

COP26 cannot be delayed again, Greens warn



Green Party

31 March 2021

- **Jonathan Bartley: “The government still doesn’t seem to have grasped the meaning of the phrase ‘climate emergency’”**

The COP26 climate change summit must go ahead in November, the Greens have warned amid reports that it could be delayed for a second time. [1]

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

“The government still doesn’t seem to have grasped the meaning of the phrase ‘climate emergency’. We have already left it 30 years too late to take urgent global action and we cannot allow the vital UN COP26 to be delayed again.

“We appreciate how important face-to-face meetings are during negotiations, but what is absolutely essential is that we stop delaying these vital talks and start the process of ensuring global emissions are reduced as quickly as possible.

“We would urge the government to start preparing now to make sure it can still be held this year, even if that means a limited number of personal meetings, with good ventilation and social distancing, combined with online meetings. This would enable the conference to take place in November – already a year later than scheduled.

“However, it is vital that we avoid any situation that further marginalises those countries who are most at risk from the climate crisis as they are the ones on the frontline of the battle against climate change.

“If there must be limits on numbers then we call on the government now to set out how it will prioritise those most at risk.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://news.sky.com/story/cop26-climate-change-summit-may-have-to-be-postponed-again-or-radically-changed-due-to-covid-12261820>

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[Greens are clear: Institutional racism in the UK does exist](#)



Green Party

31 March 2021

- **Greens accuse Government of using race commission report to whitewash institutional racism**

The Green Party has condemned the summary of a report from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities as a deliberate attempt to whitewash institutional racism.

The members of the Commission, set up in the wake of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations, were chosen by no. 10 advisor Munira Mirza, and its report confirms her view – and that of the Prime Minister – that the UK is not in the grip of institutional racism.

Cleo Lake, former Lord Mayor of Bristol and the Green Party's candidate for PCC for Avon and Somerset, said:

“Following hard on the heels of measures in the Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill intended to clamp down on protest and ‘speaking out’ against systemic government failures, this report is a further manifestation of a government committed to a strategy of divide-and-conquer rather than social justice and cohesion.

“The Bill is one part of a backlash against the BLM protests; this report is another. The Bill seeks to block people of colour from expressing their rightful outrage at injustice; the report seeks to deny their reality and

signals to white people that they have no need to change their behaviour.

“To dismiss the divisions in this country that stem from British colonial history is to do a huge disservice to the many millions of British people who are trying to relearn, inform themselves, and help build a more equitable society.”

Basing her comments in her decades of experience of working with communities of Afrikan descent in Bristol, Lake continued:

“For our society to heal we need more people to follow the mantra ‘I hear you, I see you, I believe you’ when we, as global majority people, speak of our experiences. This report is yet another attempt to silence us and deny our lived experience of institutional racism.

“The report’s conclusions fly in the face of a series of reports that find that people of Afrikan descent in particular face huge barriers at work, are ten times likely to be in prison, are routinely subjected to vile abuse, and deal with a hostile police force on a daily basis.

“Those reports have clear recommendations. Rather than using a new report to whitewash the reality of institutional racism, the government should act on those recommendations.”

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[Green Party launches local election campaign with pledge to build a Green Recovery](#)



Green Party

- **Jonathan Bartley: “After the long, dark winter of Covid we want to make sure that we bring spring into all our council chambers with new hope for a greener, more caring future”**

The Green Party will today [Wednesday 31 March] launch its local election campaign with a pledge to build a Green Recovery in every community across the country.

Ahead of the local elections on 6 May, the Greens are looking to build on their record results from the last local elections in 2019, which saw the party more than double their number of councillors.[1]

This year, the party is looking to win even more seats and has pledged that each and every councillor will continue the hard work of those currently elected in bringing about a Green Recovery from the coronavirus pandemic which will tackle climate change and reduce inequality.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley will officially launch the campaign in Battersea Park, London, today.

Ahead of the launch, Bartley said:

“At the last local elections the Green Party doubled our number of councillors, which has proved absolutely vital over the last year as they have been the ones leading their communities and working hard to bring about a Green Recovery in their area.

“Greens make change. Whether it be motions to create thousands of jobs in retrofitting homes in Norwich [2], or the Green-led Brighton and Hove Council passing a motion with £27 million of climate action in it [3], we know what it takes to make sure we all recover from this pandemic in a way that offers a better future for everybody.

“After the long, dark winter of Covid we want to make sure that we bring spring into all our council chambers with new hope for a greener, more caring future. This year it is more vital than ever that Greens are elected so that we can fight for a fairer, Greener future for all.”

While the Greens have welcomed others’ support for its Green New Deal, Greens across the country would go further, faster to transform the UK’s housing to make all homes warmer and more energy efficient, revolutionise our transport and rapidly roll out renewable energy across the country. [4]

Hundreds of thousands of low carbon jobs would be created to carry out this work.

Bartley said: “The government is categorically failing to invest sufficiently in the Green sector. It is Green councillors and activists on the ground, working with local communities up and down the country, who are picking up the slack and doing what they can to ensure a green recovery for all.

“It’s vital that local councils have climate in mind as we build the economy back after Covid. More Green councillors means a stronger commitment in all

our council chambers to the climate action that we all know is urgently needed – and to the good, green jobs that this will create.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://campaigns.greenparty.org.uk/local-election-results/>

2

https://twitter.com/jajo_osborn/status/1372138573894418434

3

<https://www.brightonhovegreens.org/2021/02/25/greens-secure-backing-for-a-budget-with-recovery-from-crisis-at-its-heart/>

4

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/04/22/green-new-deal-needed-when-uk-starts-to-reboot-economy-after-coronavirus,-greens-say-on-earth-day/>

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[Greens call for inquiry into government's handling of Covid-19, one year on from start of lockdown](#)



Green Party

23 March 2021

The Green Party has called for a full public and judge-led inquiry into the

government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic on the one year anniversary of the first national lockdown. [1]

In the wake of almost 150,000 Covid deaths [2] and as the successful vaccine rollout means pressure on public services is starting to lift, the Greens have said the government must be held accountable for past mistakes which have left their mark on everybody living in the UK and that we all need to learn lessons for the future.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

"The government's mishandling of this pandemic has resulted in thousands of avoidable deaths and left many families grieving for loved ones who died before their time. We must ensure that we learn the truth about decisions made throughout the pandemic and to ensure that such mistakes are not repeated again.

"Now that the success of the vaccine rollout means we are no longer in the depths of the emergency, there is no reason to delay a public inquiry any further. As time passes, memories fade and the ability to understand exactly what went wrong diminishes.

"There are so many questions the government needs to be accountable for, not least why it took so long to lockdown in the first instance, why it spent billions on a failed test and trace system and why it decided it was safe to open up for Christmas, causing the deaths of thousands more people.

"It will take generations for us to come to terms with what has happened over the last 12 months and we need to begin now to plan a site for commemoration and reflection. We support the National Memorial Arboretum's proposal of a memorial of health workers who lost their lives to Covid [3] as well as the idea of local commemorative woodlands close to all our towns and cities."

The Greens are also calling for the government to start providing the resources now so that every local authority has an effective test and trace system in place, run by local public health authorities, ahead of the lifting of most lockdown restrictions. [4]

Bartley said:

"As we all look forward to the lifting of the lockdown restrictions after Easter, it is vital that we have a functional contact-tracing system.

"While the vaccine will help in eliminating the risk of more people dying from coronavirus, we know that when lockdown lifts the chance of local outbreaks amongst the half of the population that has not been vaccinated increases. The government needs to be allocating funding now to enable local authorities to set up effective test and trace programmes. We've seen how effective our local public and community health teams have been with rolling out the vaccine, we now need to support them to make the vital contact tracing system work effectively."

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronaviruses-23-march-2020>

2

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/deaths>

3

<https://www.thenma.org.uk/visit-us/what%27s-here/the-memorials/memorial-to-covid-19-key-workers>

4

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-52530518>

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[Green Party calls for new vision for armed forces in response to defence review](#)



Green Party

22 March 2021

- **Calls for refocusing on promoting peace and protecting people and places from the effects of climate change**

The Green Party has criticised the government's plans to focus the defence

review away from the needs of citizens and towards robots, drones, and cyber warfare [1], warning the armed forces should instead be used to promote peace and defend people and places from the effects of climate chaos.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has criticised the rationale of both last week's integrated review [2] and the defence review today as being posturing about the power of Global Britain rather than a practical plan to make British people safer.

Bartley said:

"We utterly oppose the decision to encourage a global nuclear arms race by increasing the cap on our warheads. This is a play to defend our seat on the UN Security Council but is no substitute for the geopolitical security we had as part of the strong European bloc.

"We continue to insist that the government lives up to its legal obligation to prevent proliferation by signing up to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."

Bartley also argued for a new purpose for our armed forces, that have performed such an important national role during the pandemic.

"The armed forces have played a crucial logistical role in the pandemic and we are likely to need them in similar roles as climate change threatens more intense weather events.

"It is flesh-and-blood servicepeople who have supported Covid testing and who we will need to provide national resilience as the climate crisis intensifies. Cyber soldiers are no substitute for real soldiers and killer drones are a dangerous development that distances us from the moral responsibility for taking a human life.

"Greens would use our armed services to make peace not war. We would rename the Ministry of Defence as the Ministry for Security and Peace, making the promotion of peace a key foreign policy objective and linking the role of the defence services more closely to the crises that actually threaten global security.

"A central part of their responsibilities would be the defence of people across the world from the effects of climate chaos and dealing with the humanitarian and environmental impacts of climate-related disasters."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56477900>

2

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/969402/The_Integrated_Review_of_Security_Defence_Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf

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