

Greens back £15 an hour Minimum Wage and declare support for trade union campaigns on pay



Green Party

2 October 2022

The Green Party has backed the introduction of a £15 an hour minimum wage for all workers at its conference in Harrogate [1]. Party members also declared their support for all trade union campaigns that aim to achieve wage increases to match the cost of living.

Professor Catherine Rowett, Green Party Work, Employment and Social Security spokesperson, said:

“Inflation and the cost of living crisis are having a dramatic negative impact on the real value of the existing National Living Wage, which has never been a real living wage anyway. The Green Party recognises the dire levels of in-work poverty created by our low-wage economy, and the overwhelming support from members for a £15 minimum wage will be welcome news to millions of workers.

“Decades of Tory, Labour and Coalition governments have created a Poverty Economy where 14.5 million people are living in poverty. One in ten full-time workers are in poverty, rising to a third of working-age adults in families where there is only part-time work. Today Greens said it’s time to fight back and create a new social contract, where a basic standard of living isn’t a luxury.

“This is one part of a full package of measures we would introduce to deliver a fairer and more equal society. The Green Party has long-standing policies for a Universal Basic Income and legislation to limit the maximum salary in an organisation to no more than ten times the wage of its lowest paid worker.”

ENDS

Notes

1

The full motion can be read here:

<https://greencoordinate.co.uk/agenda/motions/15-minimum-wage/>

For more information or to arrange an interview contact the press office on press@greenparty.org.uk or call 0203 691 9401

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[Greens call for prosecution of those most responsible for climate breakdown](#)



Green Party

2 October 2022

- **Call for a legal process to prosecute those most responsible for the UK having failed to protect people and habitats from climate breakdown**
- **Liz Truss instructing King Charles not to attend COP27 “a shameful end to the UK’s tenure as COP president” – Carla Denyer**

Green Party co-leader, Carla Denyer, has said Liz Truss instructing King Charles not to attend the COP27 climate negotiations in Egypt in November is ‘shameful’. The news comes as Green Party conference agreed a motion calling for the establishment of a legal process to prosecute those most responsible for the UK having failed to protect people and habitats from climate breakdown.

Denyer said:

“News that Liz Truss has instructed King Charles not to attend COP27 in November is a shameful end to the UK’s tenure as COP president. It is a sign of what many feared – we have a prime minister willing to dilute UK action on the most important global crisis we face, just at a time we need to step up our game.

“But more crucially, under the UK’s presidency, the COP process has failed to

set the world on a path to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees. Today our conference agreed on the need for a legal process to prosecute those most responsible for the UK having failed to protect people and habitats from climate breakdown.”

The motion, passed on the final day of Green Party conference in Harrogate, also called on the Government, as outgoing president of the COP process, to make sure that COP27 takes place in a more transparent and inclusive way and that lower and middle-income countries are listened to in the negotiation and treated as equals.

Denyer continued:

“We need a process which delivers a robust science-based review of every country’s progress towards delivering on their agreed emissions targets and to be held accountable for their shortfalls, and for the losses and damage caused by their emissions.”

ENDS

Notes

The full text of the motion can be viewed here:

<https://greencoordinate.co.uk/agenda/motions/improving-national-accountability-for-climate-damage/>

For more information or to arrange an interview contact the press office on press@greenparty.org.uk or call 0203 691 9401

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[Greens call for re-joining the EU “as soon as political situation is favourable”](#)



Green Party

2 October 2022

- **“The country is paying a high price for Brexit, in economic, social and environmental terms. We should look to re-join the EU as soon as it is practicable to do so” – Molly Scott Cato, former Green MEP**
- **Call for speedy return to free movement and re-joining the customs union**

The UK should make a speedy return to the free movement of people between the UK and the European Union and re-join the customs union, to lessen the problems resulting from Brexit, say the Green Party. Members at the Party’s conference in Harrogate also voted in favour of pursuing a policy to re-join the EU “as soon as the political situation is favourable and the right terms are available [1].”

Members backed continued participation in the Erasmus+ scheme, to ensure that “all young people, regardless of background and socio-economic status, continue to enjoy the opportunity to explore the continent they share with those from the 27 EU member states.”

Reacting to the motion on “Closer Alignment to the European Union”, former Green Party MEP Molly Scott Cato, who is also Vice Chair of the European Movement, said:

“The country is paying a high price for Brexit, in economic, social and environmental terms. Whilst the decision to leave the EU cannot be immediately reversed, it is clear, given the damage Brexit is inflicting on our country, that long term we should look to re-join as soon as it is practicable to do so.

“In the meantime, the worst problems resulting from Brexit would be eased by re-joining the customs union, signing up to a comprehensive agreement with the EU covering the protection of human, animal and plant life and reintroducing free movement of people between the UK and the EU.

“It is also clear that the best way to maintain high standards on workers’ rights, health and safety and environmental protection is to mirror the legislative rules governing the EU single market. The proposed Brexit Freedoms Bill is utterly horrific and has fired the starting-gun on a race to the bottom on environmental and social standards.

“It is particularly vital that young people, who overwhelmingly rejected Brexit, should not be penalised. They must be able to continue having opportunities to study, work and form relationships across the 27 EU member states. The continued participation in the Erasmus+ scheme will help enable this.

“Brexit has severely disrupted diplomatic relations with our EU neighbours and undermined the UK’s trustworthiness around the world. The readiness to breach international law and threaten the peace by tearing up the Northern Ireland protocol has reinforced this. If acted on, the motion agreed by Green Party members today will help rebuild trust within our country and with partner nations around the world.”

ENDS

Notes

Full text of agreed motion:

<https://greencoordinate.co.uk/agenda/motions/closer-alignment-to-the-european-union/>

For more information or to arrange an interview contact the press office on press@greenparty.org.uk or call 0203 691 9401

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Amelia Womack speech to Autumn Conference 2022



Green Party

2 October 2022

Hello, conference. It's wonderful to be here with you in Harrogate – and a warm welcome, to all those joining us online too.

How much has changed since we were last here, in 2017.

Back then, Theresa May had just lost her majority.

The government was in the middle of negotiating a Brexit deal.

We had no idea what was to come: a global pandemic, war in Ukraine, and unprecedented shifts to our society and our politics.

I've been doing a lot of reflecting lately, as my time as Deputy Leader comes to an end. I was elected eight years ago, at the age of 29. I was the youngest person in a political leadership role in the UK.

In that time, I've witnessed a lot.

Four prime ministers. Three general elections. Two referendums.

Not to mention the immense change that has taken place within our party.

In just a few years, we have gone from a small party with a few thousand members to a mass movement of tens of thousands. From being ignored by the establishment to becoming a voice of authority not just on climate change but on social justice too. To almost quadrupling our councillors to the powerful team of 558 councillors representing their communities across the country.

The press reported the Green wave as if it was going to crash. What they didn't see was that we were flooding communities with volunteers and activists determined to transform the places they care about, and demand action for people left behind by complacent politicians.

The unstoppable power of our Green wave won't end until we have control of councils, Green MP's and Greens in Government.

It was actually here in Harrogate that I launched one of the campaigns I am most proud of – to make misogyny a hate crime. Being here today made me think about how much has changed since that. A few days later the Me Too movement dominated the news. We still need to win the rights we so desperately need to end the oppression of all women and understand the intersectional issues faced by women of colour, disabled women, LGBTIQ women, trans women, young women, older women and, working class women, there has been a definite shift in women's representation.

I keep thinking about an experience I had in the 2015 general election, I was representing the party on a panel chaired by Jon Snow. One question from the audience was a really good one – 'why aren't there more women and young people in politics?'

There I am sat there. The only woman on the panel, the youngest person on the panel by at least a decade – I assumed Jon would go straight to me to answer that. Instead, he went first to Hillary Ben from Labour to hear what his knowledge was about women and young people in politics, then to the man from the Conservatives, next the man Liberal Democrats, then to a man from Ukip. I thought my moment had come,, but instead he said "That's all we've got time for tonight, tune in next week..."

As the credits roll you can see me talking to Hilary Benn about why moments like that are exactly why young people and women feel excluded from politics.

I realised afterwards that I had missed an important opportunity. In reaction to this I should have said "When it comes to women and young people in politics, you know nothing Jon Snow". That's one for all you Game of Thrones fans.

That kind of moment feels unthinkable now. And I'm so proud to be part of the movement championing young women in politics, and fighting for the rights of all women.

But there is so much more to do. Making misogyny a hate crime. Standing up for survivors of domestic abuse. Fighting against sexist policing. I've fought for our rights as deputy leader, and I won't stop until we have won.

I began my leadership just weeks before the Scottish Independence Referendum. One of the defining memories of my leadership is the night of the referendum, marching to Holyrood with thousands of other independence supporters.

It was a huge moment, not just for Scotland but for the whole of the UK. It made us ask what we could achieve if we had the courage to go against the status quo. As I marched that night I was moved by what I felt from the crowd, something that is so rare in politics – hope.

And although we didn't win that night, that hope has endured.

Hope defined the Green Party the following year, as we were heading into the 2015 general election, and I don't think any of us saw coming the impact that campaign had.

Our bold anti-austerity message resonated deeply with the public, and it caused a seismic shift in politics.

Over a quarter of a million people signed a petition calling on the BBC to include us in the leaders debates. Polling put us ahead of the Liberal Democrats. On the night of the election, we won our highest ever vote share.

But that wasn't all. We had successfully changed the narrative in politics, giving a voice to the millions of people who wanted to say no to cuts and yes to investing in our public services.

A voice to all those who knew that our broken economic order wasn't working for them and that another way was possible.

A voice to everyone who wanted a fairer future.

Since then, that is what we have continued to do. Spoken up for those who are marginalised. Brought dissenting views into the mainstream.

Take our EU referendum campaign. We held on to our principles, and campaigned unapologetically for freedom of movement, migrants' rights, and international solidarity.

When COVID hit, we called for an approach that would support everyone – with statutory sick pay for people isolating, a ban on evictions, and increased benefits.

And when we began to emerge from the pandemic, we called for a green recovery. With business as usual clearly redundant, we were ready with the policies the moment demanded – from a universal basic income to a green new deal.

I can't pretend that we have won every battle in my time as Deputy Leader. It's been a challenging eight years, with the far right ramping up attacks on

minorities, and those in power stripping away our public services in order to hand more wealth to the rich.

Never has the struggle we face been more stark than with last week's shocking budget announcement: tax cuts for the ultra-rich, while across the country extreme poverty is tearing apart the fabric of our communities.

Because there is an alternative, and it's needed now more than ever.

The Green Party – and our bold voice – has never been more needed.

The Labour party are spineless. The Liberal Democrats are invisible. And don't get me started on the Conservatives.

We alone have the courage and principles to offer a different vision for the future.

This country is crying out for the kind of policies we offer.

A majority of voters support nationalisation – including Conservative voters.

People are sick of paying rip-off energy prices for their money to land in the pockets of wealthy shareholders.

They want action on inequality, on the climate, on our neglected NHS.

In the Green Party, our strength has always been that we don't shy away from offering bold solutions.

We say what the other parties are too timid to say.

We stick to our principles when others chase public opinion. And voters know that.

But as we well know, the victory of our ideas cannot be taken for granted.

We have to be brave. We have to be loud. And we have to build from the grassroots up.

In my role as Deputy Leader, one of the things I've become perhaps most well known for is my ever-growing stack of train tickets.

I've spent my time in the leadership travelling across the country, visiting local parties to see the amazing work that you're doing and support you to grow even further.

It's down to the hard and often unsung work of local party members that we recently hit the incredible milestone of electing over five hundred and fifty local councillors across England and Wales.

It's local party members who spend cold winter evenings knocking on doors, speaking to voters, and getting the Green message out there.

And it's only through investing in our local parties that we will achieve the breakthroughs we need at the next General Election.

As it's my final speech to conference, I want to leave you with a few words of advice:

- Never shy away from being radical yet rational in the policies we offer
- Hope is contagious. Never forget what gives you hope, and make sure you pass that on
- Remember your own power to make change happen. That's about action on doorsteps, on the streets, and in Parliament.

As I step down after eight years as deputy leader, I am absolutely thrilled to be passing the torch to my good friend Zack Polanski.

An inspiring campaigner, a tireless activist, and above all, a dedicated Green.

But most of all, conference, I want to hand over to you.

This is the moment to get the Green message out there.

To make our voices heard on the doorsteps, at rallies, in council chambers and in the media.

Your passion and your work has got us this far. But I know there's so much more we can achieve.

It's been a pleasure and a privilege to do this work alongside you.

Now – over to you.

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[Greens back positive charter of worker and trade union rights](#)



Green Party

1 October 2022

Green Party conference today pledged to support working people resisting the latest anti-trades union laws and committed itself to working with unions to establish a charter of positive rights. [1]

Professor Catherine Rowett, Green Party Work, Employment and Social Security spokesperson, said:

“The Conservative government is enabling firms to use agency workers to replace striking workers and break strike action, further undermining people’s democratic rights. These laws are the latest in a long line designed to restrict trade unions and worker organisation.

“Trade union rights are fundamental to a free society and enabled us to achieve major improvements in working conditions during the 20th century. It is terrifying to see those improvements being rolled back and the democratic freedoms that secured them taken away.

“The erosion of workers’ rights under successive Tory governments since Thatcher has contributed to rising inequality and exploitation of workers, leading to a dystopian prospect as the current government seeks to repeal protective EU regulations.”

Matthew Hull, Chair of the Green Party Trade Union Group, who proposed the successful motion, said:

“I’m delighted that the Green Party is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with working people struggling against precarious work, soaring prices and stagnant wages.

“We want to see the repeal of existing anti-union and anti-strike laws.

“They should be replaced with a positive charter of worker and trade union rights, enshrining the fundamental right to organise and strike, drawn up in consultation with trade unions. Those rights must include the right to take industrial action to demand ecological justice.”

Notes

1 The full motion can be read here: <http://greencoordinate.co.uk/agenda/motions/stating-opposition-to-anti-union-and-anti-strike-laws/>

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