

Green Party goes high-tech

by Tim Brennan

Just suppose ... You need to get in urgent contact with a German Green Euro-MP. You are organising an urgent demonstration against the arrival of toxic waste. You need to get a document to Green Party office before next week, and a postal strike is in the way. You've just heard that Mrs Thatcher is joining the Green Party and you need to fax it to the *Guardian*, but the shop is shut ...

All these could be problems of everyday campaigning, but help is here. With technology that allows home computer users across the globe to talk to each other, Greens are building a fast communications and information system.

Green Party office and a growing number of individual members are joining up with GreenNet, becoming part of an international network with over 3500 users in the environment, peace and human rights movements. Membership gives access to an information net-

work divided into over 250 subject areas, from animal rights to Antarctica, toxic wastes to Nicaragua.

This service could be of great benefit to the Green Party. It means that campaigners can have immediate access to a vast range of information. It is invaluable when a fast reaction is needed to new developments. For instance, next time you need to know exactly what Friends of the Earth has said about something you can find out immediately through GreenNet. Both FoE and Greenpeace put out their press releases on the network.

The party's Policy Committee is planning to use the service to help policy working groups develop their ideas. It is faster than the post, cheaper than long telephone calls, and means that when you do travel to meetings you will be better informed, making the events themselves more productive.

GreenNet is cheaper than most commercial services and can put you in touch with the people you need to talk to - Researchers on the Greenhouse Effect, major Third

World and peace groups, as well as other Green Party members. The basic cost is nine pence for each minute that you are connected up to GreenNet. It can be used by anyone with a home computer, modem and telephone. GreenNet can offer advice on the sort of equipment you need.

GreenNet is a non-profit-making company. Its aim is "to provide organisations working for the environment, peace and human rights movements with a communications capability as good as that available to the government, the military and the multinationals". It really is an appropriate use of technology.

For further details and an application form contact: GreenNet, 26 Underwood Street, London N17JQ. Tel: 01-490 1510. If you're in London they are happy to arrange demonstrations of the system.

The Green Party Office's name on GreenNet is "mendes", after the Brazilian forest campaigner who was murdered, and my own GreenNet name is "tim".