



## I'm standing for our children

***My name is Diane Wood, and I am proud to be the Green Party parliamentary candidate for election in the Yeovil constituency.***

Our children and young people are at the very heart of what I am standing for in this General Election. Growing up in today's world is difficult, with so many issues and challenges facing families who just want the very best for their kids.

The following is by no means an exhaustive list, but does explain where I stand on some key issues that matter a great deal to me.

### Education

As a Mum to a young child I was shocked to discover the degree to which young kids are tested in today's schools. Our government is obsessed with league tables and stats and numbers, rather than children's potential as individuals. This regime also means much additional paperwork and admin for teachers, leading to many leaving the profession altogether every year. Teachers are spending far too much time preparing children for exams which have no benefit whatsoever for the children themselves, and therefore sport and creativity participation in schools are suffering greatly.

- I want to end SATs tests
- I want to end league tables

- SEN children need better support and understanding, and a school system that works for them too
- I do not support the expansion of Grammar Schools: all children deserve the very best education, not just a select few who pass an entrance exam at 11
- I do not support the Academy Schools system: schools are an essential public service and should not be run like a corporate business
- We desperately need proper levels of funding for all our schools and colleges: too many kids are learning in poorly maintained buildings, inadequately supplied with learning materials, with a high turnover of staff.

### Students

Thanks to the Coalition Government our students are now lumbered with thousands of pound's worth of debt when they graduate, debt that can hang over them for many years as they attempt to start their post-graduate careers. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are particularly missing out on the opportunity to study at University. Our brightest stars need to be nurtured, encouraged and enabled, so their talents and skills lead them to be the innovators and leaders of the future.

- The Green Party wants to scrap all tuition fees
- In areas where we have skills shortages we need to offer additional financial incentives to enable students to study relevant courses , e.g. nursing

### Mental Health

Our society is facing a mental health crisis due to a lack of proper funding and an increase in everyday stress in people's lives. I am particularly concerned about the ticking time bomb in our children as they face exam stress, cyber bullying, poverty, neglect, abuse. With parents under increased pressure to work longer hours, our children are living a disjointed family life,

spending less and less time with their parents, and worrying about their family finances.

Of course, we need much higher levels of funding for mental health services but I strongly believe that with children many of these issues are preventable in the first place.

- All children should have easy access to professional counselling within their school
- All children should have access to mentoring or buddy schemes at school
- There should be more time allocated to physical and creative activities for all abilities every week in schools
- Children and their families should be taught about mental wellbeing and how to improve it, e.g. relaxation techniques

## Housing

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Too many of our towns and villages are being urbanised by developers enabled by our government to build large luxury housing estates on our beautiful countryside. Yes, we do have a housing shortage but these luxury homes are not meeting that need, merely lining the pockets of shareholders. This has to stop before we all end up merging into one another in a huge urban sprawl.

- Brownfield sites need to be prioritised over greenfield
- All houses must be sustainably built and utilise alternative green technology such as solar panels
- We urgently need large amounts of social housing to replace that which disappeared in 'Right To Buy' etc.
- All private rents must be capped at an acceptable level to stop this unsustainable rise in rental costs
- Renters need better legal protection from rogue landlords
- Developers have too much lobbying power with our government; local communities and councils need to be given more powers of their own to stop developments that are detrimental to the integrity of their communities

## Brexit

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Sadly this election is clearly focussed on Brexit and I, for one, am fed up with the whole thing. I want to concentrate on other vital issues such as our climate but just in case you want to know where I stand on this:

- Our whole country has been mired in the total shambles of Brexit since David Cameron decided to open Pandora's Box with the 2016 Referendum. This one event has proved so divisive for our nation, leading to arguments between families and friends, and three years (so far) of uncertainty for our future. This Brexit saga has meant that other essential matters of government have not been attended to as they should; it has simply taken up too much time and resources.
- I voted to Remain and would dearly love that this whole thing never started but it did. People voted Leave or Remain for many reasons and I believe it's important not to dismiss these voters out of hand, either by forcing a hard Brexit or revoking Article 50, without further consultation or scrutiny. Therefore I would welcome a People's Vote with all the information on what Brexit will mean for everyday families laid out in plain English; a vote that would include resident EU Nationals, and 16 and 17 year olds too.

If there are other issues that you would like to know my views on please email me at:

[diane@southsomersetgreenparty.co.uk](mailto:diane@southsomersetgreenparty.co.uk)

If you would like to find out more about how to get involved with Green issues in the area, please visit the website for the South Somerset Green Party:

<https://southsomerset.greenparty.org.uk>