

British Gas profits make the case for a carbon tax, say Greens



Green Party

27 July 2023

Results for energy supplier British Gas show there are “still massive profits to be made from letting the climate burn,” warns Green Party Co-leader Carla Denyer.

British Gas reported profits of £969m for the first six months of 2023, up nearly 900% from £98m in the same period last year.

Regulator Ofgem allowed the supplier to keep more of its earnings from supplying its 10 million customers during the energy crisis.

Denyer said:

“It’s not acceptable that customers struggling through a cost-of-living crisis are facing higher bills because the regulator and British Gas have done a deal allowing it to rake in a 900 per cent increase in profits.

“If nationalisation wasn’t already one of the most popular Green Party policies there is – these profits very much make the case for the public to take control of this business.

“Making so much profit whilst so many people are struggling to pay their bills, shows our cost of living crisis for what it really is – a greed crisis.

“Fossil fuel companies drive the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, but are still allowed to profit from their damaging activities. A carbon tax would target these big polluters and render coal, oil and gas financially unviable as cheaper renewable energies rise up to take their place.

“These green policies work best when everybody benefits. That is why our policy has always been to use the proceeds of a carbon tax as a social dividend. This will help people to get through this cost of living crisis and make the UK a more equal society. Yields from a carbon tax would provide the money to invest in free home insulation, properly-funded public services and a universal basic income.”

[Greens call for urgent national response to extreme weather events](#)



Green Party

27 July 2023

Responding to the Met Office State of the UK Climate report [1], Green Party Co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“We are sleep-walking into avoidable disasters. The Met Office report underlines, once again, that the climate is in crisis – and we need to act now to prevent the impacts overwhelming communities and the services we all rely on.

“The wildfires in Europe, and around the world, this summer have shown just how quickly services can strain and buckle.

“We know that this government failed to prepare properly for the Covid 19 pandemic, and it and the Labour leadership have spent the past week running away from the actions needed to both prevent climate-related disasters, and recover from them.

“The tragedy is that we know what needs to be done – but the government and Labour are refusing to show the political leadership we need.

“In 2019, we called for councils to be able to access a £3 billion a year Climate Adaptation Fund, prioritising those areas at highest risk and with the poorest populations.

“If that money had been provided by central government, local communities most at risk from the wildfires and flooding events that are becoming ever more common would be better prepared already.

“We need the government to support local authorities to make changes, but most of all, we need the government to wake up, take responsibility and lead.

“So, today, we’re repeating our call for a £3 billion per year Climate Adaptation Fund that prepares and gives local communities the tools they need to make change happen – from planting more street trees to tackle flooding and overheating in cities, to a public information campaign recognising the effects of heat stroke and what action to take.”

Denyer also outlined other changes necessary, such as:

- A national review of fire service preparedness to deal with the kind of wildfires now sweeping Europe, and a commitment from government to invest in the staffing, protective clothing and resources needed;
- Providing local fire service leads with the freedom to work with local communities to tackle wildfires in a way that best protects people, wildlife, habitats and property;
- Heat stress-testing of all essential infrastructure including railways, pipelines, pylons and roads;
- London Under Water [2], a report from the London Assembly Environment Committee chaired by Green Assembly Member Zack Polanski published in February 2023, found extreme weather events had already led to flooding in hospitals and residential and commercial properties and people trapped in cars. It called for new warnings to be issued to over 200,000 properties most at risk of flooding, including schools, homes and businesses. These recommendations should be followed and other local authorities should be supported to undertake similar studies;
- Populations at high risk from floods – including those living in basements and in high rise buildings – to be supplied with evacuation plans;
- NHS resilience plans dealing with the impact of prolonged heat waves to be regularly tested and the results published to increase public confidence;
- Local councils to be supplied with the resources needed to bring public fountains and safe public drinking water back into use in towns and cities;
- Cafes and restaurants become “heat-safe” spaces offering free water;
- Outdoor working regulations to be reviewed to prevent workers suffering heat stroke, including maximum legal working temperatures to be introduced, as called for by the TUC [3].

NOTES:

[1] <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/news>

[2]

<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/London%20Under%20Water.pdf>

[3] <https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/it-too-hot-work#>

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Drones, festivals, and coding competitions – an update on DVLA's STEM programme



Through our science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) volunteer programme, DVLA supports the next generation by encouraging interest in IT and STEM subjects in communities and schools across Wales.

STEM events

We've had a busy few years! Since the launch of [our STEM programme](#), we've represented DVLA at many events, including Swansea Science Festival and the National Eisteddfod, and promoted STEM learning to children across Wales through our annual Code Challenge.

Last year, our [Code Challenge event](#) was a huge success with more than 300 students and teachers attending our live final, and even more joining through a live stream. It was also the first time we opened the challenge to colleges and sixth forms, and I'm pleased to say, we're doing it all again in December! But more on that later...

First, let's take a look at what we've been up to recently, including an update on our Digital Inclusion Scheme, and the events we're looking forward to in the coming months.



Donating laptops with our Digital Inclusion Scheme

Our Digital Inclusion scheme donates refurbished IT equipment to primary and secondary school students across Wales, providing important digital resources to the community and reducing IT waste.

So far, I'm proud to announce we've donated over 500 laptops to multiple schools in Swansea. We have another 900 laptops and 3,000 desktops ready to go to [E-Cycle](#), who refurbish the equipment before it's donated.

We work closely with E-Cycle to fulfil the targets of our [Greening Government Commitments](#) and [Greening Government ICT and Digital Services Strategy](#), aiming to reduce the amount of IT waste going to landfill to 0% and to achieve a yearly increase in the amount of IT that is reused and recycled.

On 2 June, we donated 20 laptops to [Race Council Cymru](#) (RCC), who promote race equality, integration and justice in Wales. RCC distributed the laptops to families who did not have access to IT for school or learning opportunities. It's so rewarding to see young people benefit from the resources they need, and I'm proud that DVLA will continue to support our communities in this way.



Coding at Wales' biggest music festival

In May, I teamed up with our STEM ambassadors at the In It Together Festival, where we put on coding competitions for the children attending the festival.

It was brilliant to see the children having so much fun! We ran daily coding competitions where they had the chance to use SCRATCH software to code their own festival themed game, with the winners receiving some cool prizes, including a drone and some T-shirts!

We want to introduce young people to coding and spark an interest in the world of STEM, showing them the possibilities of a career in digital. We'll also be running coding competitions at the upcoming [Eisteddfod](#) in August, where our STEM ambassadors will be promoting this year's Code Challenge and encouraging students to take part. Make sure to come and check us out and you could win some tech gadgets!

Speaking of Code Challenge...



Save the date – it's 5 December 2023!

I'm excited to announce that one of our favourite STEM events, the [Code Challenge](#), is back in December, and the good news is, entries are open now!

So, if you know of any students that have an interest in coding and enjoy being challenged, then this is the competition for them! We've got a category for each age group, giving students across Wales a chance to show off their STEM talents and win some incredible tech prizes along the way.

Primary and secondary school students can show off their skills by coding a game that follows a theme set by [our partners and sponsors](#), such as climate change, road safety, or healthcare heroes. The winners will win some amazing IT equipment for their school!

We'll also be running the Commerce in Code challenge for 16 to 18 year olds. Students will get the chance to redesign our [STEM website](#), putting their IT and business skills to the test. The winners will see their design on the official DVLA STEM website and they'll also will win some fantastic IT equipment for their school or college.

There will be lots of other opportunities to win prizes at the event through a prize draw, including our highly anticipated annual game of 'Beachball Bingo'! So [enter today](#) and join us at the Richard Ley Development Centre on Tuesday 5 December, where we'll be streaming the event to schools across Wales and announcing all the winners.

The closing date for entries is 6 October 2023, so don't miss out!

All information on DVLA's STEM programme, including our Code Challenge, can be found on our [STEM website](#). Don't forget to follow our social media accounts for all the latest updates.

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Homes must be the right homes at the right price, say Greens



Green Party

24 July 2023

In response to Michael Gove's speech today in which he pledged to build more homes in urban areas rather than in the countryside [1], the Green Party have repeated a call for a [Right Homes, Right Place, Right Price Charter](#)].

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer, said:

"Following our excellent showing in some Tory strongholds we are pleased to see that the government plans to prioritise building on brownfield sites. But he's utterly failed to push for the right homes at the right price.

"His speech comes on the same day an investigation reveals that there are now more than 1.2 million families on the waiting list for properties and that the majority of local authorities have failed to build a single council home in the past five years [2].

"Too often speculators and developers are building their profits rather than the houses local people actually need. What is required is a massive increase in local affordable social and council housing built to the highest environmental standards so they cut household energy bills and reduce carbon emissions.

"Our Right Homes, Right Place, Right Price Charter will simultaneously protect valuable green space for communities, provide genuinely affordable housing, tackle fuel poverty and reduce climate emissions."

Notes

1. [Michael Gove relaxes planning rules to create more homes in city centres – BBC News](#)
2. [Revealed: Britain's council housing shame as majority of councils fail to build a single home | The Independent](#)

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[Greens only party to increase vote share in all three by-elections](#)



Green Party

21 July 2023

Responding to the three by-election results, Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“Greens came a credible third in each seat. We were the only party to increase our vote share in all three contests. That’s because we offered a clear alternative, though we were squeezed in the particular circumstances of these by elections.

“These were three Conservative seats with very significant majorities. A competent government that was providing solutions to the real, deep-seated crises facing our country would have held all three of them.

“The fact that they lost two of them underscores just how tired and fed up voters are with them. They have let the country down over the cost of living, over the climate emergency and over standards in public life. Now they are paying the price.

“Labour will make the best of the Selby result, but the truth is that a government in waiting – which is what Labour believe themselves to be – would have done even better against a Conservative Party that has been the most chaotic and damaging in modern history, crashed the economy and repeatedly failed the environment.

“Labour failed to take Boris Johnson’s old seat, vacated because the former

Prime Minister was found to be a liar and a disgrace in Parliament. Labour lost Uxbridge because voters are fed up with all their flip-flopping and U-turning, this time over delivering clean air for West Londoners.

“The lesson for Labour is that they need to show clear and unambiguous leadership.

“The clearest message for me coming out of these byelections is that the country wants solutions to the climate and cost-of-living crises that are ruining people’s lives.”

ENDS

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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