

# Green Party agrees electoral alliance with Women's Equality Party

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The Green Party has agreed an electoral alliance with the Women's Equality Party in the Yorkshire seat of Shipley, in a bid to unseat the sitting Conservative MP, Philip Davies.

The Women's Equality Party has agreed not to stand in five seats being contested by the Greens: Brighton Pavilion, Bristol West, Bath, Isle of Wight and Sheffield. In all these the Green Party is fielding a female candidate.

In return, local Green Party members have voted not to field a candidate in Shipley, where the Women's Equality Party leader Sophie Walker is standing as a candidate in a bid to oust Mr Davies.

Caroline Lucas MP, Green Party co-leader, said:

"I'm delighted to endorse Sophie in Shipley. Under the Conservative government – the one Mr Davies has supported – we have seen the biggest rise in inequality since Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister. Sophie and I are both committed to tackling that – from reversing the cuts that have left women behind and ending the gender pay gap, to increasing women's representation in parliament and in business. Sophie has pledged to stand on an agenda that many Green Party members and supporters will agree with and I look forward to her playing an active role in my campaigns to undo the privatisation of our NHS and for a fairer voter system."

Bradford Green Party is calling on the local Liberal Democrats and Labour to follow its bold lead and unite behind Sophie Walker as the single progressive candidate. The local party's move has been applauded by the party nationally.

Lucas said:

"This was far-sighted and bold decision by our local members. On election day we'll be urging people to vote for us because ours is the only policy platform which offers the bold changes so desperately needed to transform this country for the better. But to beat the Tories we need to be realistic about what's needed to form a progressive Government. That's why, in just a handful of places, our members will be taking brave decisions for the common good, as they have in Shipley.

"With an electoral system that benefits the Tories and locks out progressives, it's easy to imagine that predictions of the Conservatives winning the General Election, and winning big, will prove accurate, and that there's nothing we can do to change things. That isn't true and an agreement reached between the Green Party and the Women's Equality Party, together with other agreements being discussed locally, is a first step towards rewriting

the future and fixing our failed politics. This could prove to be an historic moment and one that changes not just the course of this election but every future election too."

Sophie Walker, Women's Equality Party leader, said:

"I am glad to endorse Caroline Lucas for Brighton Pavilion. The Women's Equality Party and the Greens share a desire to build a caring, tolerant and sustainable country that values women and works to create equal opportunities for all. Caroline's commitment to challenging the Government on its austerity agenda, which has affected women disproportionately, to ending the gender pay gap and to ensuring equal representation of women across political and working life means many of our members and supporters in Brighton will, like me, get behind her campaign for re-election."

The Green Party has renewed its call for the Liberal Democrat and Labour leaderships to sit down for talks about how to make the movement for electoral alliances work.

The Green Party's five leading candidates are: Caroline Lucas, Brighton Pavilion; Molly Scott Cato, Bristol West; Natalie Bennett, Sheffield Central; Vix Lowthion, Isle of Wight and Eleanor Field, Bath.

Sarah Cope, the Green Party's Women's Spokesperson, said:

"The Green Party has long been feminist party, with policies including improved maternity services, quotas for women on boards and abortion rights, to name just three. Our women's sub-group, Green Party Women, established almost a decade ago, has backed campaigns and worked with organisations to advance women's equality in the UK."

"In working with the Women's Equality Party, we are leading the way in showcasing a progressive, cooperative form of politics. Even where we may have policy differences, we can find shared ground and work for the common good."

Matt Edwards, Bradford District Green Party campaign coordinator, said:

"We have been convinced that Sophie is a candidate that the other progressive parties in Shipley should unite behind. People have been crying out for a new kind of politics where the left leaning parties work together to achieve their common goals, rather than attack each other over their differences."

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