

Greens condemn High Court ruling against Sheffield tree protesters



Green Party

15 August 2017

The Green Party is deeply disappointed by today's ruling by the High Court in favour of granting an injunction against tree felling protesters in Sheffield [1].

The injunction was taken out by Sheffield Council against Green Councillor Alison Teal, two other named protestors, and 'persons unknown'. It is aimed at preventing peaceful protesting against the council's tree felling programme.

The ruling means that campaigners will not legally be permitted to continue standing up for Sheffield's trees and local residents by preventing the felling of healthy trees.

Cllr Teal has vowed to continue opposing the council's plans, despite the injunction, and expressed dismay at the council's heavy-handed tactics.

She said:

"I am very disappointed with this outcome, but will continue to do all I can to save Sheffield trees. Sheffield Greens will not stop standing up for Sheffield residents and communities who do not want this disastrous and unpopular tree felling programme to continue. In the short term, we will of course be looking into possible avenues of appeal against this decision.

"It never had to come to this. The council says that this action was a 'last resort', but in truth they have wasted time and taxpayers' money on this needless, aggressive action when all they had to do was acknowledge residents' concerns and to mediate.

"In this, the case of Sheffield City Council vs The People, it is democracy and the residents of Sheffield who have lost. This decision by the high court is very worrying, as the right to peaceful protest has been fundamentally threatened.

"The council's disastrous and unpopular tree felling programme continues to be a story of national and international embarrassment for our city."

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“This ruling is deeply disappointing. Alison and the other protesters have shown nothing but integrity and courage in the face of a council determined to plough ahead with an ecologically illiterate and ill-considered tree felling programme.

“The council’s plans are nothing less than environmental vandalism. This is a move by an authoritarian Labour council that knows it has lost the argument and so is attempting to shut down debate. The Green Party will continue to stand with Alison and the residents of Sheffield who oppose the destruction of perfectly healthy trees. Peaceful protest is a fundamental right and an integral part of a healthy democracy.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.thestar.co.uk/news/tree-fight-will-continue-despite-injunction-ruling-say-sheffield-campaigners-1-8703673>

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