

Thousands sign Green Party petition urging government to keep masks mandatory



Green Party

16 July 2021

- **Peter Cranie: “This petition is another clear call to the government not to scrap the regulations which have undoubtedly helped to keep people safe throughout this pandemic”**

Thousands of people have signed a Green Party petition urging the government to keep mask wearing mandatory in shops and on public transport after July 19. [1]

In less than a week more than 10,000 people have signed the petition, telling the government to halt its plans to discard the legal enforcement of the protection measure. [2]

Green Party health spokesperson Peter Cranie said:

“This government’s reckless plans to remove the legal obligation to wear a mask in order to protect others from this deadly disease is nothing more than a drive from the right wing of the Conservative Party to attack any sort of social solidarity.

“In reality, this move will put thousands of people at higher risk of catching Covid. The simple act of wearing a mask not only reduces that risk, but shows that we are still all in this together.”

In Scotland, restrictions are also being lifted on Monday, but the government has said the mandatory use of face coverings will remain in place due to spread of the Delta variant. [3]

Cranie said:

“We know that the majority of people support wearing masks. Recent polling showed 70% of people supported masks being compulsory in shops and on public transport. [4]

“This petition is another clear call to the government not to scrap the

regulations which have undoubtedly kept people safer throughout this pandemic.

“The vaccines do offer protection, but as we have seen we are not out of the woods yet. The government needs to follow the science and continue to provide clear guidance on continuing to wear masks on public transport and in public spaces.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/lets-keep-our-masks-on/>

2

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/07/12/masks-must-remain-mandatory-to-keep-public-safe,-says-green-party/>

3

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-57820417>

4

https://yougov.co.uk/topics/health/survey-results/daily/2021/07/05/0275c/1?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=daily_questions&utm_campaign=question_1

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[Green Party responds to NAO report on local government and net zero in England](#)



Green Party

16 July 2021

- **Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty: “It is local councillors and communities who are on the frontline of tackling climate change”**

The Green Party leader of Brighton and Hove City Council has responded to the National Audit Office report out today [Friday 16 July] which finds that central government has not provided local authorities with sufficient funds or clarity over their roles in achieving net zero. [1]

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty successfully passed a motion at the Local Government Association General Assembly last week calling on the government to ensure that there is “adequate representation” for local authorities at COP26. [2]

Councillor Mac Cafferty said:

“From climate assemblies to retrofitting homes, it is local councillors and communities who are on the frontline of tackling climate change.

“However, as the NAO has highlighted today, the government simply does not recognise the leadership local authorities are showing on the climate emergency. Instead, the government continues to drag its feet by providing insufficient and fragmented funding, while never truly listening to what local communities need as we look to tackle the climate and ecological crises.

“It’s clear that the UK will not get to net zero without strong local leadership driving change from the bottom up, and that is why just last week the Local Government Association recognised the need for local councils to have a seat at the table for COP26 in Glasgow later this year.

“We hope that the government finally hears what those in local government have been saying for too long now, and start to provide both the funds and the tools to make the change that is necessary.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/local-government-and-net-zero-in-england/>

2

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/07/06/greens-lead-the-call-for-local-authorities-to-be-given-representation-at-cop26/>

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Masks must remain mandatory to keep public safe, says Green Party



Green Party

12 July 2021

- **Peter Cranie: “Wearing masks is about following the science and recognising that this crisis isn’t yet over**

The Green Party has called for the wearing of face masks on public transport and in shops to remain mandatory beyond 19 July.

Reacting to plans to discard the legal enforcement of the protective measure, the Greens have called the government out as wholly irresponsible and divisive.

Caroline Russell, Green Party spokesperson for transport and London Assembly Member, said:

“With Covid case rates rising so worryingly fast, it is reckless of the government to remove the instruction to wear a mask in crowded, enclosed environments like shops and on public transport, where risk of transmission is high. For anyone with compromised immunity, ‘Freedom Day’ feels like anything but that.

“We’ve all got used to protecting each other by wearing face coverings when travelling by bus or by train or going into shops and polling [1] shows most people are happy to continue to do this.

“It’s wrong to put shop and transport workers, fellow passengers and people shopping at unnecessary risk of catching this terrible virus, when it is so simple to put on a mask.”

A petition launched today [2] will give the public the opportunity to demonstrate their support for the continuation of mandatory mask wearing.

Green Party health spokesperson Peter Cranie said:

“Wearing masks is about following the science and recognising that this crisis isn’t yet over.

"The vaccination programme is an incredible feat by the NHS and has managed to reduce the chance of becoming seriously ill from Covid for millions of people. But vaccines alone will not stop Covid from spreading and there are still serious risks associated with the virus, even for those that are double vaccinated. You only have to look at the numbers to see that.

"But mask wearing is also about keeping alive the incredible spirit that's been shown during the pandemic, that we want to look after one another and that we're still in this together. Masks have become a symbol of our efforts against Covid – wearing them helps lots of us regulate our behaviour so that we're not putting ourselves or other people at unnecessary risk.

"That is why the government should be providing clear, science-led guidance on continuing to wear masks on public transport and in public spaces."

Notes

1

https://yougov.co.uk/topics/health/survey-results/daily/2021/07/05/0275c/1?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=daily_questions&utm_campaign=question_1

2

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/lets-keep-our-masks-on/>

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Green Party welcomes Rossendale councillor from Labour



Green Party

8 July 2021

- **Sitting Councillor Julie Adshead resigns from Labour and joins the Greens**
- **Becomes the first Green Party councillor on Rossendale Borough Council**

- **Councillor Adshead said: “My role as a councillor has always been about putting the residents of Whitewell Ward first, and that will not change”**

Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Green Party are pleased to announce that Councillor Julie Adshead has joined the party after resigning from the Labour Party.

Councillor Adshead has become the first Green Party representative on Rossendale Borough Council after making the move following her disillusionment with the new direction of the Labour Party, which she considers is at odds with prioritising social and environmental justice.

Rossendale resident Councillor Adshead recognises the Greens as the party taking real action on the climate emergency and campaigning for a just transition to a fairer society and prosperous economy. While her party colours have changed, her principles have not. Julie transfers to her true political home with this move.

Councillor Adshead said:

“I am proud to be joining the Green Party to fight for a better deal for our area. During my two years as an elected councillor, I have been disappointed to discover that the Labour Party are not as serious about the climate emergency as they had claimed, particularly given the new leadership.

“I believe that it is vitally important to be true to one’s principles, and so I have made the decision to move to the Green Party as this is where my core values are best represented.

“Recent gains across the country, from Bristol to our neighbours in Burnley, have demonstrated that the Green Party has become a major electoral force and that increasing numbers of people share a commitment to social, economic and environmental justice.

“My role as a councillor has always been about putting the residents of Whitewell Ward first, and that will not change. I will continue to listen to the views and concerns of local residents and work hard for them as my number one priority.”

Councillor Adshead was elected as a councillor in 2019 and was the Labour Party Champion for Climate Change.

The Green Party now has 450 councillors nationally with representation on 143 councils across England and Wales, including Lancashire colleagues consisting of two Lancashire County Councillors, five Burnley Councillors and 11 as part of the Green-led administration on Lancaster City Council.

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“I’m delighted to welcome Julie to her true political home in the Green Party. This year has seen the Greens make huge gains across the country in the May local elections, including in Lancashire, and Julie’s decision to join us shows we are continuing to gain ground.

“Julie has a strong record working for the residents of Whitewell Ward, and I know she will continue to listen to and act as a champion for the local community, delivering real change for those that need it most.”

ENDS

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Green Party condemns shift in Covid policy as negligent



Green Party

7 July 2021

- **Peter Cranie: “With a 70% rise in cases last week, the government’s decision to abandon social distancing measures is grossly irresponsible”**

The Green Party has strongly criticised the negligent and shortsighted policy shift this week resulting from the arrival of Sajid Javid at the Department of Health.

Green Party Public Health spokesperson Peter Cranie said:

“With a 70% rise in cases last week [1], the government’s decision to abandon social distancing measures is grossly irresponsible. They are not being driven either by data or by dates but by their own ideology of self-destructive individualism.

“While it is true that the vaccination programme has loosened the link between infection and death, we are dealing with a new virus, which we have already seen has the capacity to mutate. We need to continue to take a cautious approach based on science, rather than libertarian ideology.

“Forty per cent of the population have received no vaccination at all [2] and are still highly vulnerable to this infection. Although in smaller numbers,

some children do fall seriously ill and the incidence from Long Covid is still not clear. [3]

“This Darwinian policy is fundamentally discriminatory since we know that certain groups in the population have lower rates of vaccination and so we are condemning them to higher rates of Covid infection, hospitalisation and death. In a strong society we would show solidarity with the most vulnerable rather than throwing them to the wolves.

“The decision to allow individuals to decide for themselves will also put at risk those whose jobs bring them into contact with many other people. We support the call from unions for a legal framework governing safe working, and the need for greater ventilation and continued mandatory mask-wearing and social distancing in crowded places such as public transport.”

Molly Scott Cato, the party’s finance and economy spokesperson, said:

“This decision to ignore the science and be driven by the Conservative Party’s libertarian wing could end up being totally counter-productive in economic terms. It has been clear throughout the pandemic that if people don’t feel safe they’ll be put off going shopping or to the pub. As cases rise we could see this natural caution kicking in more and more causing another serious blow to our economy.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/02/delta-variant-driving-sharp-rise-in-uk-covid-cases-ONS-data-shows>

2

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55274833>

3

<https://inews.co.uk/news/long-covid-is-common-in-children-who-were-hospitalised-by-the-virus-study-finds-1084361>

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