[Greens warn banning campaigning hinders free and fair elections](#)

26 January 2021

- **Jonathan Bartley: "For any election to be free and fair then it is vital political parties have the ability to campaign so the public can engage with the choices on offer"**

The Green Party has warned of the threat to democracy as a result of the Government's advice that on the ground campaigns for this year's local elections should stop

Cabinet Office Minister Chloe Smith has this week written to political parties saying door to door campaigning was "neither essential nor necessary". [1]

The Green Party has followed public health and legal guidance in recent weeks in order to deliver community support and advice to residents who may be struggling or digitally excluded. The feedback has been exceptionally positive. Local councillors have helped residents in accessing hot meals, parents in need of laptops for home schooling and isolated residents have access to befriending opportunities.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

"Democracy is a process, not a one off event. For any election to be free and fair then it is vital political parties have the ability to campaign so the public can engage with the choices on offer, but at the moment the Conservatives in Government are saying traditional campaigning at the grass roots level should effectively cease.

"There are serious questions about who is empowered to make such a decision in a democracy. To avoid conflicts of interest this should be decided by a body such as the Electoral Commission, not a party that stands to gain from the decision.

"Greens want elections to be held as soon as it is practically safe for the whole democratic process to take place, including community campaigning, which is a crucial part of allowing people to have a genuine choice of parties to vote for. That may mean we have to delay the May elections."

ENDS

Notes

1

https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/political-parties-suspend-leafleting-door-c

[ampaigning-covid-842152?fbclid=IwAR2jfXGI8Cd8JzXbBOucL3b-N4z8lxpYSBVNs2OV2jAmT_FTQ_OPG8z0yH8](#)

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