

# Environment

Underpinning any social or economic plans should be a comprehensive environment policy. Access to clean, safe water, air and a healthy living environment are necessary components of every society. The Progressive Unionist Party wish to see environmental issues be prioritised in all areas of planning, development and regeneration.

**(I)** Northern Ireland has experienced heavy floods over the past decade, which have affected thousands of people and caused millions of pounds worth of damage. We will see to prioritise flood prevention by developing a province-wide strategy seeking joint and co-ordinated action between government, statutory agencies and emergency departments. A compensation system should support the victims of flood disasters to restore their economic independence and their living conditions in a timely manner.

**(II)** Road safety education is paramount in Northern Ireland for both road users and pedestrians. We would seek to enhance government-funded programmes educating citizens of the potential dangers. We would also seek to reduce speed limits in at risk areas whilst introducing and promoting Safe pedestrians routes or Safe Route to School Schemes.

**(III)** We are committed to the reformation of Animal Welfare in Northern Ireland; we fully support a ban on wild animals in circuses and wish to maintain the ban on hunting with dogs. We will seek: tougher sentencing, adequate enforcement of legislation and the creation and the implementation of an animal abusers registry.

**(IV)** Simplify fares for all public transport with discounted rates for off-peak journeys and for those on low incomes. Our public transport system needs to evolve and with any significant expansion, consideration needs to be given to the de-carbonising of our transport infrastructure. We would like to further encourage more walking and cycling especially for short journeys. The Progressive Unionist Party will support initiatives and schemes to improve accessibility in the heart of communities and for arterial routes and not just focussed within the city centre.

**(V)** Increase the number of schools that participate in the Eco-Schools programme. This programme extends the curriculum, works beyond the classroom, develops responsible attitudes and commitment to the environment, both at home and in the wider community. It enhances awareness and participation in tackling environment issues and promotes civic duty. We welcome that Northern Ireland was the first out of forty-nine participating countries to be awarded the prestigious Green Flag and we would like this to continue.

**(VI)** Encouraging private home owners to generate their own energy. Greater incentives and education should be given to the Northern Ireland public to encourage private wind turbine and solar panel installation. These home and land owners can generate enough energy for their private use and also sell any extra back to Northern Ireland Electricity.

**(VII)** Seek tighter controls on the dumping of toxic waste together with stricter penalties for those convicted of river pollution and illegal dumping.