

Progressive Unionist Party



Stormont &
Local Government

Manifesto 2011

Party leader's message

The Progressive Unionist Party have emerged stronger and more resilient as a consequence of the crisis of 2010. The party that negotiated the Good Friday Agreement and showed the way forward in Northern Ireland is still alive and kicking.

The fears and needs of working class Unionism have been sorely neglected by the main parties and they have not benefited from the comparative peace that Northern Ireland has enjoyed for the past decade.

We believe in mutual respect and tolerance of each others' cultures - albeit Orange, Green, Chinese, Eastern European or African.

We need to strengthen and prosper our communities by stabilising our devolved political institutions.

We will strive to improve the health, education and quality of life for all, in a shared Northern Ireland.

As the present recession begins to deepen this party will endeavour to ensure that the neediest in society will have a voice.

Yours,

Brian Ervine
Party Leader



Party Achievements

The Progressive Unionist Party has contributed extensively to the improvement of Northern Ireland since the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. The PUP have been instrumental in transforming Northern Ireland from conflict to peace, stability and prosperity. Our achievements include:

- Northern Ireland's position in the United Kingdom is secure. The principle of consent has been accepted with the removal of articles 2 & 3 of the Republic of Ireland's constitution and the Union is safe. Northern Ireland will remain in the UK for the foreseeable future.
- Negotiating, supporting and participating in the devolved Northern Ireland Assembly. While Stormont has its flaws it has played a major part in the normalisation of politics in our country and allows the NI people to have a say in their own governance. The PUP have also led the opposition to 'double jobbing' and will continue to ensure Stormont's MLAs spend their time working hard for the people of Northern Ireland.
- Reducing violence and tensions at interfaces in Northern Ireland. The Progressive Unionist Party have worked hard to improve conditions for Unionist communities near flashpoint areas. We have developed new relationships with Nationalist community workers to stop 'recreational rioting' and to defuse tensions during the summer marching season. Cluan Place, Twaddell Avenue and the Waterside areas of Londonderry have all benefited from PUP members working to eradicate violence.
- Defending and increasing services for deprived Unionist communities. We have campaigned for greater provision of services for the elderly, unemployed, disabled and single parents including community centres, training courses, mother and toddler groups and facilities for pensioners to socialise, learn new skills and keep active. We were the only Unionist party to fight against the closure of the Connswater Community Centre.
- Better relations between the British and Irish communities in Northern Ireland. The Progressive Unionist Party have long championed better cross-community relationships by promoting and organising a range of events and pilot schemes. Cross-community children's sports events, community forums and umbrella groups for community workers and church events for both religions have all contributed to much improved relations between the two main traditions in Northern Ireland in recent years.



Party Goals

The Progressive Unionist Party are committed to improving the lives of everyone in Northern Ireland. The PUP aim to ensure the Stormont Assembly - and our local councils - are working hard and effectively for their constituents. Our innovative ideas on housing, education, justice, culture, tourism and community relations will help maximise public services and provide value for money to the tax-paying public.

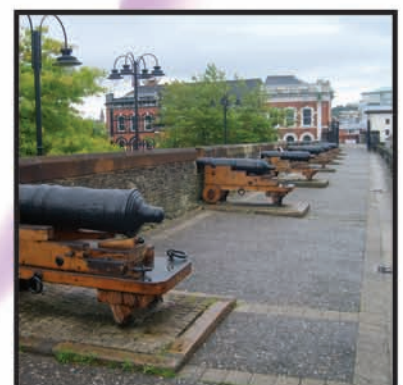
We support:

- A more balanced economy where the less well-off share in the benefits of wealth during the good times and don't suffer the majority of the pain when times get tough.
- Better value for money in our health service with funds spent on the front line as opposed to administration costs and consultant salaries.
- Greater access to integrated education across Northern Ireland. Educating our children together is vital to creating a society where fear, bitterness and hatred are replaced with friendship and trust.
- Further investment and research into renewable energy. Northern Ireland has one of the best educated workforces in the UK and the PUP believe we should be capitalising on this knowledge to lead the world in the research and creation of renewable energy sources.
- The protection and promotion of our unique scenery. We have been blessed with internationally recognised sites like the Giant's Causeway, Lough Neagh and Strangford Lough - we must take care of them and turn them into tourist attractions to attract international visitors.
- An accountable, professional, modernised water service. After the debacle of winter 2011, it is essential Northern Ireland has a water utility company that is fit for purpose. We can never again allow tens of thousands of householders to go weeks without running water.

The Progressive Unionist Party policies and goals reflect the five core principles our party have stood for since it's formation.

The five core principles of Progressive Unionism:

- 1 - Respect for Northern Ireland's place in the United Kingdom
- 2 - The material well being of the Northern Irish people
- 3 - The right to peaceful opposition and protest
- 4 - Civil, religious and cultural liberty for all
- 5 - Equal access to education



Economy

The Progressive Unionist Party have always sought radical alternatives to stimulate and improve the Northern Ireland economy. In the current economic climate innovative ideas are essential to create jobs, help new business creation and encourage foreign investment. As Northern Ireland's economy tries to cope with the recession, rising unemployment and a stagnant economy, the PUP can get things moving. We support:

- Greater powers for credit unions. As the UK struggles to deal with the aftermath of the recent banking crisis the Progressive Unionist Party believe the reliance on high street banks must end. Credit unions are a tried and tested alternative to multi-national banks and can be flexible to suit the needs of the community they are based in. The PUP will lobby for credit unions to expand their range of products to also include mortgages, credit cards and competitive current accounts.
- Lobbying the banks to increase lending to potential homeowners and small businesses. The banks can help stimulate the economy by lending more - but we need to ensure we don't see a return to the irresponsible lending that caused the current economic recession.
- A new, nominal text message tax to generate revenue to be spent on Northern Ireland's public services. Almost £25 million could be raised locally with a 1p charge on each text message. This fee would be levied on the mobile phone network operators and they would have the choice on whether or not to recoup it from their customers.



Business



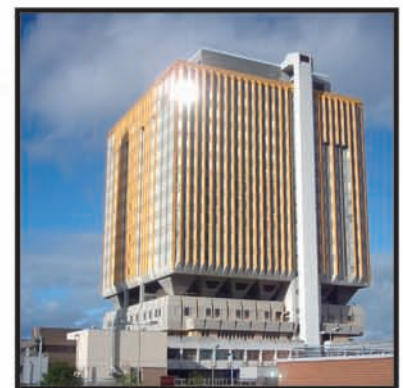
The Progressive Unionist Party are committed to encouraging inward investment in Northern Ireland - whilst also creating the circumstances which will allow new business ventures to flourish. Northern Ireland's dependency on the public service is the legacy of decades of conflict. In 2011 we must begin to tap into our highly educated workforce and give them government support to research, start and manage new businesses - especially those which will increase exports. We support:

- A successful resolution to the City Airport planning dispute. The proposed runway extension at George Best Belfast City Airport has been opposed by community and residents groups within east Belfast. The airport believes over 100 jobs could be created with an additional £120 million generated for the Northern Ireland economy in tourism revenue. The PUP will do everything we can to reach a compromise that reduces noise pollution for neighbouring residents whilst allowing the people of east Belfast to benefit from any potential jobs boost.
- Giving Northern Ireland a competitive corporation tax rate whilst protecting our fragile economy. As the only part of the UK to share a land border with another country our economic needs differ from the mainland. To allow NI to compete with the Irish Republic whilst protecting our block grant, the PUP propose that the grant is reduced only when the rise in income begins. If inward investment increases by 10%, only then will the block grant be reduced by the same amount.

Health

The Progressive Unionist Party will continue to support the NHS - and its staff - in Northern Ireland. Our health service has suffered from chronic underfunding and even today doctors, nurses and surgeons struggle to carry out their jobs in difficult circumstances. We support:

- Greater provision of services to tackle mental health problems. PUP leader Brian Ervine has been pro-active in highlighting the ongoing issues surrounding mental health in Northern Ireland. With a rising number of suicides - especially among those in deprived communities - it is essential greater investment is given towards the detection and prevention of stress, depression and other serious mental illness.
- The return of matron to Northern Ireland's hospital wards. With public confidence in hospital hygiene damaged by a number of high profile incidents the PUP believe the reintroduction of matrons can improve standards in hospital wards. A pilot scheme in Birmingham has received positive reviews and it's time for matrons to return to NI.
- Changes to prescription packaging and charges. Large differences in the cost of branded medication and alternatives in plain packaging (usually the same product from the same supplier) mean millions could be saved if we enforced plain packaging for all prescription medication in NI. We will also propose a £2 levy per prescription for those who are waged. Those chronically ill or on benefits would be exempt. This will generate much needed funds for frontline services.



Elderly



The Progressive Unionist Party have long campaigned for greater respect and care for our elderly population in Northern Ireland. PUP activists were instrumental in clearing footpaths and delivering food to elderly residents during the heavy snow in winter 2010. We support:

- Pro-active campaigns to reduce fuel poverty. With recent figures showing pensioners are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty we believe state agencies need to do more to tackle this problem. We will lobby for home visits to all pensioners in NI to advise them on home insulation, energy efficiency and other help they can receive to reduce heating bills. The PUP will also lobby electricity, oil and gas companies to ensure retail prices rise and fall with wholesale prices.
- The creation of new neighbourhood watch schemes. One of the most pressing issues facing elderly people across Northern Ireland is the prospect of burglars entering their home when they are alone. We will push for funding and training for those wishing to start neighbourhood watch groups to ensure pensioners feel safe in their own homes.
- A fairer state pension related to inflation and the average national salary. We will lobby the Westminster government to create a clear link between the UK state pension and average earnings across the country. When taxpayers' income and the nation's wealth rise then the pensions paid to our elderly population should also rise so they aren't left paying inflated bills with stagnant pensions.

Education

The Progressive Unionist Party have earmarked education as our most important priority for the immediate future. Deprived, working class Unionist communities are suffering from educational underachievement and this will only get worse as the coalition government's cuts begin to take hold. We will campaign for every child to have the same access to quality education regardless of their background. We support:

- Financial incentives for parents to enrol their children into integrated schools. Integrated education is vital to removing fear and suspicion between the two communities in Northern Ireland. It is unacceptable that our children are educated separately for the first sixteen years of their lives because of their parents' religious beliefs. The PUP will work to increase participation in integrated education across NI.
- Better discipline and greater powers for teachers and principals. We will lobby for greater powers for school principals to discipline unruly children and promote improved behaviour. We cannot permit some schools to have a zero tolerance approach to unruliness and violence while others become a 'dumping ground' for problem children.
- The expansion of the Dickson plan currently being used in Armagh. The PUP have always believed that academic selection at age 11 was detrimental to those children who are late developers. We want to see selection changed to age 14 across Northern Ireland as in Armagh. In reality, this will need a gradual transition from the current system.



Higher Education



The Progressive Unionist Party are committed to creating the circumstances which allow anyone - from any background - to access further and higher education in Northern Ireland. Family wealth or the district which someone comes from should not dictate whether they can attend one of Northern Ireland's colleges or universities. We support:

- Means testing for university grants. We will lobby for financial help for those from disadvantaged or low-income backgrounds to continue their education and improve future career prospects. Free university education for all is not realistic in the current economic climate but we should be giving financial assistance to those who cannot afford to fund four or five years of study themselves. This will allow children from working class backgrounds to aspire to university education.
- Encouraging students to contribute to their local community. The PUP believe students should be encouraged to help those in nearby disadvantaged communities. Either financial incentives, reduced fees or credits towards their qualifications could encourage them to help with literacy, numeracy or training in working class communities.
- Access to further and higher education for mature people in working class areas in local libraries. With the closure and threat of closure of dozens of libraries we need to broaden the range of services offered to increase their usage. Evening classes for mature students and the unemployed would make better use of these vital public buildings.

Policing & Justice

The Progressive Unionist Party will endeavour to support the Police Service of Northern Ireland to combat crime whilst continuing to hold its staff and leadership to account. We have also been a long time supporter of the rehabilitation of offenders whilst protecting peaceful citizens from the most dangerous in society. We support:

- A fairer system of police recruitment. The PUP have always accepted the need for specialist recruitment procedures for the PSNI due to our troubled past. Whilst the Catholic imbalance has been addressed there is a new divide emerging between working class and middle class recruits. A police force works best when it's officers are drawn from the communities in which they work. We actively encourage greater recruitment from working class areas of Northern Ireland.
- A limit on legal aid payments to solicitors and a sizeable reduction in the rates paid. At present a small circle of senior solicitors are making millions of pounds annually from legal aid cases. We want a cap on how much a solicitor or firm can earn from legal aid payments so the work is distributed evenly rather than controlled by a few.
- More funding to educate prisoners. Educational underachievement and crime go hand in hand. Young men with numeracy and literacy problems make up a high percentage of today's prison population. The PUP believe education and skills training in prisons and young offenders centres can prevent reoffending upon release from jail.



Armed Forces



The Progressive Unionist Party will continue to support our nation's armed forces and seek to provide them with high quality equipment and support both during and after service. Northern Ireland's Unionist community have always provided an above average amount of it's young men and women to serve in the British Army, Navy and RAF. It is essential we campaign to ensure they are looked after. We support:

- A pay rise for frontline troops. The average annual salary of a newly qualified soldier is £14,300 before tax - compared with about £20,000 for a police officer and £21,000 for a trainee firefighter. These brave soldiers put their lives on the line daily for our freedom - the least we can do is compensate them for doing so. The PUP are calling for army pay to mirror that of police officers and firefighters in the UK.
- Continued recognition for the hard work and sacrifice of our young men in the British armed forces. While many would disagree with the current military commitments in Afghanistan it is important we let the soldiers on the ground know they have the support of the British public. We support army homecoming parades and eagerly await the next Royal Irish Regiment parade past Belfast city hall.
- Better post-conflict support and treatment. The harsh reality of army life is well known. Many young men and women will suffer a serious injury or experience post-conflict mental trauma because of their occupation. We must do more to treat and care for our soldiers.

Tourism

The Progressive Unionist Party are committed to making Northern Ireland an attractive destination for tourists from around the world. Our rich heritage, unique mix of cultures and post-conflict feel good factor, combine to make the province an interesting and enjoyable place for European, American and Asian tourists to visit. We support:

- Promotion of both British and Irish cultures, our attractive scenery and unique annual events. With a global marketing campaign the Orange marching season, St Patricks Day, Titanic Quarter and the Giants Causeway could bring in millions of new international visitors.
- The creation and promotion of a 'Presidential trail' across Ulster. With over one-third of US Presidents having family ties to Northern Ireland we have a unique selling point to attract American visitors. A designated trail around the country with stops at ancestral homes and notable sites could result in an influx of US college and school students, Scotch-Irish Americans, genealogists and historians.
- Building a full size replica of the Titanic to remain docked in Belfast harbour. With a combination of private and public funds the rebuilt Titanic would feature hundreds of hotel suites, restaurants and bars, a museum and conference facilities - bringing in more visitors and revenue to boost the Northern Ireland economy. Who could turn down the opportunity to stay overnight on board the world's most famous ship in the very harbour where it was originally built?



Sport



The Progressive Unionist Party will continue to support the funding and provision of world-beating sports facilities in Northern Ireland. With growing childhood obesity it is imperative we encourage our children to get involved in competitive sports whilst also supporting the future world champions who might inspire them. We support:

- Parity of esteem for international rugby matches. With a single team representing both Northern Ireland and the Republic in international rugby it is essential that both countries and sets of fans are treated with respect. We believe half of Ireland's home international matches should be played at Ravenhill so Northern Irish fans can watch their team in their own country. The PUP also believe the national anthem of Northern Ireland should be played before these games alongside 'Ireland's call' as the Republic's anthem is played before international matches played in Dublin. Parity of esteem for Northern Ireland rugby fans will improve relations between fans and the two countries.
- The creation of an elite golf academy to support Northern Ireland's next generation of golfing champions. Golf is one sport where Northern Irish competitors have regularly punched above their weight against international competition. Graeme McDowell's success over the past twelve months and Rory McIlroy's rapid ascent up the world rankings should act as an incentive for young sports fans to take up the sport. We must ensure Northern Ireland has the facilities, coaches and support to help them become our next generation of world beaters.

Housing

The Progressive Unionist Party are dedicated to the provision of well built, professionally maintained social housing to all who need it. There is a massive shortfall in the availability of vacant social housing when compared to the numbers currently on waiting lists. We support:

- Giving the Housing Executive first refusal on repossessed properties. As the current recession leads to a rise in repossessed homes and retail properties the PUP believe the Housing Executive should be given the chance to purchase these buildings to be used for social housing or the development of blocks of apartments. Not only will this help combat rising waiting lists but it will also stir activity in the Northern Ireland property market as the number of homes and business units for sale would decrease - thereby increasing prices and reducing selling time.
- Creating a single Housing Executive accountable to Stormont with their own building and maintenance staff. We believe a single Housing Executive - with their own maintenance staff - will provide a more professional, accountable service to tenants than the current set-up.
- Three strike rule for bad tenants. 'Noisy neighbours' are a blight on housing estates across Northern Ireland. The PUP propose a 'three strike' rule where tenants in social housing causing a nuisance are given a written warning for a first offence, a final warning for a second offence and if anti-social behaviour persists the third offence will result in them being removed from their home and having to rent privately.



Planning



The Progressive Unionist Party appreciate the pressing need for reform of the planning system in Northern Ireland. Waiting lists for social housing continue to grow with people seeking adequate social housing, private developments have stalled due to the recession and the property market continues to show little signs of positive movement. We support:

- A new focus on developing inner city brown-field sites in Belfast. With increasing waste ground acreage across the city the PUP believe a new cross-party working group needs to be established focusing solely on redeveloping these sites. With some in private ownership and others under public ownership, some sites suitable for social housing and others not it's important a wide range of views are involved in the regeneration of these areas. While it lies empty waste ground will always attract fly tippers, loitering, graffiti and other low level crime.
- Greater incentives for the owners of derelict or vacant homes. At this present time thousands of dwellings sit boarded up across Northern Ireland whilst social housing waiting lists continue to grow. The PUP will seek to encourage the owners of these properties to carry out the work needed to make them ready for habitation.
- Greater scrutiny of links between developers and elected politicians. Recent years have seen a steady stream of news stories and scandals about relationships between politicians and developers. The planning process in NI must not be influenced by these shady relationships.

Welfare

The Progressive Unionist Party are dedicated to looking after those most vulnerable in our community. The elderly, unemployed, poorly educated, and physically or mentally ill have been left to look after themselves in working class areas of Northern Ireland. We support:

- Legitimate welfare claimants. We will continue to help those in need of benefits and oppose any adverse changes to the welfare system. We have a duty to care for those who cannot look after themselves. The Progressive Unionist Party will endeavour to ensure those who need financial assistance from the state receive it without stigma.
- Innovative ideas to tackle fuel poverty. People on low incomes or surviving on benefits have to face difficult choices on what they do with their money. Many elderly pensioners and single mothers have to decide between food or fuel. We want to see the creation of fuel co-operatives for those with oil heating who cannot afford to fill their tank when it is empty. Weekly payments to the fuel co-operative and regular oil deliveries could allow these people to heat their homes.
- Opposition to benefit decreases for long term claimants. The UK government had recently planned to reduce housing benefit paid to those who had been claiming unemployment benefits for over twelve months. Although they later reversed that decision we will continue to lobby against these types of unworkable sanctions on claimants which will serve only to drive marginalised people to crime or fraud.



Disadvantage



The Progressive Unionist Party are dedicated to improving the lives of those most vulnerable in Northern Ireland society. The old Unionist parties neglect working class areas except when they come looking for votes at election time. Far too many people are being left to fend for themselves in poor social housing with no money and little chance to improve their life through employment or education. We support:

- Funding and support to improve adult numeracy and literacy. Latest figures show that over a quarter of adults in Northern Ireland are functionally illiterate and 4,000 children leave school every year unable to read and write at the expected level of an eleven year old. The PUP want to see one-to-one tutoring for unemployed adults in libraries, community centres and churches - funded by Stormont.
- Skill sharing centres to train young, unemployed men and women to return to work. The PUP believe incentives should be offered to unemployed tradesmen to train unskilled young people struggling to find work. A jobless electrician could train a group of youths in his field while learning computer skills from a different volunteer.
- Innovative ideas to tackle rising numbers of homelessness in Northern Ireland. With the current recession, property repossession and rising unemployment homelessness is a growing concern in Northern Ireland. Increased social housing - including one bedroom apartments for single people - can help reduce the rising problem of people sleeping rough.

Agriculture

The Progressive Unionist Party recognise the important role the farming industry plays in creating employment, providing training and contributing to the economy in Northern Ireland. In these tough economic times we must do all we can to keep small farmers in business in NI. We support:

- Funding for farmers regardless of which community they belong to. With DARD Minister Michelle Gildernew accused of sectarianism in her handling of the Farm Modernisation Scheme it is imperative that future funding schemes are allocated by need - rather than by which area the farmer worked or the altitude of their agricultural land.
- Greater involvement in decision making for fishermen in Northern Ireland. Too often our hardworking fishing communities have been disadvantaged by European Union regulations which may well work well in other parts of the continent but don't work here in Northern Ireland. Input from local fishermen in consultations about the industry will enable their voice to be heard in Brussels and will allow them to contribute ideas which will improve the sustainability of fishing in NI.
- The building of a chicken waste incinerator which has the support of the people of Northern Ireland. The PUP believe a locally based incinerator which can generate jobs and large amounts of sustainable energy should be welcomed. With opposition to the planned site near Glenavy from local residents' groups it's clear the parties involved in the planning of the project need to do more to explain its benefits.



Environment



The Progressive Unionist Party will continue to champion all that is best for Northern Ireland's environment. We have some of the most striking and recognisable scenery anywhere in the world and it is essential it is protected by the Stormont Assembly. We support:

- The protection of Northern Ireland's 30 green belts. The PUP will work to oppose the continued building of housing and commercial developments on rural land while hundreds of brownfield sites lie empty across the country. We also believe the Belfast skyline should rise vertically instead of the city sprawling out into the countryside.
- The development of vacant retail units on arterial routes in Belfast. It's clear that the high street shopping experience is gone for good. With out of town shopping centres and easier access to Belfast city centre numerous arterial routes are lined by scores of vacant retail units as businesses have relocated or closed down. The PUP wants to see incentives offered to private developers to purchase these properties and turn them into blocks of one and/or two bedroom apartments dedicated to social housing for single people.
- The protection of the Comber Greenway. This little piece of tranquility in the heart of east Belfast is currently being targeted by the Stormont Assembly who plan to develop a high speed bus route from the suburbs into the city centre. The PUP will actively oppose this ill thought out idea and do everything we can to protect the Greenway from development.

Energy

The Progressive Unionist Party will work hard to ensure Northern Ireland continue to lead the world when it comes to developing new sources of alternative energy. The world needs to prepare for a time when fossil fuel reserves have been depleted with solar, wind and tidal power supplying most - if not all - of our energy. We support:

- Continued investment and research into new forms of renewable energy. Northern Ireland is leading the world in the development of alternative energy sources with the SeaGen tidal wave station in Strangford Lough proving a great success. Continued funding and support for 'green energy' will reduce our overdependence on fossil fuels and possibly create hundreds of new jobs in Northern Ireland.
- Electric cars. By 2020 one-third of new car sales will be electric vehicles. It is vital that Northern Ireland has the best infrastructure in place to help manage the cross-over from petrol and diesel and the Stormont government leads the way in encouraging drivers to make the change. We believe the thirteen ministerial cars should be replaced with electric vehicles when the current fleet needs renewed.
- Encouraging private homeowners to generate their own energy. The PUP believe 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 NIE.



Water



The Progressive Unionist Party has been at the forefront in the drive to create a modernised, accountable, fit-for-purpose water utility in Northern Ireland. During the water fiasco over Christmas 2010 the PUP played a vital role in the management and delivery of emergency bottled water at council facilities and door-to-door in areas with large numbers of elderly residents. It's obvious to all that Northern Ireland Water needs huge investment to improve it's infrastructure and we will ensure that any money spent is done so wisely. We support:

- The continued opposition to water rates. Northern Ireland's taxpayers already pay for their water through the current rates system. Another charge will effectively be a double tax - something no-one can afford with the current economic downturn. The need for huge levels of investment to improve our water infrastructure is because of decades of neglect during direct rule. The Westminster government failed to invest and it is they who should provide the funds needed to provide improvements.
- Better emergency procedures. After the recent water crisis and the disastrous handling of the situation by NI Water's management it's clear that new emergency procedures need to be organised and implemented. Never again should homes go weeks without water.
- Opposition to privatisation. The PUP will lobby to keep Northern Ireland Water under public control as politicians and economists look at the options open to the DRD Minister for reform of the water utility.

Culture

The Progressive Unionist Party will continue to promote the historic, rich culture of Northern Ireland's Unionist community. We are blessed with an abundance of unique music, literature and art. We support:

- Greater respect between the two main cultures within Northern Ireland. While there are aspects to both the Ulster Scots and Irish cultures that people may find controversial it is beneficial to all of us that our unique music, dance, sports, language and literature is supported. We look forward to a time when Unionists feel at ease taking part in St Patricks Day celebrations and Nationalists feel equally at home watching the Orangefest celebrations every July.
- Improved links between Ulster cultural groups and Scotch-Irish associations in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. There are millions of people in those four countries unaware they are descendents of Ulster protestant immigrants - it is in our interest to help them understand where their genealogical and family ties lie.
- The creation of an 'Orange Quarter' in Belfast. With the success of Belfast's Titanic, Cathedral and Queens Quarters the PUP believe an area of the city should be set aside to promote and educate people about the culture and history of Ulster's Unionists. The Orange Order, our unique marching band culture, the Somme and the Ulster Scots language would feature prominently in an area rich with wall murals, museums and regular parades and events. Shankill Road perhaps?



Troubles Legacy



The Progressive Unionist Party played an important role in helping Northern Ireland move from daily violence to an era of peace and prosperity. Our country still bears the scars of 'The Troubles' and neither the British government nor any of the local political parties have worked out how best we should deal with the past. We support:

- Parity of esteem when investigating Troubles related violence. There is a perception that the Historical Enquiries Team are not looking into political violence with impartiality. It is accepted that Nationalist paramilitaries committed 60% of attacks throughout 'The Troubles' with Loyalists carrying out 30% and British security forces 10%. Are the HET investigating old cases using the same percentages?
- An end to public inquiries. The PUP believes a line should be drawn in the sand regarding costly public inquiries into individual incidents which occurred during 'The Troubles'. The inquiry into the events surrounding 'Bloody Sunday' cost £400 million. Sinn Fein continue to push for more inquiries into the deaths of Pat Finucane and others yet oppose similar inquiries into IRA attacks. We believe in 'Enquiry for one - enquiry for all'.
- Continued support for ex-prisoners. Former paramilitary prisoners suffer from the same problems as those who spent time in jail for non-political offences. They need continued help to enable them to integrate into Northern Ireland society. The promises of long-term help for Unionist ex-prisoners in the GFA have not been delivered.

Stormont

The Progressive Unionist Party are committed to creating a credible, responsible, fully-functioning devolved government. Since the Northern Ireland Assembly was created as part of the PUP-negotiated Good Friday Agreement, it has suffered from crisis, suspensions and gridlock due to the DUP/Sinn Fein carve up. For Stormont to work it needs parties willing to do what's best for the people - not themselves. We support:

- The retention of 108 MLAs in the Assembly. The DUP are planning to cut the number of elected members to the Stormont Assembly in a bid to consolidate their grip on power. The PUP will actively oppose this proposal as it will lead to the disappearance of smaller parties and independent MLAs. An Assembly with only two or three parties would not be in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland.
- A mandatory coalition. The PUP were instrumental in negotiating the current system of government for Northern Ireland. However, the system is only as good as the parties which use it. The current Sinn Fein/DUP government does not function properly as both parties refuse to compromise or reach agreement on important issues. The Maze stadium, council reform and academic selection problems show we need a mandatory coalition and eventually an effective opposition.
- Greater accountability for Ministers. We propose that if two-thirds of the departmental committee oppose a Minister's proposal it can be put to a full vote of the Executive to ensure it has cross party support.



Westminster



The Progressive Unionist Party will continue to lobby the coalition government to act in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland despite the implications of the current financial crisis. Our party is in regular contact with the British government and we will continue to lobby for a Westminster parliament that is representative and accountable to every person in the United Kingdom. We support:

- A change from first past the post to PR for Westminster elections. The PUP want to see a change from the archaic voting system used currently to PR which creates a House of Commons reflective of how the British public actually votes. While the PUP want to eventually see a Proportional Representation voting system, we support the Alternative Vote method as an acceptable compromise and stepping stone to PR.
- Compulsory voting. British citizens are lucky enough to have the right to elect a democratic government when we consider that millions of people around the world do not have the same luxury. Despite this the UK still suffers from low turnout and voter apathy - especially among certain sections of society. We will lobby Westminster to make voting compulsory so our elected representatives reflect public opinion.
- Sanctions against abstentionist MPs. It is not acceptable that some voters in the UK are disenfranchised by elected MPs refusing to take their seats in Westminster. We demand sanctions against abstentionist MPs including the removal of parliamentary expenses and other benefits.

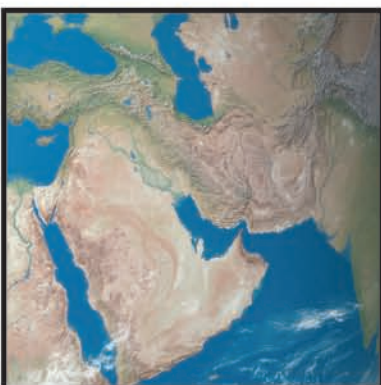
Immigration

The Progressive Unionist Party welcome anyone to Northern Ireland who is willing to work hard, contribute to society and respect our laws and traditions. Our history is rich with positive examples of economic migration. Chinese, Jewish and - more recently - thousands of Eastern Europeans have worked hard, paid taxes and integrated well with their Northern Irish neighbours. While most migration benefits our country the PUP will push to remove those who do not contribute. We support:

- Better relationships between the PSNI, Interpol and international police forces. In recent years we have seen examples of foreign visitors committing serious criminal acts in Northern Ireland. A number of these people had previous convictions in their own country which were not disclosed when they applied to live in Northern Ireland. The PUP call for more in-depth, background checks on those wishing to move to NI.
- More support for long-term economic migrants to help them integrate into Northern Ireland society. As widespread immigration to our country is a recent phenomenon we can learn from mistakes made by authorities in England during the past fifty years. Allowing migrants to congregate in areas where they can't mix with native people hampers their assimilation into the general population. Mixed housing, schooling and community services are vital to ensure we don't suffer from 'ghettoisation' in NI.
- A crackdown on 'welfare migrants' who come here to take advantage of our benefits system. Proof of eligibility and greater checks are vital.



Global Affairs



The Progressive Unionist Party have always taken a keen interest in international affairs. We led the way in negotiations leading up to the Good Friday Agreement and have sent representatives to take part in other conflict transformation discussions in Cyprus, Israel, Sri Lanka, Iraq and South Africa throughout the past fifteen years. We support:

- The right of Israel to protect its citizens from terrorism. The Unionist people of Northern Ireland have always been a staunch ally of Israel as both countries have suffered at the hands of terrorism. Our support is not unconditional and we will continue to encourage the Israeli government to act within international law at all times. We support a two state solution in the Middle East and remain willing to assist the conflict transformation process at any time we are required.
- The continued membership of the European Union. The PUP are aware of the benefits Northern Ireland has received from the UK's participation in the EU. However, we oppose any further surrender of UK sovereignty and will lobby for decisions affecting our country to be made in London.
- Preparing NI's children to work in the 21st century. Most economists agree that the world's future economic powerhouses will be China, India and Brazil. It is vital our children are equipped to work and do business in a world dominated by these three countries. The PUP will lobby to see Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese and Hindi added to school curriculums to compliment the current languages of Spanish, French and German.

Candidates



Brian Ervine - Stormont Assembly (East Belfast)

Brian Ervine is the leader of the Progressive Unionist Party and our Assembly candidate for the East Belfast constituency. He was born and raised in the east of the city and attended Megain Memorial Church School, Avoniel Primary School and Grosvenor High School. He is also a double graduate from Queen's University and worked as a schoolteacher at Orangefield High School for fourteen years. Brian has been involved extensively in the local community of east Belfast and still resides in the area today. He made a conscious decision to remain in East Belfast to show his commitment to the local area and stand alongside his neighbours and community. A dedicated community volunteer Brian cares deeply about the welfare of those most disadvantaged in Northern Ireland society. He wrote and produced the first Ulster-Scots magazine programme on Northern Ireland radio whilst working as a presenter on Belfast Community Radio, has written three plays - 'Haunt of Dragons', 'Somme Day Mourning' and 'Cradle of The Queen' and is a well respected singer, composer and songwriter. He regularly performs at cultural events and concerts around Northern Ireland - and across the British Isles - and recently performed a number of his songs in Stormont's Long Gallery. He is actively involved in his local east Belfast church and strongly believes churches have an important role to play in tackling poverty, disadvantage and marginalisation within working class Unionist communities. Brian is married to Linda - who works as an English teacher at Ashfield Girls' High School in east Belfast. Linda also volunteers in the area helping those most in need.

Dr John Kyle - Belfast City Council (Pottinger)

Dr John Kyle is a councillor for the Pottinger district of Belfast city council and has been serving his constituents since being co-opted after the death of the late David Ervine. A popular GP in east Belfast he has operated his surgery at Hollywood Arches for over twenty years. John is one of the hardest working councillors in Belfast and helped save the Connswater Community Centre when other Unionist parties were pushing for it's closure. Dr Kyle is committed to improving the lives of those in disadvantaged areas of the city and believes that reducing poverty and unemployment leads to better health for all.

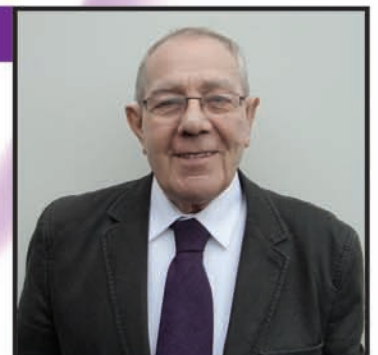


Robert McCartney - Belfast City Council (Victoria)

Robert McCartney is a respected community worker in the Victoria district of Belfast. He is heavily involved in youth work in East Belfast. He works with a variety of community groups and government bodies to improve the lives of those in the Victoria area. He is a member of the Sydenham Community Development Agency, secured funding for the Sydenham Youth Centre, is the chairman of the Inverary Community Centre and is an organiser of the George Best Community Cup. Robert was born and raised in Sydenham and still lives in the area with his wife Amanda and young family. He has worked in the docks for twenty years.

Hugh Smyth - Belfast City Council (Court)

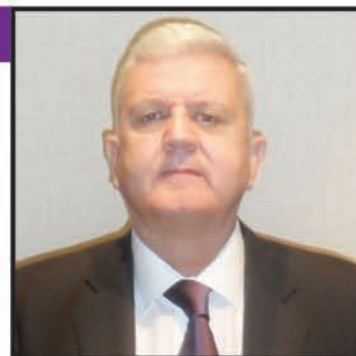
Hugh Smyth is the longest serving councillor on Belfast City Council having served the Court district for over 38 years. He also served in the 1974 Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Convention and has represented Belfast city council as Lord Mayor. Hugh has also received an OBE for his services to his community. He has been happily married for over 40 years to Ellen and continues to live on the Shankill Road where he was born. In the time representing his constituents he has met and worked with John Major, Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, George Bush and other world leaders and politicians.



Candidates

Bill Adamson - Larne Borough Council (Larne Town)

Bill Adamson is a native of Larne and has worked in East Antrim all of his life. He obtained a Masters Degree in Business and is a qualified engineer working as a director of an insulation company. Bill has a long history of voluntary and community work in the town stretching back over twenty years. He is currently Chairman of the North East Peace III Partnership and was previously Vice Chair of the Larne Strategy Partnership. Bill has been instrumental in securing funding for redevelopment in Larne including the recent government investment in the Factory district of the town.

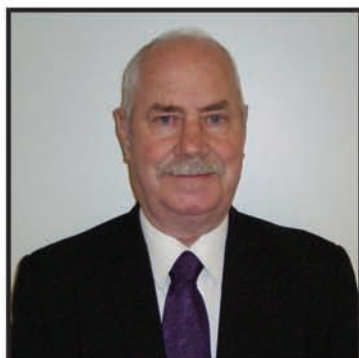


Jason Burke - Castlereagh Borough Council (Central)

Jason Burke is a Queen's University graduate and has lived in the Downshire area of Castlereagh all of his life. He is heavily involved in community work in the Clonduff, Braniel, Downshire and Cregagh areas. Jason aims to tackle the neglect of these areas by Castlereagh Borough Council and improve facilities for the elderly, unemployed, single parents and otherwise disadvantaged. If elected he plans to lobby for a new community centre in Braniel, an expansion of the 'Neighbourhood Watch' scheme in Downshire and road improvements to the busy traffic junction at Greenway shops and Cregagh Road.

Nigel Gardiner - Derry City Council (Waterside)

Nigel Gardiner is a community worker in Londonderry and the PUP deputy party leader. He is the candidate for the Waterside district of Derry City Council and is standing for the first time in this election. He served twenty years in the Ulster Defence Regiment from 1971 1991. He now works full-time as a community project officer dealing with politically motivated prisoners in the Londonderry area. His job also takes him into schools in the North-West where he educates children on the consequences of sectarian violence and interface riots. Nigel looks forward to Londonderry's spell as the UK's City of Culture.



Ken Wilkinson - Antrim Borough Council (Antrim Town)

Ken Wilkinson is a long standing community worker in the Antrim area. He regularly confronts the controversial issues that other mainstream politicians don't discuss. He is outspoken against the illegal drug trade and is a member of the Antrim Community Safety Partnership. He played a leading role in securing funding to open the Drug Awareness Centre (Future 2000) and has regularly campaigned against drug dealers, anti-social behaviour and petty crime in Antrim. A respected representative in his local community, Ken is standing for the Progressive Unionist Party in the Antrim Town district.

Philip Hamilton - Newtownabbey Council (University)

Philip Hamilton is the Progressive Unionist Party representative for the University district of Newtownabbey. He has been a member of the party for over ten years and is a community development officer in the Newtownabbey area. He has worked on many issues affecting the people of the area including social deprivation, crime, parades, interfaces and bonfires. Phil spent most of his working life in the Army Air Corps and completed tours in both Bosnia and Northern Ireland. He is an active campaigner for injured soldiers and those who have left the military and struggled to adapt to everyday, civilian life.





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