

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 or call 0203 691 9401

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