

Greens support National Pensioners Convention protest against introduction of over-75s TV licence



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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[2050 zero-carbon: Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley says setting a target is not “action”](#)



12 June 2019

Reacting to Theresa May’s answer to Green MP Caroline Lucas at Prime Minister’s Questions today, Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said: “The Prime Minister’s claim that setting a legal target is ‘action’ simply doesn’t stack up.

“As Caroline identified, there are significant steps that Theresa May could take in her short remaining time as Prime Minister, cancelling Heathrow expansion, turning money earmarked for new roads to public transport and

stopping fracking.”

Jonathan continued:

“What most of the discussion has missed since the Prime Minister’s announcement is, however, the positive possibilities that a strong, fixed zero-carbon target date means for businesses.

“With Finland setting the goal of 2035, businesses there will be racing forward with new technologies and approaches.

“Yet our government is planning a review of the target in five years, so British business is not being given the stable policy framework that it needs to take advantage of the huge possibilities offered by the need to reshape our economy and society for the Climate Emergency.

“That is what business is asking for, nationally (1) and globally (2).

“Instead in Britain we have had see-sawing policy and sudden decisions, such as cutting and ending the feed-in tariff and removing the planned zero-carbon homes standard, that have left businesses around the country stranded. ”

Notes

1. <http://www.aldersgategroup.org.uk/latest#legislating-net-zero-target-is-crucial-step-forward>
2. <https://www.corporateleadersgroup.com/reports-evidence-and-insights/publications/publications-pdfs/we-mean-business-the-climate-has-changed.pdf>

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[Green peer responds to highly critical report about storage of data under the ‘snoopers’ charter’](#)



11 June 2019

Green peer Jenny Jones has responded to a report on the use of the Investigatory Powers' Act (IPA – known as the 'snoopers' charter').

The campaigning group Liberty has highlighted the conclusions of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office that MI5 had "illegally mishandled" data including calls, messages, location and web-browsing history.

Commissioner Adrian Fulford said compliance failures first became clear in January 2016, but were only brought to the IPCO's attention in February 2019.

Jenny said: "This report has confirmed what we've known for some time, that the security services, as well as the police, are operating their surveillance systems without accepting that they have to operate lawfully, and in a properly targeted manner.

"I know from my own experience of being put on the domestic extremism database that valuable security time and energy are wasted on the wrong targets.

"We have to ensure the police and security services are not out of control, trampling on our human rights and civil liberties."

Back when the Act was passed in 2016, Jenny wrote: "We have given our security services unprecedented powers to spy on us." (2)

She said today: "They have clearly exceeded even the sweeping powers they were given, and broken the law in the process."

Further information: contact press@greenparty.org.uk, 07967-417859

Notes

(1) <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-security-mi5/watchdog-says-mi5-spy-agency-mishandled-snooping-data-for-years-idUKKC1TC1NC?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&rpc=921>

(2) https://twitter.com/GreenJennyJones/status/798922431545098240?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E798922431545098240&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.theinquirer.net%2Finquirer%2Fnews%2F2477546%2Fsnoopers-charter-20-ip-bill-passed-by-parliament-and-will-become-law-within-weeks

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[Green Party conference calls for reinstatement of David Muritu at Sandwell College](#)



9 June 2019

Delegates at the Green Party conference passed an emergency motion on Saturday in support of a trade unionist who was sacked for writing “racist” on a poster for the government’s Prevent programme.

David Muritu, a college lecturer and member of the Universities and College Union, was sacked by Sandwell College this week after defacing the poster because he felt the Prevent scheme – which requires teachers to report students who show signs of being drawn into extremism – unfairly targeted Muslims (1).

Green Party member Samir Jeraj, who moved the motion, said:

“We completely oppose trade union victimisation and call on Sandwell College to reverse their decision.

“Prevent is a racist endeavour and we stand in solidarity with Dave in calling this out.”

The Green Party conference motion called for Mr Muritu’s immediate reinstatement.

Co-leader Sian Berry said: “The Green Party has since its inception been expressing concerns about Prevent.

“In its current form it disproportionately targets Muslim communities.

“We should instead pursue community-led collaborative approaches to tackling all forms of extremism.”

Notes

1. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/black-country/sandwell-college-sacks-lecturer-dave-16380273>

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[Deputy leader celebrates Green successes as party conference opens](#)



7 June 2019

The Green Party deputy leader, Amelia Womack, will open the party’s spring conference in Scarborough with a call to build on the electoral and campaign successes of this year, which have seen the number of Green councillors and Green MEPs more than double and membership increase by nearly 15,000 in

England and Wales.

Amelia will tell delegates that electoral success is being achieved despite the odds being stacked against smaller parties with a political system that is badly broken, and a hollowed-out, outdated and out-of-touch media.

"Our archaic democracy needs to be revived with a truly proportional system where every vote and every voter matters," she will say.

"A system where MPs can sit in the party which truly reflects their values and beliefs in a mature parliament with collaboration at its heart.

"For three years that system has tried to handle Brexit... and it has failed embarrassingly."

Amelia Womack will also say the Green Party remains committed to equality for women on boards of business, in the houses of Parliament and in every aspect of public life.

On climate action, she will accuse the media of ignoring the climate crisis and instead manufacturing a migration crisis. And she will criticise the government and local authorities for continuing to support airports or road building while at the same time declaring a climate emergency. What's needed instead, she will say, is a complete rebuild of Britain's economic and political system with a Green New Deal.

"A Green New Deal will not only build green infrastructure, it will empower people and it will put environmental and social justice where they belong – jointly at the heart of our democracy and intertwined."

"We must be the architects of the future. We will build new structures: ones based on peace, justice and equality. Ones which leave no-one behind. And ones which hold the wellbeing of people and planet at their very core."

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