

Amelia Womack speech to Autumn Conference



Green Party

6 October 2018

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Conference, it's an honour to be here in Bristol. A city that back in 1821 gave us the first woman to qualify as a doctor, and whose 1963 bus boycott inspired the UK's First Race Relations Act.

A city with a history of making change – and a future being created now, by our Green councillors and Green Lord Mayor.

It's an honour and privilege too that I stand before you having already served as your deputy leader for the last four years – and am ready to do so for another term. Thank you for putting your faith in me once again.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jonathan and Sian on their election – two formidable Greens who I've already worked with to achieve so much – and I look forward to what we can deliver working together over the next two years.

I am incredibly proud of our dynamic and fearless Party. Of what we achieve against the odds. And I am incredibly proud of the difference each of you makes.

In the Green Party, it's dynamic activists on doorsteps who go out and share the passion and principle behind our unique message.

In the Green Party, it's members who make policy and who live that policy by our actions. Whether that's fearlessly laying our bodies on the line to stop fracking or challenging injustice within our communities.

It's your work in the party that sets the agenda – and your tireless campaigning and drive that inspires and makes me proud every day.

Conference, I want to let you in on a secret.

I am not here to just get a few more Green votes,

I am not here to enable other parties to look progressive by adopting our policies,

I am here to work with you to build the foundations of the first Green government.

It's a big and bold goal but we are part of a big and bold movement, with a thirst for change.

A movement that knows we must radically overhaul our broken economic order – putting the environment at the heart of everything we do.

We are the pioneers with the only possible vision of the future. Who boldly go where others dare not tread. No wonder the ultimate pioneer, Patrick Stewart, Captain of the Starship Enterprise, has recently given us his support. Although I am not sure he realises how we feel about long distance travel!

The spirit of who we are as Green pioneers is unbreakable, immeasurable and tenacious.

Our task is building a politics, not only “for the many” of today – but also for future generations. A politics for humankind, and for the natural world too. That will be achieved by working internationally and collaboratively.

Our task is rebalancing and redefining politics – because the environmental and social crises we face demand nothing less.

I dream of a dynamic, fearless Green government because I cannot tolerate injustice.

Whether that's people without a home forced to sleep on the streets tonight. The Windrush generation who gave their lives to the UK and got threatened with deportation in return. And a generation of young people who still do not receive equal pay.

Right now if you are under 18, you receive £1.70 less minimum wage than someone between the ages of 18 and 21.

So today I am proud to announce our policy of equal pay for everyone under 21.

If we want to build a working environment that is fair for everyone, we have to make things fair from your very first job onwards. So if you are under 21, the Green Party promises you won't lose out because of your age and we promise you equal pay for equal work.

It doesn't stop there though.

A fair workplace has to be fair for apprentices as well. So today we are pledging official support for a living wage for apprentices.

The current minimum wage for apprentices is £3.70 an hour. An unfair sum, we can all agree.

Meanwhile, three quarters of young people polled this year have said that low pay would put them off taking an apprenticeship. It is no wonder that we have a skills shortage in this country.

It is time that the political class woke up:

To the value of investing in training and apprenticeships.

To the hardships facing young people today.

And to the realities of pay inequality in Britain.

While other politicians seem to have recently discovered the looming climate crisis, we have long known that you cannot separate social, economic and environmental injustice.

The climate catastrophe is affecting everyone, even the rich, but those causing most of the emissions are outsourcing the damage. To poorer countries and future generations.

This summer – fires were burning in the arctic circle. Floods washed away homes and lives in India. Storms raged all across the world.

You'd have to be wilfully ignorant to not see that climate chaos is upon us.

I'd like to think people have woken up to the climate emergency.

That Caroline Lucas will never again have to walk around Westminster, with a big green question mark to challenge the total absence of the environment in the media's election coverage.

I'd like to think that Rupert Reed won't ever again have to explain to the BBC and other media why giving air time to climate deniers isn't balanced debate – it is dangerous.

But conference, whilst together we have already achieved remarkable things, we need to do more.

Although they are welcome – commitments on everything from reducing plastic and food waste, to investment in green energy, simply do not add up to the transformation we need to secure a future for our planet.

On the one hand – we are facing an ecological crisis.

On the other – we have Michael Gove acting all super hero because he's carrying a kecup to cabinet meetings.

Conference, the Green Party is needed more than ever before.

Because only we truly recognise that whilst our individual choices make a difference, it's deep seated structural change that will deliver a safe, green and just future.

The change we need is about looking forward. Not into the rearview mirror.

Looking towards a resilient, diverse economic system.

Be a party that is pro-business – because business, like all of us, needs a planet.

Where would we be today, if those who profited from investment in Deepwater Horizon had been made responsible from the very start for the colossal public risk they were creating?

That disaster took the lives of eleven workers, killed off fishing and tourism industries, and as we now know, altered the very building blocks of ocean life.

Corporate social responsibility has to mean more than a glossy brochure and good intentions.

That's why today I am committing to work with business to bring forward policies that will reward green investment and innovation, outlaw the environmental pirates and build a future for pioneers.

A radical Green economy isn't just about the state and the individual.

It embraces start-ups and co-operatives, land trusts and community interest companies, social enterprises, enterprising communities, new models of worker ownership and things we haven't even begun to imagine.

It fearlessly reimagines business as a force for good, for creativity, with a positive role to play – in an economy where wealth is shared and our environment enhanced.

Politics needs the Green Party because we are always pushing the boundaries of what it means to be radical and forward facing. And we will continue to do so, even as others cherry pick our ideas.

We will also continue to uniquely define politics as so much more than putting a cross on the ballot paper.

Greens are at the heart of communities pushing back against the construction of HS2. Against the Wylfa nuclear plant on Anglesey or, in my own community, the toxic sludge being dumped into Cardiff Bay from Hinkley Point.

Where abhorrent inequalities are in evidence – Greens will be there.

Where injustices are being perpetrated – Greens will be there.

Where our environment is under attack by powerful moneyed interests – you can bet that Greens will be there.

Speaking out.

Fighting back.

Leading the resistance.

Politics for us is inspiring people to hope.

Hope allows us to believe change is always possible. And Green changes everything.

The power of every small action reminds me of the regular trips I used to take as a child just down the road to Weston-Super-Mare to visit family. We'd spend our time scrambling over the rocks, eating ice cream at Anchor Head and wandering to the Pier to try our luck on the arcade machines.

I'd put my 2ps into the machine. Wait to see if it was my coin that would tip the balance. And watch as those couple of coins hung just over the edge.

You'd stare at it, knowing that the next person who came along could be in for that big win, and it might not be you.

I often see activism like those machines, it takes just one 2p piece for a win – but it's only made possible by all the people before you who did their part to tip the balance. That's what it's like to be a member of this party. That's what it's like to create political change.

Every Green electoral win comes not just as a result of a single great campaign, but as a result of the hard work of people like you bringing others over to our way of thinking. It is that work that tips the balance.

And the balance is starting to tip well and truly in our favour. Conference we now have a record number of Green councillors and please join me in a round of applause for our newly elected councillors in Peterborough, in Lambeth, in Cannock Chase, in Trafford, in Knowsley, in Richmond upon Thames, in Burnley, Birmingham, Ryegate and Banstead, in Sheffield, Solihull and Worcester.

Small actions can change history.

2018 marks one hundred years after the vote was won for some women. The words of Christabel Pankhurst seem more poignant than ever:

“We are here to claim our right as women, not only to be free, but to fight for freedom. That is our right as well as our duty”.

The Government marked this historic milestone by issuing a pardon to all the suffragettes imprisoned and force fed for fighting for their rights.

Then, just eleven days ago, three activists were imprisoned for taking on the

destructive fracking industry.

I want to thank them for their fearless principled actions.

I want to thank the Greens up and down the country who have been at the heart of the anti-fracking movement.

And I want to tell the government that, like the suffragettes, these people are the heroes of this story.

That we cannot wait another 100 years before we recognise those on the front line of environmental destruction are freedom fighters not criminals. That we must ban fracking and must Free the Three.

In the darkness, we need to light candles of hope.

And we must continue to make the case that democracy didn't end on 23rd June 2016. Whether you voted leave or remain, you have a right to still be heard.

We must do whatever we can to stop our country crashing out with no deal

because it's increasingly clear that this Tory Government, would rather wreck our economy and society than trust the people with their own future.

We must bring this question back to the people.

We must build a genuine People's Vote.

In the darkness we need to hold onto what we believe. And after what's been a tough summer for our party I take some inspiration from former President Obama, and I quote:

"The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness."

The Green spirit that surges through each of us is enduring.

And as we lay the foundations for a future Green Government, as we stand on the shoulders of the giants that have achieved change before us – whether it be big or small, whether they realise it or not – we reaffirm our belief that tomorrow will be better because of what you, I, all of us – do today.

Thank you conference.

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Green Party

5 October 2018

Check against delivery

JB

Thank you Cleo.

It's great to be back in Bristol. Where we are showing how Greens on a council can change everything.

The real opposition.

Leading when it comes to the big ideas. And less than 2 years away from taking City Hall.

SB

Conference, today we are putting the other parties on notice.

To the Lib Dem's – we are ready to take your place as England's third party.

To Labour – thanks for listening. Where Greens lead others follow. We're the first to congratulate you on your journey. From being 'intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich' to standing up to the utter nonsense that was "greed is good".

But Labour's leaders still have a lot to learn from the Green Party. They

still have to drop that old 20th century notion that says 'growth is good'.

Greens put real prosperity at the heart of our policies. A real transition to a healthy economy that stays within the environment's limits because what else can it do?

Greens want an end to airport expansion. Not at City Airport, not at Heathrow, not at Gatwick or Bristol, Labour have failed on this.

Greens only support clean energy, but Labour won't give up on fossil fuels or nuclear.

Greens say shut down the bomb factories of BAE and build for the future – Labour would renew Trident, and put billions into military hardware, nuclear weapons, that we cannot ever use.

And so many times it's been the Greens alone standing up for freedom of movement in Europe, just as we stood up for refugees and migrants and said 'we welcome you'

Conference, time after time Greens are the real alternative. We go further, we do it better – and Labour should expect us to challenge them and to keep getting stronger.

JB

And then there's the Tories. Reckless and cruel.

From gambling with peace in Northern Ireland to the despicable treatment of the Windrush generation.

Cut after cut. From cradle to grave. Children's centres, schools, youth services, community centres, libraries, social care.

And then they have the audacity to say austerity is over when the majority of welfare cuts are still to come.

Conference we spoke up about austerity when everyone else stayed silent – and we say reverse the cuts which are destroying people's lives.

And scrap universal credit.

Their big new idea? A festival of Brexit Britain.

A festival of Brexit Britain!

Roll up to see the world's longest lorry queue, a parade of empty shops and pin the blame on the Remainder.

A festival where you can refuse to pay the entrance fee and then demand

unlimited access to all the attractions.

Conference. We all know what is driving Brexit. This pitiful charade is being engineered so the Tories can say they ended Freedom of Movement.

Sacrificing people's lives and futures.

It's not just cruel, it's not just reckless, it's no way to govern a country.

And Conference, it is dangerous.

It has paved the way for the rise of the far right in our communities and on our streets.

And let's be clear. If Brexit does go ahead, deal or no deal, we will have to stand firmer than ever.

A new wave of attacks on the poor and the powerless. A war on human rights, civil liberties, workers and our environment.

Opening the floodgates to a new tide of racism and nationalism.

What's the point of beating the National Front, the EDL and the BNP – if you then bow your knee to UKIP?

SB

We have all watched in dismay as the right have rioted in Germany, taken Cabinet seats in Austria, and promoted 'Swexit' for Sweden.

But our sister parties in Europe are showing us the way. From the German Greens standing up to the extreme AFD, to the Dutch Greens running on a pro-migrant platform.

We stand up for migrants not only for their economic value. We stand firm in the belief that migration is a gift to us all, which enriches all our lives,

Greens reject the myth of 'skilled' and 'unskilled migrants'. Migrants are not just workers – they are our neighbours, friends, families.

Greens are best when we are internationalists – when we recognise that borders are created by people, and that they can be torn down, as well as put up.

Our country rejected and fought the hard right and Fascism 80 years ago and we will not allow their poisonous politics to take hold in Britain again.

Conference, there is a battle going on to defend the soul of our country and it's time to pick a side.

JB

Thank goodness for Caroline Lucas.

A shining light in Parliament – and a thorn in the side of the Government every single day.

Caroline, it has been a privilege to work alongside you. You have shown the importance of having a green on every council, on every assembly and in every Parliament. You've led the demand for a People's Vote. You've led this party, and this country.

Your voice rings louder and truer than any other. Thank you.

SB

And what about those who think a new party is the answer? That yet more vapid centrism is the solution to the problems we face?

We say – think again.

That's what got us into this mess. Stare hard into the so-called centre ground and all you can see is compromise, timidity and more of what has already failed.

It's not a vision.

And it's that muddled middle ground that allowed the bankers free rein. The planet to burn. And the Far Right to rise.

Well Conference it belongs in the past.

The future demands change. It demands politics with passion. Radical common sense, for the common good – what the Greens do best.

And far too many of the people pushing a new centrism are doing so as some kind of alternative to Brexit. This shows just how little they have learned from the vote to leave.

The politics of centrism. The blairite consensus is exactly what led to so many people and places feeling forgotten and blaming Europe.

Can't they see that people wanted real change?

The Green opposition to leaving the EU has the real revolution people are crying out for built in.

And when we get a People's vote we'll fight twice as hard to make sure we have that revolution when the Brexit hurricane has passed.

We were the first party to call clearly for a People's Vote and we've played a key part in building the campaign.

In the London Assembly the Greens proposed the motion that brought Labour members together with us and pushed the Mayor of London off his fence.

Green MEP Molly Scott Cato has dug forensically into the dirty money that bent our democracy to breaking point in 2016.

Just as for nearly 20 years Green MEPS have stood up so fiercely for our values, and for everyone's rights, showing the difference Greens make.

Thank you Keith, Jean and Molly for all you have done.

And it isn't over yet.

It's in our hands, and with our help, a People's Vote feels absolutely unstoppable.

JB

Conference Green politics will never be confined to parliamentary assemblies or council chambers.

It must also be outside banging on the doors.

To change everything we must be willing to put our bodies on the line.

That's why on Monday I stood outside Chelmsford Crown Court as fifteen of the bravest people in this country filed in to face a judge and jury who could send them to prison for life.

Their alleged crime? Stopping a deportation flight.

The Stansted 15 didn't just stop the flight taking off. They didn't just give people a chance to appeal and stay. They didn't just put their bodies on the line.

The Stansted 15 acted as our conscience. The conscience of every person in the country who believes that Britain is better than to shackle people and deport them into danger.

People from the very tip of our northern shores to the foot of Cornwall.

People who could but for the accident of birth be my mother, my father, my brother, my sister.

People who believe that no one should be torn from their families, stripped of their livelihoods and strapped to their seats on these brutal charter flights.

The Stansted 15 are not criminals. They are human rights defenders. They are heroes.

And today I call on the Crown Prosecution Service to see sense and drop the charges against them.

Confernce the hypocrisy of those who celebrate the suffragettes and the anti-apartheid activists in one breath, but then turn their backs on those who fight for human rights today, is breathtaking.

We should be under no illusions that our civil liberties and our freedom to protest are under threat.

From those opposing the environmental vandalism of high speed rail to those fighting against new, dirty opencast mines.

Today we stand on the shoulders of so many giants. And we stand today on the shoulders of the three men who last week were jailed for their opposition to fracking.

Richard Roberts, Simon Blevins and Rich Loizou. You are on the right side of history and you have our thanks and deepest gratitude. You are environmental rights defenders and today we say that fracking must be banned and you must be set free.

Throwing people in prison is a dying industry's desperate death rattle.

But they can't arrest the whole of Lancashire.

It was a pleasure to see so many come for the green week of action at Preston New Road.

We are winning the fight against fossil fuels. And Our victory is inevitable.

Police may have dragged us away from Kirby Misperton but it was Third Energy that left with its tail between its legs.

We evicted Europa Oil and Gas from Leith Hill.

We booted Banks Group from Druridge Bay.

We are going to kick Cuadrilla out from Lancashire.

And I have a message for all the frackers. Your days are numbered. Fossil fuels must stay in the ground and we won't stop until your dirty industry is thrown in the dustbin of history.

SB

Conference, it's four months since the leadership elections began.

Thank you to everyone who stood and spoke so positively about their passion for our party.

More new members signed up in July than at any time since the last general election.

We are honoured to be your new co-leaders with the job of showing the country how Green politics can change everything.

And we extend a huge welcome to everyone who has joined!

Congratulations to Amelia too. Our members backing her for a third term as deputy leader is a real endorsement for her tireless work, the way she campaigns so fiercely for equality, leading our work on fighting cuts and fighting misogyny.

And come rain or shine Amelia is out working with local parties, inspiring activists and supporting election campaigns all across England and Wales.

Thank you Amelia.

JB

Conference, one thing that also became clear during the leadership elections is that we need to be better as a party in the way we relate to one another.

We need to be willing to listen to those we disagree with. And when we disagree, we should disagree well.

We are proud of our policies on free speech. On peacebuilding, conflict resolution and restorative justice.

But let us lead the way by our actions, not just point in the right direction.

Let's pledge today to be the good in any argument, not just the right. To be the change we want to see.

SB

Conference, our members code of conduct, tells us to assume the best of each other, in all our interactions.

So let's do our vital work together with the right generosity and integrity.

Let's work for the common good, with ethics.

Let's make decisions by seeking consensus

Let's always demand respect – for opponents as well as our allies.

Because conference, Greens stand against all hatred.

Against Transphobia, biphobia and homophobia. Against disablism, racism, islamophobia and antisemitism. And against misogyny, sexism and patriarchy. And we must do so together in solidarity.

JB

Since the last conference the Holistic Review Commission has been working day and night to review our parties structures and practices. It has been a huge, complex – and long overdue – task.

A huge thank you to each and every member of the commission today. You have our support.

Conference, let's keep the party moving forward in every way.

In June, at the Black Cultural Archives just off Windrush Square in Brixton, I was proud to launch a new fund in memory of Deyika Nzeribe, who was our candidate for Mayor of Manchester. The fund will support candidates from ethnicities that are under-represented.

Among those attending was Donald Trump's nemesis Magic Magid – our grand Lord Mayor of Sheffield – who is showing us exactly how to shake things up.

We need to invest in the next generation of Green leaders. We need more chances for new people to get the skills they need to develop and shine, with more access to Campaign School, In It To Win It and the Young Greens amazing 30under30 programme.

Let's build up a team for each region – ready to hit the ground running when by-elections are called.

Conference, when Greens get elected we change everything. That's why we are planning for a shadow cabinet with a wealth of strong, challenging green voices holding the Government to account.

Showing why the Department for Work and Pensions should be renamed the office for welfare and wellbeing. Why the Home Office should become the department of security and welcome. And why the Treasury should be transformed into the ministry for economic transformation.

SB

Conference, we are all ambitious for our party. And we are right to be.

This May saw our best local election results ever. We have a record number of councillors. We made stunning breakthroughs on 6 new councils. Trafford, Peterborough, Knowsley, Richmond, Birmingham and Burnley.

Taking seats from Conservatives and Labour in equal number.

And what a win in Lambeth! London Greens are now the official opposition on Lambeth council after Jonathan was elected with four new gains. Our wins broke open Labour's complacent, one party state in style.

Labour tried to wipe Greens out.

How they tried. They had MPs down to campaign. They had the Mayor of London down. But they could not keep the Greens down.

I am so pleased to see in the hall today Sandy Hore-Ruthven who has just launched his campaign to be next mayor of Bristol.

We need someone leading this city with the courage to invest in our future – well done and good luck Sandy!

Friends we have Greens elected to 68 local authorities holding them to account. We hold the balance of power in places like Stroud, the Forest of Dean and Worcester.

But the next local elections are just seven months away. We will be defending a record number of councillors, and we want to win a record number of new seats too.

We are on our way to becoming the country's third party.

So let's hit the streets, knock on doors, and start those conversations, that will get a Green voice on every council.

JB

Conference, every Green who stands for election. Every Green who campaigns. Every Green in the Town Hall, in the Assembly or Parliament brings about change.

And the Green Party changes lives.

Earlier this year I went to campaign for Rosamund Kissi-Debrah, our Lewisham by-election candidate.

Together we visited her daughter's memorial outside the children's ward at University Hospital.

The memorial is made up of a thousand paper cranes. Each individually decorated by her school friends. A Japanese legend says that anyone who folds a thousand origami cranes will be granted a wish.

Rosamund's wish is that the Government wakes up to the air pollution epidemic and takes action.

Her daughter Ella was nine when she died of breathing difficulties. She had visited hospital 27 times in the preceding three years. Her final admission happened during one of the worst air pollution episodes in London.

Conference, it is green voices that put air pollution on the agenda, when no one else was talking about it. It is Green voices that are pushing it up the agenda now.

And every Green Voice calling for a country wide car free day, a new Clean Air Act, clean air zones, an end to waste incineration, no more road building and investment in walking and cycling, is helping Rosamund's wish to come true.

SB

Conference, let me tell you about the ways our bright Green ideas shine through and win.

From 20mph speed limits to community renewable energy. Look out soon for rent controls, the end of immigration detention, and road pricing to clean up our air.

These ideas, radical now, will seem so normal in a few years, mark our words.

We are already winning the battle of ideas in London,

The Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan was not going to do anything to plug the huge gaps from cuts in council youth services – he said it wasn't his job.

That is until we got involved!

Thanks to our pressure we now have £45 million going back into youth workers, projects and youth centres in London.

It took even more pressure, at all levels, to get the Mayor to change his mind and back ballots for residents on estates facing redevelopment and demolition.

And having won democracy for estates, now we want to win more rights for private renters.

To end section 21 notices – the most simple change, removing a clause from

the Housing Act so that no-fault evictions cannot happen.

So that renters who pay the rent and want to stay can't just be turfed out.

It's always a fight but we will always stick up for the fact that Housing is a human right.

Like our Brighton and Hove councillors David Gibson and Tom Druitt. Homeless people there now have a secure overnight shelter thanks to their courage and determination.

Conference, when we get elected and when we work with campaigners and communities, we can always win these battles. It's what Green politics does best.

It's why so many of you joined, it's why I am stood here today, and it's why together we can win more arguments and change so much more.

JB

Conference, we need fundamental change and we need it right now.

This summer's heatwave must be a wake up call.

Climate change should be on the front page of every newspaper, every day.

And conference, we won't debate with climate deniers.

There isn't time.

The UN warned just last week that the biggest enemy is not denial – but complacency. We are nowhere near to doing enough.

And we won't succeed by thrashing around with the same economic settlement that has failed for so long.

The scale of this crisis demands nothing short of system overhaul.

The decisions we make today dictate our tomorrow.

That's why we must say a firm "no" to airport expansion and road building, and reject the vanity projects of HS2 and Hinkley. And say "yes" instead to a renewable energy revolution, a local transport revolution, and the economic transformation that we so desperately need.

And we also need to get real about wealth redistribution.

Conference did you know that there was just two percent difference in the tax and spending plans of the other major parties at the last election? Just two

percent!

Rather than shift wealth from top to bottom, both parties are entrenching inequality, and levels of consumption and growth that are unsustainable.

The problem is not that there isn't enough wealth. The problem is that the wealth is in the wrong hands.

And conference it requires boldness to say it. And then it requires the political will to make change happen.

So we're saying it now. It's time to shift away from the narrow obsession with Gross Domestic Product, it's time for real, effective wealth distribution and it's time to reprogramme our economy to put people and planet first.

SB

18 months ago, Caroline and Jonathan stood before you and floated the idea of a 4 day working week.

I have never seen a Green Party proposal capture the public imagination so quickly.

Since then, the momentum for this idea has grown and grown, with Frances O'Grady, the latest to support our call at the TUC conference.

Just this week the Communication Workers Union won a cut in hours for Royal Mail workers without any loss of pay.

Demonstrating how bright Green ideas can bring about real change, when we put them forward with passion.

Well now we want to go further.

JB

It's time to shift away from the culture which sees us work harder and harder for longer and longer, often without reward or satisfaction.

And to recognise that true freedom will only be found when people have more control of their time and how it is spent.

That is why we are announcing the idea of a new 'free time index'. Greens want the next Budget, and every future Budget, to include a new economic indicator that measures people's leisure time.

Time when they are not at work – or doing work on a long commute. Free time to have a family life, relax, and pursue the things they care about.

It should be an aim of Government to see a yearly increase in this Free Time Index, so that the quality of time which is truly our own becomes the real measure of wellbeing.

SB

And there's much more to do. People need to thrive and grow while they are at work. Lifelong learning should be available to everyone.

Yet current employment law only allows workers in companies with over 250 employees to ask for unpaid training leave.

It's pathetic

Greens would change all that, so no-one has to feel stuck in one job for life.

All workers should be able to grow and learn throughout their careers, get trained in the things they need to know for their next job, improve how they do the one they have, or learn a new skill or trade.

Today we are promising to fight for paid training leave for every worker.

Conference with the right political will we can transform employment into more than just work.

Spanish workers have a right to training leave. And we should have it too.

SB

Conference –

The Prime Minister insists there will be no election in the coming months. She's very clear on that.

But with her track record, that's exactly why we are getting the party ready right now for a general election.

We know that Green parties all over the country have been selecting candidates but we want to see more of these reports every day when we come into the office.

We want to see more of you – our brilliant, diverse, eloquent, talented members – selected and on those ballot papers.

We aim to stand a record number of candidates and we want to give voters in every constituency the chance to vote Green.

JB

Conference – our influence grows when we win.

A green vote is the most powerful vote anyone can cast. And change comes from winning every vote we can.

Every green vote amplifies our voice and our ideas and makes others sit up and listen.

Every green vote sends a message. So let's get out on our streets, knock on every door and fight for every last vote to win the change we need to see.

JB

Tell them there is only one party that believes everything must change.

That has the radical, common sense policies people are crying out for.

That there is a clear choice between the change that the Green Party is fighting for and the timid tinkering of the rest.

That only one party wants to scrap Trident and put the money into healthcare.

Only one party would scrap Ofsted, endless testing and league tables, and put children back at the centre of our education system.

Scrap Nuclear power, arms trade subsidies and fossil fuel subsidies. Bring in a frequent flier levy not bigger airports.

Only one party truly believes in localism and creating a zero waste economy.

And only one party will make Britain beautiful again, halt the destruction of the natural world, stop the badger cull and extend the hunting act.

SB

Only one party has committed to the full reinstatement of the NHS.

And to halving the prison population.

Only one party will clean up deadly air pollution with the right urgency, and make places fit to walk and cycle.

Only one party believes that every home should be a powerhouse.

That people with a right to secure housing are free people.

That a planning system fit for purpose puts people first not developer profits.

A party that is uncompromising on freedom of movement and welcomes refugees and migrants.

That believes our future lies in building bridges not walls

JB

Only one party rejects the love affair with growth, and puts a stable, resilient economy and the battle against climate breakdown first.

Only one party refuses to measure economic success with the blunt instrument of GDP but looks at real wellbeing.

We're the only ones who will truly shift the wealth from top to bottom with a wealth tax.

The only ones who believe we should scrap sanctions, and universal credit, and bring in a universal basic income.

And only one party is committed to transforming working life and cutting down our working week.

SB

We're clear what we stand for. And we know you're ready to stand for it too.

Greens pick a side.

We know that the world we need to build means changing everything, and we're not afraid to say that.

With Greens in the room the change we need has a voice and that world becomes possible.

And together conference – with you in this room – we can win.

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Greens call for paid training leave for workers



Green Party

5 October 2018

- * Green co-leaders Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley give first speech to Autumn Conference
- * Berry and Bartley announce support for paid training leave for workers as part of vision to overhaul world of work
- * Sian Berry: “People need to be supported to thrive and grow while they are at work”
- * Greens also reaffirm ambition to become England’s third party
- * Jonathan Bartley: “Today we are putting the other parties on notice – it’s our ambition to become the third party in Britain”

In their first speech to Green Party Autumn Conference [1] new Green co-leaders Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley will pledge paid training leave for workers.

The policy would enable workers to learn new skills or pursue personal development within working hours, putting lifelong learning at the heart of employment.

The announcement is part of the party’s plans to revolutionise the work of work, and follows Berry and Bartley’s call for a Free Time Index to measure how much leisure time people in Britain have [2]

Research has found that investing in training and personal development has the potential to decrease staff turnover and encourage career progression

within the company. [3]

In their speech to Autumn Conference Berry and Bartley will also set out their vision for the party including the ambition to replace the Liberal Democrats as England's third party.

Sian Berry, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say (check against delivery):

"People need to be supported to thrive and grow while they are at work. Lifelong learning should be available to everyone. Yet current employment law only allows workers in companies with over 250 employees to ask for unpaid training leave. [4]

"Greens would change all that, so no-one has to feel stuck in one job for life. All workers should be able to grow and learn throughout their careers, get trained in the things they need to know for their next job, improve how they do the one they have, or learn a new skill or trade.

"Today we are promising to fight for paid training leave for every worker. With the right political will we can transform employment into more than just work."

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say (check against delivery):

"Our influence grows when we win – so today we are putting the other parties on notice. It is our ambition to become the third party in Britain.

"Every green vote amplifies our voice and our ideas and makes others sit up and listen. Every green vote sends a message. So we will get out on our streets, knock on every door and fight for every last vote to win the change we need to see."

ENDS

For more information contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

Notes:

1. The full speech will be available at at 2.15pm:
<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/>
Green Party members will soon gather in Bristol for Autumn conference to hear from the party's new co-leaders Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry, vote on party policy, and debate issues from climate change to Brexit. Green Party Autumn Conference will be held from 5 to 7 October 2018 at Bristol City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR.
Co-leaders' speech by Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry: 2pm, Friday 5 October 2018.
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2018/10/05/greens-to-call-for-measure-of-nation%E2%80%99s-free-time/>
3. <https://www.go2hr.ca/training-development/employee-training-is-worth-the-investment>
4. <https://www.gov.uk/training-study-work-your-rights>

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[Greens to call for measure of nation's free time](#)



Green Party

5 October 2018

*** New Green co-leaders to announce commitment to Free Time Index at Autumn Conference in Bristol**

*** Sian Berry: "True freedom will only be found when people have more control of their time"**

*** Jonathan Bartley: "The Government must aim for a yearly increase in the Free Time Index so time off becomes the real measure of wellbeing"**

The Green Party will call for a new economic indicator which measures people's leisure time.

New co-leaders Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley are set to announce their party's commitment to a Free Time Index in their speech to Autumn Conference on Friday 5 October [1].

The new indicator would count the number of hours people spend outside of work and commuting, and be published once a year by the Government as part of the Autumn Budget.

Berry and Bartley will call for this new indicator to replace GDP as a measure of wellbeing. It is their first policy announcement since being elected co-leaders of the party on September 4 this year. [2]

The announcement follows Green Party policy for a four day working week which was announced at Spring Conference in 2017 [3], and will expand work to ensure people are given a better work life balance and adapt to the changing ways of working.

Research has found links between free time and happiness. Studies have shown that focusing on free time rather than money makes people happier [4], while people who choose to spend money on things which free up leisure time are happier than those who spend it on material goods [5].

Sian Berry, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say (check against delivery):

"It's time to shift away from the culture which sees us work harder and harder for longer and longer, often without reward or satisfaction. And to recognise that true freedom will only be found when people have more control of their time and how it is spent.

“That is why Greens want the next Budget, and every future Budget, to include a new economic indicator that measures people’s leisure time.”

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say (check against delivery):

“The Free Time Index would count the hours people are not at work – or doing work on a long commute. The time to have a family life, relax, and pursue the things they care about.

“It should be an aim of the Government to see a yearly increase in this Free Time Index, so that the quality of time which is truly our own becomes the real measure of wellbeing.”

Notes:

1.

Diary note: Green Party Autumn Conference 2018

Green Party members will soon gather in Bristol for Autumn conference to hear from the party’s new co-leaders Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry, vote on party policy, and debate issues from climate change to Brexit.

Green Party Autumn Conference will be held from 5 to 7 October 2018 at Bristol City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR.

Co-leaders’ speech by Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry: 2pm, Friday 5 October 2018.

Press

registration:<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/conference/press-conference.html>

2.<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2018/09/04/green-party-announces-jonathan-bartley-and-sian-berry-as-new-leaders/>

3.<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/04/03/green-party-to-investigate-three-day-weekends/>

4.<http://uk.businessinsider.com/is-it-more-important-to-have-more-time-or-more-money-2016-6?r=US&IR=T>

5.<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-40703519>

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[Greens respond to decision to jail anti-fracking protesters](#)



Green Party

26 September 2018

Responding to the news that four environmental campaigners have been jailed for peacefully resisting fracking in Lancashire [1], Keith Taylor, Green Party MEP and a vocal critic of the policing of fracking protests, said:

“The frack free four are heroes. These people put their lives on hold to defend our environment and climate from the destruction imposed on it by a government blindly committed to fracking at any costs. The latest cost being the liberty of three peaceful protesters whose only crime is resorting to peaceful direct action to resist an industry after every democratic route of opposition was ignored and overturned by the government. The people of Lancashire and their democratically elected representatives repeatedly said no to fracking.”

“It has been almost a hundred years since Britain jailed its last environmental campaigners. Since then, the theory goes, we have developed into a mature liberal democracy that can accommodate dissent. Today’s decision blows that myth wide-open; authoritarianism has become a favourite tool of a minority government that lacks the public’s support to force through its environmentally destructive agenda by any other means. Any government that conspires with the dirty fossil fuel industry against its own people is rotten to the core.”

“Dissent is not a crime in any country with a political system fit to be called a democracy. Consequently, the sentences handed to the frack-free four are chilling.”

Notes to the editor

1. <https://twitter.com/ruthhayhurst/status/1044900650998517760>
2. Keith has been calling for a review of the policing of fracking and drilling operations across the UK <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jul/10/police-tactics-at-fracking-protests-need-urgent-review-says-mep>

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