

Leeds Green councillor appeals for calm

Leeds Green councillor Mothin Ali appeals for calm after disturbances in Harehills:

“I want to appeal for unity and calm after last night’s troubling scenes in Harehills, which took place when children from a local family were taken away by social services. As I have reiterated since yesterday, this is our community, and everything that was damaged last night, all the people who were left fearful, the damage done, is all a part of our neighbourhood. It’s up to all of us to take responsibility of one another and for our local infrastructure.

“I want to thank everyone who worked well into the early hours of the morning to bring peace and calm to the situation. From the local businesspeople, to my fellow councillors and community leaders, to the public service workers and everyone else who stepped in. It’s thanks to all their efforts that no one was seriously hurt.

“The scenes from last night were not a reflection of our collective community, but we must recognise the tension that has been bubbling here for some time is the consequence of rising inequalities, poverty and discrimination.

“Therefore, we must come together, including the authorities and the local community, to address these foundational issues in a constructive way. We will continue to build a brighter future for Harehills and make sure we never see scenes like last night again.

“This is a working-class area, with people living side by side belonging to many different cultures, struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, lack of resources, crime and health. We cannot give into polarisation and must instead unify to work towards a better and prosperous future for us all.

“Let’s make last night a moment for change, rather than one that further divides us.”

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Green Party statement on International

[Court of Justice ruling](#)

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Green Party MP for North Herefordshire, Ellie Chowns said: “The Green Party welcomes the International Court of Justice ruling. It confirms what we have been saying for a long time: the occupation of the Palestinian territories is illegal.

“Now, attention must turn to what must be done to end the occupation. Clearly, ‘diplomatic pressure’ and the ‘peace process’ are not enough. There must be real, consequential pressure on Israel to leave the territories and stop the settlements. Along with its international partners including the EU, the UK must now consider measures such as sanctions and boycotts to this end.

“The international approach hitherto to the occupation has not worked. There needs to be a new international approach which will plausibly bring the occupation to an end. Calling for more diplomacy is akin to doing nothing.”

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[Green Party statement on restoration of UNRWA funding](#)

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Green Party MP for North Herefordshire, Ellie Chowns said: “Lifting the ban on UK funding for the United Nations aid agency for Palestine (UNRWA) is welcome. It is vital that the UN is now allowed full access to Gaza and the Occupied Territories to carry out its humanitarian work. The UK government has an important role in ensuring this happens.

“As I pointed out to the Foreign Secretary in the Commons this morning, I am clear that arms sales to Israel should stop, given that the prosecutor for the International Criminal Court has said war crimes have taken place. The legal advice that the Foreign Secretary has commissioned should be published immediately.

“I question the Foreign Secretary’s approach to achieving the very overdue

and necessary full ceasefire in Gaza. It is clearly not enough to 'call for' a ceasefire or talk about diplomatic pressure for a ceasefire.

"These tactics are woefully insufficient in persuading both parties to stop fighting. The Netanyahu government is deeply incentivised to continue the conflict. There must be meaningful pressure on both parties, including the threat of targeted sanctions, to force them to end the horrific bloodshed."

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[Green MP responds to record sentences](#)

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Responding to record sentences for environmental protests, Green MP Sian Berry said:

"These sentences feel like a hangover from the last government's obsession with punishing disruptive but non-violent, peaceful protests. They should be appealed as wholly out of line with the disruption caused.

"There is, however, a wider challenge for the Labour government. It should review the guidelines given to judges that have led to such extreme, disproportionate sentences for peaceful protest."

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[Green MP Ellie Chowns responds to Covid inquiry](#)

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Ellie Chowns, MP for North Herefordshire said: “Our thoughts today are with the families of the over 230,000 people who have died from Covid-19, the key workers who risked their lives to keep the country going and countless others who had to make terrible sacrifices when Covid-19 first struck.

“As this report lays bare the awful truth is that many of those deaths, and the subsequent lengthy lockdowns we had to endure to bring cases down, would have been avoided if better preparation had been in place. We simply can never allow these failures to be repeated.

“The grim truth is that the UK is in an even worse position to deal with a pandemic today than it was at the start of 2020. With our NHS overstretched, lengthy waiting lists and a demoralised workforce.

“The Government should commit to adopting the recommendations made by the Covid Inquiry, but just as importantly they must match our pledge to invest £30bn a year in the NHS by 2030, to ensure we have infrastructure, workforce and equipment in place that we need. The cost is miniscule compared to what will be required if another pandemic strikes whilst our health service is in its current state.”

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