

Green parliamentarians call on Labour to “stand up against this government” over right to protest



12 January 2022

Green Party parliamentarians, elected representatives and members gathered outside Parliament today [Wednesday] to protest the draconian measures in the Policing Bill and urge Labour to join them in standing up against the government.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill has reached the House of Lords this week, where crucial votes will be held to defend the right to effective protest, culminating in a decisive vote on Monday [17 January].

The Green Party has called on Labour and independent members of the House of Lords to stand up for the right to take part in peaceful protest, which they say will be removed by the Bill.

Dozens of Green Party members and representatives attended the Covid-safe protest outside Parliament today to hear speeches from parliamentarians Caroline Lucas, Jenny Jones and Natalie Bennett and London Assembly member Zack Polanski.

Baroness Jenny Jones said:

“It’s not easy to change legislation, but here we really can make a difference. The problem we have is that Labour is not onside, it is dithering.

“So what we are trying to do is get national Labour, Yvette Cooper and Kier Starmer, to understand that these measures suppress genuine dissent with the government. It’s a Belarus-style move by our horrible government.

“We can stop it if Labour is onside.”

Baroness Natalie Bennett said:

“If we don’t have protest, we will have even worse government and council policies than we have now.

“Jenny has set out how we have a real opportunity in the House of Lords. It’s all down to the Labour peers, that they stand up against the government, stand up for rights that so many Labour people over more than a century have actually used and have been essential to get rights for working people.

“We have a message to Labour, you have to stand up against this government, you can stop these dreadful amendments now, you’ve got to do it.”

Caroline Lucas MP said:

“Priti Patel has said that she intends to use the Bill to criminalise people taking part in climate-related protests. But the sweeping powers of this Bill could be used against anyone who falls foul of what the home secretary decides is acceptable.

“The threat to democracy goes way beyond party politics, and we are calling on MPs of all parties and members of the House of Lords to stand up for human rights and reject this extremely dangerous and anti-democratic Bill. Whatever the home secretary believes, protest is a fundamental right in our democracy, not a crime. It must be protected.”

Zack Polanski AM said:

“These are not acts of a government that think they’re in charge. This is an act of a government who think they’re cornered, that the power of the people is coming and they know that we have the ethical and moral responsibility and duty on our side.

“And we are challenging them and it’s working because they are hearing. We need to keep this up, Labour need to join us, hear the call loud, hear it clear, because we’re here and we’re not going away.”

Notes

1

Photos and footage of the event are available from the Green Party press office: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

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[Government ministers are not above the Law](#)



12 January 2022

Responding to today’s High Court ruling that the Government’s use of “VIP lanes” for granting contracts during the pandemic was unlawful [1], Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“This is a tremendously important ruling. When Conservative ministers dodgily chose to give contracts to their mates rather than getting best value for the country and the NHS, they not only wasted taxpayers’ money, their actions also put lives at risk.

“Government ministers are not above the law, despite what they seem to believe. We now need constitutional reform to prevent the abuse of power that Conservatives have indulged in happening in the first place.”

NOTES

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jan/12/use-of-vip-lane-to-award-covid-ppe-contracts-unlawful-high-court-rules>

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[Gove announcement on cladding fails to wrap up issue of hazardous homes, says Carla Denyer](#)



10 January 2022

Responding to the announcement by Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, that developers must pay to fix the cladding crisis that they created [1], Green Party co-leader and Bristol City Councillor, Carla Denyer, said:

“Michael Gove’s announcement that developers will be expected to foot the bill for replacing dangerous cladding is welcome, but the issue is far from wrapped up.

“He is relying on the goodwill of developers, far too many of whom have already shown themselves to be irresponsible and motivated by profit rather than safety.

“And there has been no acknowledgement of the stress and anxiety the government has put thousands of households through by delaying action.

“The government focus is on cladding and it is unclear how non-cladding fire

hazards such as wooden balconies and missing fire doors will be addressed.

“Developers must also be required to address defects in council and social housing. It’s completely unacceptable that these costs should fall on housing associations or councils whose budgets are already at breaking point.”

“I have heard from so many people affected by this scandal, in Bristol and beyond. They need to feel completely secure in their homes, so if this really is to be an overhaul of government policy on housing safety, all hazards must be addressed, not just headline-grabbing cladding.”

“We also need clarity of government action and government funding to enable homeowners to shut the door on the awful limbo they have been living in for the past five years.”

Notes

[1] [Government forces developers to fix cladding crisis](#)

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[Green Party protest urges Labour to oppose Policing Bill as it reaches House of Lords](#)



10 January 2022

The Green Party has urged Labour to oppose the dictatorial powers within the Policing Bill as it reaches the House of Lords this week.

Green Party parliamentarians Caroline Lucas, Jenny Jones and Natalie Bennett and London Assembly member Zack Polanski will be joining a socially-distanced protest in Parliament Square on Wednesday 12 January to defend the right to protest [1].

Crucial votes have started on amendments this week to defend the right to effective protest, this will culminate in a decisive showdown with the government next Monday (17 January).

The Green Party is calling on Labour and independent members of the House of Lords to stand up for the right to take part in peaceful protest, which they

say will be removed by the government's Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

The protest will be a Covid-safe event where those attending will be expected to socially distance and masks will also be available. [2]

Baroness Jenny Jones, who has been leading opposition to the Policing Bill in the House of Lords, said: "The Government is trying to take away our democratic freedom to protest, but in the next few days we have a unique opportunity to stop some of the worst measures outright in the Lords. Laws that give the police the power to stop people attending demonstrations who have no criminal conviction and to stop and search without suspicion.

"Boris Johnson once promised to lay down in front of the bulldozers if they expanded Heathrow, now he wants a year in jail for anyone doing that. We need Labour and others to vote with us, in deleting these draconian laws from the Police Bill."

Caroline Lucas MP said: "Priti Patel has said that she intends to use the Bill to criminalise people taking part in climate-related protests. But the sweeping powers of this Bill could be used against anyone who falls foul of what the home secretary decides is acceptable.

"The threat to democracy goes way beyond party politics, and we are calling on MPs of all parties and members of the House of Lords to stand up for human rights and reject this extremely dangerous and anti-democratic Bill. Whatever the home secretary believes, protest is a fundamental right in our democracy, not a crime. It must be protected."

Baroness Natalie Bennett said: "Many of the rights we enjoy today would not have been achieved without protest, including women's right to vote. The statue of Millicent Fawcett, where we will be gathering, commemorates the suffragists' long struggle. Boris Johnson attended the unveiling of this statue in 2018, but his government is now planning to criminalise the very forms of protest used by these brave women."

London Assembly member and Green Party spokesperson on Democracy and Citizenship, Zack Polanski AM, said: "The Policing Bill has been condemned by a wide range of civil rights organisations, including Amnesty International and Liberty. It clearly contradicts Article 11 of the Human Rights Act, which protects people's right to protest by holding meetings and demonstrations. Even the Conservative MP David Davis has warned of the uses to which this dangerous legislation could be put.

"There is a clear distinction between peaceful protest and violent action – and there are plenty of laws already that can be used against anyone who crosses that line. The Green Party will always defend people's right to peaceful protest, whether we agree with what they are saying or not."

Baroness Jones said: "These draconian laws should be seen as part of the attack on our democracy designed to keep a corrupt government in power and minimise opposition.

“Ironically, it could be the government’s attempt to bypass parliamentary scrutiny by MPs that enables the Lords to defeat the 18 pages of new amendments that have been added to the Bill. If so, there is a good chance that the government will be forced to go back to the drawing board.”

Notes

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The socially distanced protest starts at 10.15am in front of the statue of leading suffragist Millicent Fawcett where there will be speeches from Green Party representatives

2

Pictures will be available after the event.

Journalists wishing to attend the event or to arrange an interview with a Green Party representative should contact press@greenparty.org.uk or call 0203 691 9401

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[Armed Forces in hospitals shows additional Covid measures needed, Greens warn](#)



7 January 2022

The Green Party has warned additional Covid measures are needed to stop the NHS from being overrun after the Armed Forces sent 200 personnel into hospitals in London to make up for staff shortages. [1]

After the Prime Minister earlier this week said he hoped England could “ride out” the Omicron wave of cases, Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay has urged the government to re-think its strategy and follow in Wales’ footsteps by introducing additional measures.

Ramsay said:

“It is a shocking state of affairs to see the army being drafted in to help hospitals in London deal with the latest wave of coronavirus.

“The prime minister has accepted the NHS is overwhelmed but is still refusing to take firm action to stop the spread of the Omicron variant which is on the rampage across the country. More than 3.5m people in the UK had coronavirus last week, with 1 person in 15 infected in England.

“So ratcheting up lateral flow testing, whilst welcome, won’t be enough to prevent thousands of key workers having to isolate – pushing our public services to breaking point and placing those still able to work under severe pressure.

“In addition, we fully support the emphasis on the vaccination programme to reduce serious illness – but it has become increasingly clear that it has not stopped the transmission of the virus.

“This is why, with the prospect of millions more Covid-19 cases in January, Greens believe additional measures need to be taken in relation to mass gatherings. We suggest England should look to Wales and limit indoor events to a maximum of 30 people and outdoor events limited to 50 people. Alongside this, it is vital that venues and businesses impacted by these measures are offered financial compensation.

“With so many people required to self-isolate in order to protect others, we also need to do the right thing and offer financial support to those unable to work.

“We were urged to be careful to save Christmas; now we need to be careful to save the NHS. That means, for a short time while we ride out this wave, we should put these safeguards in place.”

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-59902220>

2

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

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