

Grenville Ham to take on Wales Green Party leadership as Alice Hooker-Stroud steps down



6 March 2017

Leader of the Wales Green Party Alice Hooker-Stroud today announced that she will be stepping down at the end of March. Grenville Ham, current deputy leader and expert in renewable energy, will take over.

Grenville Ham, said:

“I want to thank Alice for all her contributions to the Wales Green Party, and to build on this movement which genuinely represents the best interests of Welsh people, rather than one that panders to big business. I look forward to continuing the Wales Green Party’s work of creating a society where people are more important than profit”.

Talking about next steps for the Wales Green Party, Ham added: “It will be an immense privilege to lead the party into the Council elections in May. My priority will be to support all of the hardworking Wales Green Party candidates who offer their communities the chance to vote for fresh ideas and a positive future. I will be standing myself in Brecon, and I’m already seeing local people recognise that in order to get a meaningful change they can’t keep voting for the same old parties”.

Hooker-Stroud, who has led the Wales Green Party since the beginning of 2016, said in a statement today that the lack of funding for smaller parties in the UK has contributed to her position being untenable.

Hooker-Stroud said:

“I love Wales and I feel honoured to have represented the Wales Green Party’s vision on behalf of our members. Though the decision to step down was not easy, it was made easier by the fact I knew I would be handing over to Grenville, a committed, skilled, and experienced member of the Wales Green Party who will take us forward with confidence to the elections in May.

Speaking of her reasons for stepping down, Hooker-Stroud said:

“As a party that cares about who lines our pockets, we don’t take funds from big business donors like other parties do. That means our members have the biggest say – not corporate lobbyists, but it has contributed to my role being effectively a voluntary one, which for me has sadly become untenable. I am proud that every person in our party has an equal say, and proud that when I speak on behalf of the party, that I know I speak on behalf of our members. However, the financing of political parties in general needs urgent reform so that politicians aren’t just the mouthpieces for big business, and so that

alternative voices are heard.”

Hooker-Stroud added: “Parties that have a lot of money can do a lot, and those who have a smaller amount can do less. That is how contemporary politics works. We need to level the playing field financially for political parties in Wales, and in the UK. It would be a much fairer country all round for everyone.”

Notes

[1] The Wales Green Party campaigns to make politics fairer, which includes fairer finances for political parties. The party call for a cap on large donations that mean wealthy individuals and organisations have a huge influence on politics, and for state funding to be available to parties who achieve more than 3% of a proportional national vote. Other countries, such as Sweden already give state funding to political parties to level the financial playing field.

[2] Ham was elected as a deputy leader in December in 2016. He gained over 50% of the Wales Green Party membership vote against two other candidates. He ran as a candidate on the regional list for Mid and West Wales in the Welsh Assembly elections last year and is currently standing in this May’s council elections in his own ward, St Mary’s in Brecon. He runs a not-for-profit engineering company in Powys and has been awarded the British Empire Medal for ‘Services to the Renewable Energy in Wales’.

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6 Mar 2017



The British Transport Police has tabled explosive evidence ahead of appearing before MSPs tomorrow about the risks of merging the respected organisation with Police Scotland.

Ahead of the planned SNP move for the single force to take on BTP responsibilities north of the border, both the organisation itself and its authority will detail what the Scottish Conservatives have described as “extraordinary risks”.

In its evidence, the BTP will say that dealing with fatalities could take 50 per cent longer under the new plans, and that “there is well-defined evidence that a non-specialist force is less able to provide the consistent levels of service that a dedicated policing commitment can offer”.

Decades of experience in dealing with IRA threats would be lost, the evidence stated, meaning future terror incidents may cause significantly more disruption than previously.

There is also a “potential risk” of staff deciding to retire from the BTP or leave altogether, rather than joining Police Scotland under the new set-up, meaning considerable experience would be lost overnight.

A number of legal difficulties will also emerge.

The evidence states: “Officers would not have any legal jurisdiction to operate as constables in Scotland.

This would obviously create difficulties in policing any railway service that crosses the border, particularly as officers from other divisions will still need to carry personal protective equipment such as TASER type devices or incapacitant sprays, both of which are defined as weapons.”

The submission goes on: “There is also a real risk that the investigation of crime will become more complicated, and possibly more costly.”

The views, which will be heard at tomorrow’s Holyrood justice committee, also refer to “specialist train services including nuclear trains, MOD trains and the Royal Train” which are currently operated on an “end-to-end” route basis by the BTP.

And on top of the BTP evidence, the BTP Authority will also weigh in on the SNP’s plans. It will point out the skills of BTP officers “differentiate from their counterparts elsewhere”, and that “transferring railway policing is not the same as merging eight police forces with the same function”.

Later in the meeting, Police Scotland is expected to point out it has merger experience following the creation of the single force in 2013.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross said:

“The arguments set out here are extraordinary, and should leave the SNP in no doubt about why it should not pursue this merger.

“It is an utterly needless move, which is inspired by nationalism rather than national security.

“We completely agree that the British Transport Police should be more

accountable to the Scottish Parliament, and the BTP itself has set out how that can be done.

“Instead, the SNP is using that reason to swallow up the organisation as a whole.

“And as we see from this evidence, that could have a range of desperately negative consequences.

“From coping with terrorist threats to a delay in dealing with complex fatalities, it’s clear this is the wrong move.

“The Scottish Government should heed these warnings and shelve these unnecessary and unpopular plans immediately.”

To see the evidence from both the BTP and the BTP Authority to be presented tomorrow, visit:

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S5_JusticeCommittee/Inquiries/British_Transport_Police1.pdf

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S5_JusticeCommittee/Inquiries/BTP_Authority.pdf

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Barbara

Keeley MP, Labour’s Shadow Cabinet Minister for Social Care and Mental Health, commenting on the

prosecution in relation to neglect at Mossley Manor Care Home in Liverpool, said:

“The neglect and poor care of the residents at this care home is shocking. With the CQC saying that there was ‘a continued and serious risk’ to the lives, health and wellbeing of residents, it is welcome that the owners have been prosecuted.”

“There are wider questions for the Government on just how this level of neglectful

care was allowed to develop unchecked. The Government must ensure our care system does not allow standards to fall to the level found at this care home, leaving residents exposed to harm and neglect.”

Theresa May must use her first Budget to provide the NHS & social care sector the funding it desperately needs – Jonathan Ashworth

“Theresa

May must use her first Budget as Prime Minister to provide the NHS and social care sector with the funding desperately needed to provide the very best quality of care. That’s the test on the NHS that her budget must meet this week.

“Theresa

May used to make a virtue of her rows with the police and said she had no sympathy with those managing her budget cuts but she can’t take the same unsympathetic, derisive approach to NHS funding. The test of her first Budget this week therefore is whether she will signal a different approach to the NHS.

“At

the very least the Government should bring forward £2 billion of emergency funding for social care and make clear as soon as possible how this money is going to be used to increase capacity and take some of the pressure off NHS hospitals, so that patients and their families never have to go through a winter like this again.”

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