

LB6 Joshua Morris-Blake

Agenda item: H.4. Under 18

Which role are you applying for?:

Under 18 Young Greens Non-Portfolio Officer

## Candidate Statement

Hello, fellow middle-class white vegans...

I'm Josh, I live in the Green heartlands of Brighton and am running for the prestigious role of Non-Portfolio Officer for the Under 18 Liberation Group. I'll be honest, it was only last week I became aware of the existence of an Under 18 group, so I can't claim to be an expert of the structural roles it plays within the Young Greens, but perhaps the fact that I was totally unaware of the group shows that we need to reform, restructure and reinvigorate in order to more effectively represent our electorally essential demographic. Despite having the most transformative policies for young people, Greens thus far have failed to inspire enough youngsters, due to 3 main reasons which I would like us to focus on:



Local Party:  
Brighton and Hove

- **Labour hegemony:** Labour is very, very effective at absorbing young voters from the Greens at election times. This can be attributed to their huge media presence and resources which override all the great grassroots work that Greens do. With a smaller budget, we need a smarter, long-term media strategy that inspires and clearly demonstrates to young people why they should vote Green. A step we could take is to more directly engage under 18's in our policy development on relevant issues like education; for example, the Greens' 2019 manifesto promised to "Revive the further education sector to provide a wider choice of academic and vocational learning," yet offered no detail on what these choices would be. This gives us an opportunity engage with GCSE-age students to ask them what reforms they would like to see, and we can then use this to pressure the Greens to implement an education policy for young people, made by young people. This could be an effective step towards ending the myth that Labour is the only party of the youth – whether we think they have better policy or not, this is currently the reality and therefore we need to be more proactive and innovative.
- **Image:** As my introductory line hinted at, this is what we are still seen as. Even here in Brighton, many non-political peers our age see us through this painful stereotype. Showing young people that this is not true is essential, and we can do this by engaging all people from a young age.
- **Professionalism:** Sometimes, we come across as more of a pressure group than a political party. Our campaigning sometimes looks inconsistent and lazy (not just the Young Greens - the Greens' main Twitter account needs major improvement too!) - we make massive statements like 'abolish the Home Office' but then offer no detail as to WHY. If young people develop this idea about us, then they will feel unable to vote for us. Our Under 18 group has to lead by example and display ourselves as a credible political force.

As an NPO it wouldn't be my role to dictate what the Under 18's prioritise, however, I would use my influence to ensure that we look to strategise in a meticulous and professional manner.

I currently study 4 A-Levels (Environmental Science, Geography, Politics and Sociology) and am completing my Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, so have been forced to excel in the art of time-management and organisation. This is a practical skill which I can transfer to the Liberation Group,

ensuring I Get Brexit Stuff Done in an efficient manner. I have recently been involved with the party at the 2019 election, campaigning for the re-election of Caroline Lucas, and during the Covid-19 pandemic have engaged with the brilliant political education sessions run by the Young Greens. I'd like these talks to carry on and use them to engage with the wider youth rather than just with members.

My political areas of 'expertise' are electoral reform (I have a weird obsession with voting systems) and environmental policy. Making a more coherent argument for Proportional Representation would go a long way to tackling the problem of Labour hegemony stated above, and as climate/ecological matters are so important to youngsters, we need to articulate our policy in a clearer, professional manner.

So, if you want a Liberation Group that can liberate the Greens from perpetually frustrating results, vote for Josh Morris-Blake (maybe start a hashtag - #VoteJMB) for Under 18 NPO.

Facebook:

Josh Morris-Blake

Twitter:

@JoshMorrisBlake

Do you self-identify as belonging to this Liberation Group? (Yes/No/Unsure):

Yes