European elections, which will take place in exactly one year from now. Those elections, because they are conducted under a proportional-representation electoral system, offer a level playing field for all Parties.

The Green Party will be challenging Labour and Tories alike over the next 12 months, in the run-up to the Euro-election: challenging those Parties' fake green credentials, and offering instead an actual way out of the crisis now facing this country and this planet. As economic hardship starts to bite, the Tories are sidling away from the green agenda, and instead starting to promote a traditional Tory tax cutting agenda. What they fail to see is that the crisis that we are now in is a result of strip-mining our environment: high food prices are caused by high oil prices and by incipient climate chaos; the financial crisis is caused by debt-fuelled borrowing to fund out-of-control consumerism; at the roots of all of this lies the burning of fossil fuels like there's no tomorrow, and the consequent running out of oil.

Out of this perfect storm, there is no exit by means of yet more borrowing and yet more spending. The Green Party has consistently warned of oil dependency and the need to develop renewables and invest in sustainable transport systems. There is no evidence that the other parties have recognised the size of the crisis we face nor the need to move away from oil quickly. It is essential that the Green Party prospers: for we are the only Party committed to introducing carbon rationing ('carbon entitlements'), a silver-bullet for ending oil dependency, and one less vulnerable than 'green taxes' to public discontent, because a carbon entitlements system is progressive not regressive, and is not a tax.

I hope next June to join our existing MEPs, Caroline Lucas and Jean Lambert, in being elected to the Brussels Parliament. Yes, government should be greener: the best way to ensure that we go green is, unsurprisingly,...to vote Green."

Campaigning/Speeches

How Green Will Be Our Valley?

On the morning of, Tuesday 20 May, I gave an invited talk on 'environmental philosophy' at Reepham High School in North Norfolk. The level of interest among the gifted and talented kids in the class was very exciting. I talked with mostly twelve and thirteen year olds about ecological economics as the new Copernican revolution in economics, about human beings as part of their (our) ecosystem, and so on, and the kids lapped it up and asked all sorts of challenging and exciting questions.

It gives one hope. If these kids point the way to the future, then *how will green will be our valley..*

If you'd like me to come and give a talk in your area, please get in touch!

Press Highlights

Norwich is the greenest council in the country following the local elections...follow the link to learn more:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/politics_show/7372606.stm

This is a first: the Green Party in 'Heating and Ventilation News'! Read the response to Rupert's keynote speech at the IDHEE Conference:

<http://www.hvnplus.co.uk/page.cfm/action=Archive/ArchiveID=4/EntryID=480>

Read more about the historic 20mph speed limit victory for Norwich Greens:

<http://new.edp24.co.uk/search/story.aspx?brand=EDPOnline&category=News&itemid=NOED22%20May%202008%2019:21:51:980&tBrand=EDPOnline&tCategory=search>

Greens stand firm against Police objection to 20mph speed limits:

<http://new.edp24.co.uk/search/story.aspx?brand=EDPOnline&category=News&itemid=NOED29%20May%202008%2020:30:10:083&tBrand=EDPOnline&tCategory=search>
<http://new.edp24.co.uk/search/story.aspx?brand=EDPOnline&category=News&itemid=NOED29%20May%202008%2020:30:10:083&tBrand=EDPOnline&tCategory=search>

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Sign up for the One World Column RSS feed -- stay in touch with this unique activist resource in East Anglia's mainstream media:

<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

- **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-Appling-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.

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Thanks!

Rupert Read

[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]

[[Note: this newsletter is put out in Rupert Read's name and does not necessarily represent the opinion of Eastern Region Green Party.]]