

# Plan for our rivers: Greens say privatise water companies, invest in sewage infrastructure and give regulator real teeth

- Greens highlight poor health of River Wye to argue for “drastic change”
- £12bn infrastructure fund for sewage and water
- £1.5bn boost to environmental regulator Environment Agency
- Cast-iron commitment to renationalise water companies
- Near triple support for farmers for transition towards nature friendly methods

TV personality Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and the Green Party parliamentary candidate for North Herefordshire, Ellie Chowns, will today be testing the River Wye for phosphate levels alongside a group of local campaigners and wild swimmers. The duo will outline The Green Party plan for rivers that will include the nationalisation of our water companies, investing £12bn into our sewage and water infrastructure and to boost the Environment Agency a £1.5bn boost to better regulate.

The River Wye’s ecological status was recently downgraded by Natural England from “unfavourable-improving” to “unfavourable-declining” – evidence, Greens say, that “drastic change” is needed. [Government figures](#) say that 72-74% of the phosphate pollution in the Wye comes from agriculture. According to [CPRE](#) there over 20 million chickens in the river catchment at any one time. Phosphates at unnaturally high levels alongside other nutrients in rivers can result in algal blooms and the death of many species in the river including fish, birds, invertebrates and plants that are vital to the river ecosystem.

The Green Party is calling for a Water Protection Zone around the river to give it a fighting chance to recover.

In addition, The Green Party is calling for a £12bn investment in water and sewage infrastructure to prevent sewage being dumped into our rivers and seas, and a cast iron commitment to nationalise water companies.

The Green Party is also committed to almost tripling support for farmers over the next 5-year parliament to support the transition to nature-friendly farming.

**Ellie Chowns, the Green Party Parliamentary Candidate for North Herefordshire** will today say that:

“We are reminded of just how much this shared resource means to the community and why drastic change is needed. The decline in the Wye’s ecological status is a stark warning that has been ignored for too long. The river has no

voice, but it does have a political manifesto that puts its priorities front and centre. We are here both demand a Water Protection Zone around the River Wye and to put forward a bold vision for how we can protect all of Britain's rivers. We need to tackle sewage pollution through real investment in water infrastructure and putting people before profit by taking water companies back into public hands. And we need to tackle agricultural pollution through proper support for farmers to transition to nature-friendly farming, plus giving the Environment Agency the funding and teeth it needs to enforce the polluter pays principle. With these measures, we can restore our rivers back to health."

**Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall will add:**

"Ellie and I are clear that the only way to end the scandal of our filthy water is to tackle the pollution at source. For the Wye this means addressing the factory farmed elephant in the room, and working closely with farmers to give them the support they need to grow food locally, and in a way that protects the environment. Nationally we need to be bold, and bring to an end the disastrous and unfair experiment with privatisation of a basic human right – clean water. We cannot allow shareholders to profit by extracting money from these disgraceful businesses which completely fail to deliver their obligations to society. And so I fully support the Green Party policy of bringing the water companies back into public ownership."

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## [Greens pledge to end 'dental deserts' with £3bn for new NHS contract](#)

The Green Party has vowed to end Britain's 'dental deserts' by restoring full access to NHS dentistry after years of cuts that left millions unable to get affordable dental treatment.

Elected Greens will push for a new contract for NHS dentists that ensures everybody who needs an NHS dentist has access to one, backed by an additional £3bn for the dentistry budget by 2030.

This will begin to reverse more than a decade of real terms spending cuts and begin to restore the incomes of dentists providing NHS services.

Co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

"In many parts of the country it is now impossible to register with an NHS dentist, and many dentists are de-registering NHS patients to avoid treating them at a loss.

“Too many of us are feeling the consequences: dropping from regular preventative dental visits to only going when we have a problem that needs treatment. Prevention is so much better than treatment, and it’s a national outrage that tooth decay is now the top reason for child hospital admissions.

“Our Green plan for dentists will put the billions into the NHS needed to turn around fourteen years of Conservative failure, and ensure every person in every community will have access to an affordable NHS dentist.

“Green MPs will commit to meeting with the British Dental Association as soon as possible after the election, so that we can pile the pressure on the next government to fix dentistry as a matter of urgency.”

The announcement comes after the British Dental Association (BDA) reviewed the dental policies in each party’s manifesto. (1)

The BDA stated that “meaningful reform needs to go hand in hand with fair funding” and noted the “multi-billion-pound promises” made in the Green Party manifesto.

By contrast, the BDA noted a “modest pot of new money from Labour for 700,000 urgent appointments”, but that Labour’s wider promises on dentistry “have yet to be priced in and will likely hinge on future negotiations.”

Elected Greens are also committed to pushing for all children to have a daily free school meal, made from nutritious ingredients and based on local and organic or sustainable produce. The BDA supports universal free school meals, “to fight the severe impact child hunger and poor nutrition are having on children’s dental health.” (2)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. BDA review of the parties’ manifestos: *“Meaningful reform needs to go hand in hand with fair funding. We’ve seen multi-billion-pound promises from both the Greens and Lib Dems for the NHS. There is a modest pot of new money from Labour for 700,000 urgent appointments, but pledges on reform – “a shift to focusing on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists” have yet to be priced in and will likely hinge on future negotiations.”*

<https://www.bda.org/news-and-opinion/blog/nhs-dentistry-where-we-go-beyond-election-day>

2. BDA manifesto supports free school meals: *“Extend free school meals to every primary school child in England to fight the severe impact child hunger and poor nutrition are having on children’s dental health.”*

<https://www.bda.org/what-we-do/campaigns-and-advocacy/general-election-2024/manifesto>

## **“You can judge a society by how it looks after those in need” says Greens as they promise £20bn social care package**

- Greens will introduce free personal care along the lines successfully brought in by the Scottish Government, to ensure dignity in old age and for the disabled.
- Increase pay rates and introduce a career structure for carers to rebuild the care workforce.
- An additional £3bn to enable local authorities to provide high-quality children’s social care

The Green Party is today highlighting their ‘take greater care’ commitment, pledging better care for millions of people in the care system and those working in it. The Green Party manifesto includes a commitment of £20bn extra a year to ensure free personal care available for all and increased pay rates and a career structure for carers.

Currently there are 150,000 staff vacancies in the care sector. In England there are estimated to be 4.7 million unpaid carers.

The Green Party Communities Spokesperson, Ellie Chowns, said:

“You can judge a society by how it looks after those in need.

“With this test the UK is clearly severely failing and must do better.

“That’s why Greens have committed to invest £20bn a year into social care and will put it on a par with health.

“We believe that health and care services must go hand in hand.

“Investment and an increased priority given to care, will help free up hospital beds and reduce waiting lists.

“The Green Party believes free social care is fundamental to ensuring everyone is shown compassion and dignity at any stage in their lives when they need extra support.”

The Green Party has also pledged greater care of social care workers. Chowns continued:

“There are 150,000 staff vacancies in the care sector and in England an estimated 4.7 million unpaid carers.

“Green MPs will seek to bring together local authorities, trade unions and private providers to ensure increased pay and improved terms and conditions for all care workers.

“The current system is failing some of the most vulnerable in society.

“It is only The Green Party who are being honest about the levels of investment needed to give people the dignity and wellbeing they deserve.”

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## [Labour’s eco policies a “bitter disappointment” say Greens](#)

### 2. [Press Releases](#)

Responding to the [ranking of different party manifestos released today](#) by Britain’s leading environmental groups, Green Party Co-Leader, Carla Denyer said,

“These rankings show what most of us already know.

“Greens are the party that has the strongest fully costed policies for the environment.

“If you want green, then you need to vote Green.

“Labour’s green policies are bitterly disappointing, even in the context of the dire Conservative offering.

“Every single Green vote on 4th July will push the Labour government to be bolder and better on important issues – no more so than on the environment.”

She continued,

“We’ve seen the Labour party U-turn on their once-flagship green policy of £28bn climate investment.

“And that’s before they even get into government.

“The environmental NGOs are clear that Labour’s lack of green funding hamstrings their offering.

“Without being honest about how they’ll fund their climate policies, the Labour manifesto is all talk and no trousers.

“A group of Green MPs will work tirelessly in Westminster to defend against any further Labour U-turns, keep Labour honest, and make the case to invest in our future.”

*An overview of the analysis is available on the websites of [Friends of the Earth](#) and [Greenpeace UK](#).*

24 June 2024 / 21 June 2024 by [Green Party](#)

[Press Releases](#)

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## [Only Greens have plan to give nature a voice](#)

### 2. [Press Releases](#)

Responding to today’s [Restore Nature Now march](#) in London, co-leader of the Green Party Carla Denyer said:

“The march in London today, calling on politicians to prioritise nature and climate, gets our full backing. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Action is essential and needed urgently.

“People from all over the country want to give a voice to nature in this election and Greens are the only party with a plan to fully do that. Green MPs will make it a priority to push for a new Rights of Nature Act.

“Greens are also the only party calling for water companies to be taken back into public ownership so we can end both the scandal of sewage pouring into our rivers and seas and stop billions in profits leaking out to shareholders and fat cat salaries.

“We also want to triple support to farmers over the next parliament so they can make the transition to nature-friendly farming and produce healthy affordable food.

“There would be no new oil and gas licenses under the Greens, and we want to introduce a carbon tax to make polluters pay and provide money to invest in the green transition. Greens have a plan for the UK achieve net zero by 2040 at the very latest.”

## Notes

See our manifesto commitments on Bringing Nature Back to Life: <https://greenparty.org.uk/about/our-manifesto/bringing-nature-back-to-life/>

Full manifesto:  
<https://greenparty.org.uk/about/our-manifesto/2024-manifesto-downloads/>

22 June 2024 / 22 June 2024 by [Andrew Bell](#)

[Press Releases](#)

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