

Green Party: Universal credit an assault on Britain's most vulnerable



Green Party

2 October 2017

The Green Party has criticised the Government's decision to press ahead with the roll out of Universal Credit, which it branded an "ill-conceived, counter-productive assault on Britain's most vulnerable".

Responding to the announcement by David Gauke [1], Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, urged the Government to reconsider – and investigate a pilot of a Universal Basic Income instead.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

"Universal Credit is an ill-conceived, counter-productive assault on Britain's most vulnerable. The Work and Pensions secretary may think it's working, but the reality is different for the families left without food because of lost benefits and delayed payments.

"In pressing ahead with the scheme the Government has shown a complete disregard for the pain it is inflicting, and I urge it to reconsider the roll out. Instead it should pilot a Universal Basic Income, which would truly eliminate the poverty trap."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/oct/02/heidi-allen-tory-mp-theresa-may-universal-credit>

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Greens respond to Catalonia situation



Green Party

2 October 2017

The Green Party has responded to the situation in Catalonia where police used violence against voters casting ballots in a referendum on independence.

Jonathan Bartley and Caroline Lucas, co-leaders of the Green Party, said:

“The horrifying police violence in Catalonia is a shameful stain on Rajoy’s government. The people of Catalonia must be able to peacefully assert their wishes for their future without being subjected to repression and attacks.

“Regardless of the case for or against independence, the Spanish Government must uphold the right to democracy and act to ensure people’s safety is its first priority, and the EU must work with Spain to find a peaceful and democratic solution going forwards.

“Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson’s failure to condemn the violence unequivocally is also wholly unacceptable and the UK government must use its voice to stand up against violence.”

Molly Scott Cato MEP, Green Party Europe spokesperson, said:

“The EU has a proud history of spreading democracy in the Mediterranean and Central Europe. As democratic norms come under stress in the wake of the financial crisis and the rise of nationalism it is vital that European leaders – and the EU institutions – continue to champion and defend the principles of democratic engagement and self-determination.

“We call on heads of state and the European Commission to call on both sides to step back from the brink and play a mediating role in negotiating a solution that works for the people of Catalonia and the people of Spain.”

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Green Party urges Chester University to abandon fracking research centre



Green Party

29 September 2017

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has written to the Vice-Chancellor of Chester University urging him to drop plans to build a controversial new fracking centre at the university [1].

Warning that the university risks creating a 'white elephant', Bartley has called on the university to instead create a renewable energy centre and become the "research pioneers of the future".

Bartley's letter [2] comes before he joins demonstrators at two fracking sites next week [3]. On Monday he will join protesters at Preston New Road before travelling to Kirby Misperton on Tuesday.

Bartley said:

"The study of fracking should be consigned to the university's History and Archeology Department. The latest research suggests that it is an industry which has little future with mounting evidence that it isn't financially viable.

"Fracking is dirty, dangerous, and undemocratic – being forced upon communities against their will and against their interests. Mounting evidence suggests that it is not financially viable [4].

"With the price of renewable energy falling beyond anyone's expectations and the industry expanding rapidly, this is what research pioneers of the future should be looking at. Instead the university risks building a white elephant."

Notes:

1. <http://www.chesterchronicle.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/fracking-research-centre-near-chester-13673204>

2. Dear Prof Wheeler,

I write to you in the hope that you will consider abandoning current plans to build a new fracking research centre at your university.

The study of fracking should be consigned to the university's History and Archeology Department. The latest research suggests that it is an industry which has little future with mounting evidence that it isn't financially viable.

Specifically:

1. The world has five times more fossil fuels in reserves than we can safely burn and setting up a whole new fossil fuel industry will only add to this problem.
2. Methane gas leakage from fracking threatens to be a considerable contributor to climate change.
3. Solar and wind energy are now cheaper than fossil fuels. We can continue that trend towards a greener, cleaner future but only if investment is being put into renewables, not fossil fuels and fracking. Friends of the Earth has calculated that the UK can move to generating three-quarters of its electricity from renewables by 2030.
4. The amount of reserves of shales gas in the UK remain uncertain whereas there is untapped power in our atmosphere – wind, solar, and wave – that we know exists.

With the price of renewable energy falling beyond anyone's expectations and the industry expanding rapidly, this is what research pioneers of the future should be looking at. Instead the university risks building a white elephant.

Yours,

Jonathan Bartley

Green Party co-leader

3. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-40953427>

4. Jonathan Bartley will be at Preston New Road on Monday from approximately 1.30pm to 3pm. He will be at Kirby Misperton on Tuesday from approximately 10am to 1pm.

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Green co-leader writes to Ferrari urging them to reinstate suspended cleaning staff



Green Party

29 September 2017

Co-leader of the Green Party Jonathan Bartley has urged Ferrari dealership HR Owen to reinstate cleaning staff suspended for joining a union [1].

Cleaners at the Ferrari showroom in Kensington were suspended after registering with United Voices of the World Union and demanding that they be paid at least the London Living Wage.

In a letter [2] sent to both HR Owen and Templewood Cleaning Bartley called on the companies to reinstate the workers.

Bartley said:

“Everyone deserves a living wage. But the cleaners’ current wage of £7.50 per hour – which the Conservative Government has disingenuously branded a ‘living wage’ – falls far short of what they need to survive.

“No one should be forced to choose between heating their homes or putting food on the table because wages simply don’t cover both. It is unacceptable that those who perform the vital function of cleaning your showrooms, which have an annual turnover of £400 million selling luxury cars to London’s elite, are in that position.

“I urge you to sit down with UVW and resolve this dispute to ensure justice and dignity for your cleaners.”

Notes:

1. <http://metro.co.uk/2017/09/28/cleaners-at-luxury-car-showroom-suspended-after-asking-for-pay-rise-to-9-75-an-hour-6963925/>

2. Full letter:

Dear Denis (HR Owen) and Sharon (Templewood),

I am writing to urge you to rethink the decision to suspend without pay the cleaners of HR Owen's Ferrari and Maserati showrooms in South Kensington.

It appears they have been suspended because they have joined a union – United Voices of the World (UVW) – and threatened to exercise their right to strike, having returned a 100% Yes vote to take strike action just a few days ago over your refusal to pay the London Living Wage.

You will be aware that every worker has a right to join a trade union and to take lawful industrial action. Likewise, they have a right not to be victimised for their trade union membership or activities. I therefore call on you to respect these basic rights and immediately reinstate them.

Everyone deserves a living wage. But the cleaners' current wage of £7.50 per hour – which the Conservative Government has disingenuously branded a 'living wage' – falls far short of what they need to survive.

No one should be forced to choose between heating their homes or putting food on the table because wages simply don't cover both. It is unacceptable that those who perform the vital function of cleaning your showrooms, which have an annual turnover of £400 million selling luxury cars to London's elite, are in that position.

The London Living Wage of £9.75 per hour reflects what employees and their families really need to survive. It is HR Owen's responsibility to ensure all their outsourced contracts guarantee staff receive at least the London Living Wage.

I urge you to sit down with UVW and resolve this dispute to ensure justice and dignity for your cleaners.

Thank you for your consideration.

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[Green Party calls for urgent action to reverse increase in road deaths](#)



Green Party

28 September 2017

The Green Party has called for urgent action to protect “vulnerable road users” after government statistics revealed an increase in road deaths in 2016 [1].

They also described the claim by the government that the 62 additional deaths last year was “statistically insignificant” as “morally repugnant” and “an insult to families of those who have lost their lives.”

The latest statistics from the Department for Transport show overall road deaths up 4% on 2015. Pedestrian deaths were up 10%, cyclist deaths 2%. Overall 25,893 people were killed or seriously injured on roads in England and Wales last year.

Caroline Russell, Green Party Transport Spokesperson and member of the London Assembly called on the government to act immediately to reverse the trends.

Russell said:

“As if it wasn’t enough that last year 25,893 people lost their lives or suffered serious injuries on our roads, the government has rubbed salt into the wounds by calling the rise in deaths ‘statistically insignificant’. This is insulting and shows an extraordinary lack of empathy for the people killed and injured and their families.

“The Government’s gung-ho approach to road safety has seen them build new roads without repairing old ones, failing to invest enough in walking, cycling or public transport and cutting roads policing budgets.

“Urgent action is needed to turn this around and protect people from the trauma of road death and serious injury. This means lowering speed limits, investing in roads policing and innovative projects like the West Midlands “close pass” policing approach that is simple, affordable and effective at reducing danger.

“If the government was serious about reducing road danger, they would make streets in our cities, towns and villages inclusive, safe and convenient for people of all ages and those with disabilities to get to school, work or the shops in safety.”

Notes:

1. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/648081/rrcgb2016-01.pdf

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