

Hope beat hate – how Greens took on Reform in Kent... and won!

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The Green Party has a new councillor on Kent County Council, but that's only half the story.

Cllr Rob Yates – and his hundreds of campaigners – defied all the odds to defeat Reform in a “seismic” victory in a Margate by-election last week, upending all predictions, and leading the way for Greens looking to defeat Reform in May.

Greens vs Reform. Hope vs hate.

At the launch of the Green Party's local election campaign last Thursday, Green Party leader Zack Polanski made clear what's at stake at the ballot box in May:

“This election is between the Green Party and the Reform Party. It is a straight up battle between hope and hate.”

His message to voters was just as clear:

“We can reject the hate of Reform and instead bring in politics that actually benefits people's lives, that improves their living standards, lowers their bills and redistributes power and wealth from the super wealthy into our communities”.

But can hope really beat hate? Can the people-powered Green Party take on Nigel Farage's billionaire-backed Reform party and win?

We didn't have to wait until May to find out.

The same day Zack was launching the Greens' national election campaign with an affordable housing pledge in South London, local Green campaigners were out on the doorsteps in Margate to turn out the vote in a crucial council by-election.

No more no-go areas for the Green Party

The seat: Cliftonville. The council: Kent County Council. A Reform seat – won just last year with 40% of the vote – on a Reform-controlled council.

The Green Party came fourth in that 2025 election, but that didn't deter candidate Rob Yates nor campaigners across the region. After all, the Green Party wasn't supposed to win in the Gorton and Denton parliamentary by-election. And as with the waves of Green support that flocked to Manchester, Greens turned out in Margate.

On the day before the election, over 400 people joined Zack on the Margate seafront for an emergency rally called with just 24 hours' notice – all inspired by the simple message that a vote for Rob was a vote for hope.

When voters in Cliftonville headed to the polling station the next day, they would not just be casting their ballots. They would be giving their verdict on a chaotic year of Reform control in Kent, and putting Zack Polanski's argument that hope can triumph over hate to an early test.

The result was decisive. The people of Cliftonville voted hope.

As with Hannah Spencer's victory in Gorton and Denton, Rob Yates' defeat of Reform on home turf made one thing clear: there are no more no-go areas for the Green Party. Greens can take on Reform anywhere – and win.

“Greens are the antidote to Reform”

Reactions from Greens underscored the significance of the “seismic” result.

Having added county councillor to a resumé that already includes district councillor and a career in renewables, Rob Yates said the result “shows that across Kent and across the country the Greens are the antidote to Reform.”

Mark Hood, the Green Group leader on Kent County Council, said the result was “seismic” for Kent and for the country. “Reform lost this seat after less than a year due to their dismal record of failure, chaos and managed decline running Kent County Council. The defeat is a major embarrassment for Nigel Farage.”

And Green Party Leader Zack Polanski noted the pattern of wins vs Reform: “Greens are making a habit of taking on Reform – and winning! Robert Jenrick came to visit – as did Emily Thornberry. And their vote share both dropped. Huge congratulations to the entire Green Party team. People power wins the day once again!”

Greens are taking on Reform where you live – help us win

As Zack said at the campaign launch, it will be Greens vs Reform in May.

Greens beat Reform in Manchester and again in Kent thanks to the incredible turnout of Green campaigners.

Greens can beat Reform where you live – but that will depend on you.

We can win big all over the country in May – but we'll need your help. You can help us replace Labour and defeat Reform. There are action days all over the country. Find one near you and sign up today.



Green Party

LE2026 High Priority Targets

Which
Green Team
can you
help win?



Find an action day: greenparty.click/actiondays

Featured photo of Margate rally by Aldo Ciarrocchi

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