

# Greens call for end to all shareholder payouts until water companies sort their sewage out



11 March 2023

The Green Party has called for a halt to all further dividends to water company shareholders until the privatised monopolies end dumping sewage into the UK's waterways and coasts.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay will make the announcement during an address to members at the Green Party's Spring Conference in Birmingham today (Saturday 11 March). [1]

Ramsay said:

"Rivers up and down the country are facing an assault from all directions, made all the worse by inaction from government, water companies and regulatory bodies.

"The situation we currently have across the country where water companies can, almost with impunity, dump sewage into our rivers, waterways and coastal waters cannot go on. We are calling for a halt to all dividend payouts to shareholders until these companies sort their sewage out.

"After years of failing to invest adequately in infrastructure, the private monopoly model is broken.

"The water industry cannot continue to be rewarded for failure. The £57bn paid out in payouts to shareholders over the last 30 years [2] and hugely inflated salaries of water bosses should have gone towards improving standards. Instead, these companies have been awash with profits and leaking funds towards shareholders.

"Not only should shareholder payouts be halted immediately, but ultimately, to end leaks, stop sewage discharges and cut bills we need to take the water

supply back into public ownership, which is what the Green Party believes must be done at the earliest practicable opportunity.”

At conference, Green Party co-leaders Adrian Ramsay and Carla Denyer will also provide members with an update ahead of this year’s local elections in May.

Ahead of the conference, Ramsay said:

“This year’s local elections are a crucial step for the Greens as we look to not only defend 100s of seats across the country but continue our unprecedented growth, breaking through on to new councils and gaining control of councils where we already have representation [3].

“Over the last few years, we have seen Green councillors elected in record numbers, winning seats from Labour and the Conservatives in roughly equal numbers, in rural and urban areas alike. We know that people like what they see. That’s why we are fully expecting this growth to continue this year right across the country, be that in places like Lancaster and Lewes where we are already in administration, or Mid-Suffolk where we could gain control of the local authority.

“With the cost of living crisis, the climate crisis and more and more people looking for a fresh political voice, it has never been more important to get Greens elected.”

ENDS

## Notes

### 1

The Green Party Spring Conference will take place over the weekend of 11-12 March at the Eastside Rooms in Birmingham

### 2

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/01/england-privatised-water-firms-dividends-shareholders>

### 3

The Green Party currently has 562 councillors on 171 principal authority councils in England and Wales. It will be defending 281 seats in this year’s local elections in May and will be looking to make further gains across the country

*For more information or to arrange an interview contact the press office on [press@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:press@greenparty.org.uk) or call 0203 691 9401*

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## Green Party welcome report on positive attitudes towards migration



9 March 2023

Green Party Co-leader Adrian Ramsay has welcomed a new report from UK In A Changing Europe, which highlights “sustained shift towards more positive attitudes towards migration” [1].

Ramsay said:

“More and more people are coming to understand the value of immigration to our cultural and economic life. As this report shows, Brexit and the pandemic highlighted just how vital immigration is to our country.

“Brexit closed down free movement of people and has created labour shortages in important sectors, while immigrants make up a significant proportion of the key workers – from supermarket shelf-packers, to care workers and health staff – who we all clapped for during the pandemic.

“The public increasingly recognises this and the Green Party is the only party that would renegotiate Freedom of Movement with the EU.”

### **NOTES**

#### **1**

Immigration after Brexit: Where are we going? is published by UK in a Changing Europe (UKICE), together with the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford –

<https://ukandeu.ac.uk/research-papers/immigration-after-brexit-where-are-we-going/>

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## [Green Party response to small boats bill](#)



7 March 2023

Responding to the small boats bill announced by the Home Secretary Suella Braverman today, Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“This is the latest attempt by the Tories to stop desperate people finding sanctuary. Last year three quarters of all asylum claims were granted [1]. Despite this, the government seems determined to clamp down on those fleeing conflict, persecution or extreme poverty in a host of countries by failing to offer legal routes to the UK. This will force people to continue taking their chances arriving in small boats.

“The UK government appears to be on a mission to push the boundaries of international law and breach the European Convention on Human Rights. This will further damage the UK’s already shattered global reputation.

“The Green Party is the only party taking a strong stand against this cruel legislation and saying proudly that refugees are welcome. We want to see safe legal routes for anyone wanting to claim asylum. That’s the way to stop small boats making perilous journeys across the channel and break the criminal gangs involved in people smuggling.”

## Notes

1. [Top facts from the latest statistics on refugees and people seeking asylum – Refugee Council](#)

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## [Green Party response to deal on Northern Ireland protocol](#)



27 February 2023

Responding to the deal agreed between the UK and the EU on the Northern Ireland protocol, Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“We welcome closer cooperation between the UK government and the EU. Boris Johnson had promised an ‘oven-ready’ deal which has caused pain, division and turmoil for communities and businesses in Northern Ireland.

“Hopefully today’s agreement marks a turning point when we can begin to heal these problems and strive towards much closer relationships.”

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## Greens mark 50 years since birth of political movement to protect people and planet



24 February 2023

Green Party founders, leaders and parliamentarians will gather today to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Green political movement in the UK [1] – and the first Green Party in Europe.

Around 40 past and present leaders of the Greens including Caroline Lucas MP, Green peer Natalie Bennett, founding members Lesley Whittaker, Michael Benfield and Freda Sanders, and Jean Lambert former MEP, will meet for the opening of the Green Party archive at the London School of Economics [2].

The event marks the 50th anniversary of the first public meeting of PEOPLE, in Coventry on 22 February 1973. PEOPLE became the Ecology Party in 1975, before eventually becoming the Green Party in 1985.

Former leader Caroline Lucas, who became the party's first MP in Brighton Pavilion in 2010, said:

"The Green Party has come a long way over 50 years – transforming the public debate on the need to tackle the climate and nature crises, winning the political arguments for meaningful action, and being instrumental in the climate emergency declarations from both the UK Parliament and over 300 local authorities.

"But with time running out, we urgently need more Green MPs to keep challenging the political status quo, demonstrating workable alternatives and standing up for a fairer, greener and more liveable future."

Current deputy leader Zack Polanski will also be at the event on Friday.

Polanski said:

“I’m so proud of the achievements of the Green Party – over the past few years, we’ve seen our councillor numbers rapidly rise.

“We still have a lot of work to do to meet the scale of the crises facing us and I know all over England and Wales members are ready to meet that challenge.”

ENDS

## Notes

### 1

For more information about the 50th anniversary please visit:

<https://50years.greenparty.org.uk/>

### 2

The event will mark the opening of the Green Party archive at LSE and exhibition: [“Clothing this Naked Earth”: politics and the planet](#) which contains archive material

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