

Greens welcome climate talks in UK, but government will have to change radically to avoid embarrassment



Green Party

18 June 2019

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, has welcomed the news that the UK now looks set to host the 2020 global climate talks.

He said: “Having this crucial global gathering on our climate emergency in the UK will be a great opportunity for us to learn from the top experts and campaigners, and galvanise the struggle for climate action in our country.

“But if we are not to be embarrassed in front of the world, the policies of this or a subsequent government are going to have to change radically.

“To be the hosts of COP26 when you are still pursuing the failed policy of fracking, massively subsidising fossil fuels, planning on expanding aviation and traffic, and building sub-standard energy-inefficient homes, would be a massive embarrassment.

“The UK has a proud record as a pioneer with the 2008 Climate Change Act. But we won’t be able to still trade on that legacy in 2020, as the British delegation was trying to do at the climate talks last year in Katowice.”

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Heathrow expansion consultation: Green

Party says 'no way' is the only answer



Green Party

18 June 2019

Reacting to the opening of the consultation on Heathrow expansion this morning, the Green Party's co-leaders have said this should not be happening.

Sian Berry, co-leader of the Green Party and its candidate for London mayor, said: "The only answer to the Heathrow consultation is 'no way'.

"Aviation clearly has to contract, not expand, while we need to promote and encourage cleaner options like train travel, which could replace many Heathrow flights.

"Huge numbers of Londoners already suffer from the noise and air pollution from Heathrow, see their transport systems overloaded and their lives disrupted."

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader and Lambeth councillor said: "We are in a climate emergency.

"The Committee on Climate Change has already said a net-zero carbon target means the government has to rethink aviation expansion.

"This is something the government has clearly failed to grasp. From airport expansion to new roadbuilding, fracking to allowing homes with dreadfully poor energy standards to still be built, its actions are a direct opposite to its words. They are a betrayal of our society."

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Green MEP Magid Magid calls for justice for Orgreave



Green Party

15 June 2019

The Green MEP for Yorkshire and Humber Magid Magid today will join the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign 35th anniversary rally.

He said: “Last year, as Lord Mayor of Sheffield, I was proud and honoured to dedicate one of my monthly campaigns towards demanding an immediate enquiry into this injustice from home secretary Sajid Javid. This year I will be joining thousands at the rally on Saturday to wholeheartedly reiterate that demand.

“Thirty five years after the grave abuse of state power and injustice of Orgreave, I commend everyone joining the community today to march for justice.

“The Green Party backs campaigners’ calls for an independent inquiry into the police brutality on that day.

“Coming to a clear and honest acknowledgement of what happened in the past is important in its own terms, to achieve the closure that the Hillsborough survivors and their families have won through hard campaigning. Orgreave deserves the same.

“There are still grave concerns about the behaviour of the police and security services in the UK, towards a wide range of communities, including black and minority ethnic communities and those from economically disadvantaged areas.

“Addressing the past is also a way of confronting the continuing abuses of the present, and by campaigners around many different campaigns uniting and supporting each others work, we all progress more effectively towards the goal of justice and respect for human rights and the law from the authorities.”

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Free school decision driven by ideology not evidence, says Green Party education spokesperson



Green Party

14 June 2019

Vix Lowthion, Green Party education spokesperson, has described the announcement today by Damian Hinds of 22 new free schools as a decision based on “ideology not evidence”.

Vix, a secondary school teacher, said: “Free schools have not raised attainment. They have consumed vast financial resources and are not accountable to their local communities. Their creation is driven by ideology, not evidence.

“They are not being put where they are needed, whilst too many of our community schools are bursting at the seams.

“The government must end this privatisation ideology and allow councils to plan for and deliver the educational needs of their communities.”

The announcement came as the failures of the school inspection system were exposed by a report showing that more than 80% of schools that had been top-rated by Ofsted were downgraded on their latest inspection, with inspections being conducted after a hiatus of up to a decade.

Vix said: “The Green Party calls for the focus to be schools cooperating to achieve the best result for every pupil, not competing against each other for league table places.

“We want to abolish Ofsted, replacing it with a truly independent organisation which would monitor standards but also work closely with schools to cooperatively share best practice and support each other.”

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[Greens support National Pensioners Convention protest against introduction of over-75s TV licence](#)



Green Party

13 June 2019

Green Party members will be at the BBC in Salford today, supporting a protest from the National Pensioners' Convention against the abolition of the free TV licence for the over-75s.

Astrid Johnson, Manchester Green Party member and candidate in the European elections, said: "That our most senior citizens should face the worry and concern, and potential loss of an essential bulwark against loneliness, a crucial entertainment in many people's lives, cannot be accepted.

"But the blame needs to be laid where it is due: at the government that pushed responsibility for funding the fee on to the BBC, when it had previously been accepted as a government responsibility.

"A further concern is that while the BBC has attempted to help some of the poorest older pensioners through sparing those in receipt of the pension credit, this is a blunt instrument that will miss many who need it most.

"Estimates are that 1.3 million pensioners who are eligible to get pension credit don't get it, and so will also miss out on a free TV licence.

"This is a demonstration of the dangers of means-testing, to which the Green Party is opposed. We want universal benefits – like the TV licence for over 75s."

Astrid continues: "More fundamentally, however, we are opposed to the structure of the licence, which operates as a poll tax, the poorest citizens in our society paying the same charge for it as billionaires.

“We very much believe in publicly funded public service broadcasting, but it should be funded from a ringfenced portion of progressive taxation.”

Michael Welton, Green Party councillor in Altrincham, Trafford, said: “The BBC is the fall guy for the Government’s cowardly buck passing of this unpopular decision.

“Means testing will exclude the 1.3 million people who are due pension credit but don’t claim it, many of whom are vulnerable or unwell.

“The Green Party’s policy of funding the BBC via progressive taxation is the only just solution.”

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