

# Green Party reveals new team of spokespeople



# Green Party

7 June 2021

- **Thirteen spokespeople ready to reach new voters in lead up to General Election**
- **Remits include the natural world, global solidarity and citizen engagement**
- **Co-leader Jonathan Bartley says: “These aren’t just spokespeople, these are megaphones for a movement”**

The Green Party of England and Wales has revealed its updated team of spokespeople, ready to reach new voters in the lead up to the next General Election. [1]

The 13 spokespeople will stand alongside the leadership team as experts with lived experience of their areas of advocacy, and with track records of being embedded into grassroots movements on the ground.

Following the landmark election results in May, the new team of spokespeople will play a pivotal role in reaching new voters in every corner of the country, putting forward fresh thinking and bold solutions for the problems we face together.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley accompanied the new spokespeople in Calthorpe Community Garden in Kings Cross, London at 10.00 on Monday 7 June, to celebrate the announcement of the new team.

Bartley said:

“When people get involved in the Greens, it’s because we have a deep passion for the issues that we care about.

“Our spokespeople are embedded into networks of grassroots activists and people who have the solutions to the problems we face, whether that’s the collapse of our ecosystems or the brutality of poverty.

“These aren’t just spokespeople, we are megaphones for a movement of people who want real change”

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## Notes

[1]

The list of spokespeople in full, in alphabetical order by role title.

### **Jack Lenox**

*Culture, Sport and Digital Inclusion spokesperson*

Jack has worked as a software developer for over a decade, most recently as a Principal Engineer at Automattic, the company behind WordPress.com. He is a leader in the world of sustainable software engineering, a founding co-signatory of the Sustainable Web Manifesto, and an active contributor to ClimateAction.tech. He stood as the Green Party's parliamentary candidate for the constituency of Copeland in the 2017 by-election and the 2019 general election. Jack studied Ancient History at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is currently undertaking an MSc in Sustainability and Behaviour Change at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales.

In his spare time he is a keen amateur actor and musician, having performed for several years with the Keswick Amateur Operatic Society. He enjoys cycling, skiing, rugby and football. He supports the Sale Sharks and Forest Green Rovers. He now lives in Lancaster where he is the city's area coordinator for North Lancashire Green Party. He is also the Internal Communications Coordinator for the North West Green Party.

### **Zack Polanski**

*Democracy and Citizen Engagement spokesperson*

Originally from Manchester, Zack graduated from the University of Aberystwyth (Wales) and the University of Georgia (USA.) He now lives and works in London and became the party's third London Assembly member in May's elections.

Zack's expertise in engaging and empowering people comes from working in a range of jobs outside of political life – as an actor, communications trainer and a mental health counsellor at Arts Educational, ALRA and the National School of Circus Arts. Zack's work includes an Erasmus project running over several years with young people from every single EU country coming together through the arts to work on community building, activism and how to promote democratic engagement in their home countries.

Whether it's being out on the picket line demanding care home staff receive more than a poverty wage, campaigning for Proportional Representation or working with community groups to advocate for Citizens Assemblies – empowering people lies at the heart of everything he does.

### **Molly Scott Cato**

*Finance and Economy spokesperson*

Molly is an economist and writer who has campaigned for green politics all her adult life. Between 2014 and 2020 she represented South West England in

the European Parliament where she led the Parliament's work on sustainable finance especially in the areas of mandatory disclosure, climate benchmarking, and the role of central and public banks in funding the sustainability transition.

She has helped to pioneer work on the green economy, based around achieving maximum well-being with minimum use of energy and resources. She was at the forefront of the opposition to Brexit, including launching a campaign for the studies of the impact of Brexit on the economy to be made public that ended up in a legal case and a parliamentary victory, but not the release of the studies. Molly studied politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford University and later gained a doctorate in economics from Aberystwyth. She continues to be a Professor of Green Economics at Roehampton University.

### **Carne Ross**

*Global Solidarity spokesperson*

Carne is a writer and former diplomat. He served for fifteen years in the Foreign Office, with responsibilities including terrorism, the Middle East and the global environment. He resigned in 2004 after giving secret evidence to the first official inquiry into the Iraq War, the Butler Inquiry (he also later testified to the Chilcot Inquiry), offering testimony about his work covering Iraq at the UN Security Council. After his resignation,

Carne founded the world's first non-profit diplomatic advisory group, Independent Diplomat, which advises democratic governments and political groups all over the world, including the democratic Syrian opposition and Rohingya groups. Independent Diplomat helped create the High Ambition Coalition, which was responsible for some of the most important elements of the 2016 Paris climate agreement. Carne has written two books, *Independent Diplomat*, a critique of diplomacy, and *The Leaderless Revolution* about agent-led political change, and numerous articles for international publications.

### **Zoe Nicholson**

*Green New Deal spokesperson*

Zoe is Deputy Leader of the Lewes District Council and Leader of the Green Group. Through her council work she has come to understand the vital urgency of retrofitting our housing stock as well as ensuring new housing meets the highest energy standards.

She believes a Green New Deal and creating a sustainable economy will entail the creation of millions of good-quality green jobs as well as building wealth locally and tackling climate change. Zoe won the Sussex Business Woman of the Year Award in 2018 for her work as Chief Executive of a non-profit organisation. She is a strong supporter of small businesses and is committed to ensuring that they are put front and centre during the sustainability transition.

### **Peter Cranie**

*Health, Social Care and Public Health spokesperson*

Peter is a university lecturer specialising in the training of further education teachers. He is a former social worker and Further Education lecturer in Public Services and Health & Social Care. He has a record in anti-racism activism and is an active member of UCU and a member of his branch committee. He has been active in the Green Party since 2002 and was a former lead candidate for the North West region in the European Elections. Like many others, he has seen the loss of extended family members to Covid and is passionate about holding the government to account on their mishandling of the pandemic response. Peter studied philosophy, politics and economics at Keele University and later gained an MA in Social Work at Liverpool John Moores University.

### **Carla Denyer**

*Housing and Communities spokesperson*

Carla is a Green Party councillor in Bristol. In 2018 she proposed the first Climate Emergency declaration in Europe, committing Bristol to go carbon neutral by 2030 and inspiring hundreds of other councils to follow suit. Alongside her work on the Climate Emergency, as a councillor she works to protect local services that support the most vulnerable people in her city, and has a track record of standing up for renters and working to prevent homelessness. This includes lobbying successfully for a landlord licensing scheme, securing funding for homelessness prevention, pushing for better housing for domestic violence survivors, and protecting the poorest households from rises in council tax.

Before entering politics, Carla worked as an engineer in the renewable energy industry, specialising in offshore and onshore wind technology. She is the Green Party parliamentary candidate for Bristol West and was also a candidate in the 2019 European Elections.

### **Vix Lowthion**

*Lifelong Education spokesperson*

Vix is a Secondary school teacher, single parent of three and an outspoken campaigner for a reformed national approach to education. She has been our Education spokesperson since 2016, which has involved sharing platforms with teaching unions, party leaders and educators at events across the country. Vix has led Green Party campaigns to properly fund school and Further Education budgets, to scrap OFSTED and the over-testing of young children, and to increase opportunities for learning outside of the classroom. In addition, she has worked with the Young Greens in their work to ensure greater funding to access college and university courses.

Vix studied History and gained a PGCE at York University, followed by Open University courses in chemistry, renewable technology and Geology when her children were small. She now teaches A levels in History, Geology, Classics and Sociology at a local authority school on the Isle of Wight.

### **Benali Hamdache**

*Migration and Refugee Support spokesperson*

Benali is an activist and campaigner based in Islington. He's spent his working career in campaigning and the third sector. For the EU referendum he worked for the official Remain campaign, driven by the belief that we had to fight back against the awful narrative of scapegoating migrants. He's worked as a campaigner in a variety of organisations, including migrants rights, health and disability. He's also served as the co-chair of LGBTIQ+ Greens for three years. During that time he led on a variety of campaigns, including leading demonstrations against the death penalty for gay sex in Brunei and campaigning for trans rights.

### **Jonathan Elmer**

*The Natural World spokesperson*

Jonathan Elmer has amassed many years of experience and knowledge of the natural world having spent most of his career working as a consultant ecologist and also as a Countryside Manager for various Councils. A member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Jonathan has broad knowledge and expertise particularly in Botany, and with species identification skills across British plants and animals. Jonathan has detailed knowledge of how ecosystems function and the existential threats to these systems posed by human activities. He studied Environmental Biology at university and also completed an MSc in Environmental Impact Assessment in the early 1990s.

After studying he cut his cloth as an Ecologist for various Ecological Consultancies conducting numerous botanical surveys, river corridor surveys and protected species surveys. After this, he gained employment with Councils working as County Ecologist and as a Countryside Manager with responsibility for the creation and maintenance of numerous nature reserves. Throughout his career, Jonathan has sought to influence people from all backgrounds regarding the vital importance of natural systems to our own survival on the planet.

### **Shahrar Ali**

*Policing and Domestic Safety spokesperson*

Dr Shahrar Ali was Deputy Leader of the Green Party from 2014 2016, the first BME deputy of a UK parliamentary party. He has been a prominent campaigner for policing by consent against the hostile environment pursued by successive governments, which have disproportionately affected already marginalised communities; whether as a fierce critic of the disproportionate targeting of black people through stop and search or racist UKBA van slogans, to the role of shoot to kill in the fatal shooting of De Menezes and the Islamophobic effects of Prevent in schools.

He is a formidable campaigner against the abuses of civil liberty carried out in the name of domestic safety, from the release of British detainees in Guantanamo to the right of a UK citizen to a fair trial here without fear of politicisation (Begum). Shahrar has considerable media experience, whether taking on politicians on live TV or policy panels to Ted Talks or festivals at the Battle of Ideas and Bloomsbury. He is author of two popular books in Green politics, including *Why Vote Green 2015*, and, on a lighter note,

managed to cause something of a stir on The Mash Report.

### **Caroline Russell**

*Transport and Healthy Streets spokesperson*

Caroline Russell was elected to the London Assembly in May 2016. Caroline published a report on the climate change risks for London and proposed the motion that persuaded the Mayor of London to declare a climate emergency in 2018.

Caroline came into politics through campaigning for people friendly streets, after a career as an artist, retraining as a civil engineer and a period of parenthood combined with community activism. Since becoming the chair of the Assembly Environment Committee in 2018, Caroline has led investigations into the environmental impacts of single use plastic unflushables like wet wipes and period products, the role of ventilation in tackling cold damp mouldy homes, embodied carbon, farming in the green belt, aircraft noise and concentrated flight paths. Recent investigations have looked at tube dust, the implications of the proposed third runway at Heathrow which the Committee continues to oppose and air pollution.

### **Professor Catherine Rowett**

*Work, Employment and Social Security spokesperson*

Catherine currently holds a part time teaching and research position in philosophy at the University of East Anglia. From May 2019 to January 2020 she served as Green Party MEP for the East of England, and participated in debates and votes concerning Brexit and the European Green deal, and oversaw files on freight transport and aviation. In Norwich she worked with local councillors, Clive Lewis and UBI Labs to win support for a local pilot for Universal Basic Income. She attends the European Network of Green Basic Income Supporters, which is supporting Green parties across Europe under the aegis of the Green European Foundation. In December 2020 her online Public Lecture for the Royal Institute of Philosophy explored the philosophy of universal basic income. She is also involved in revising the Party's policy chapter on Europe. Catherine is currently deputy coordinator of the Eastern Region Green Party.

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