

Greens repeat call to re-join EU as soon as political situation favourable



11 March 2023

The Green Party has reiterated that full membership of the EU remains the best option for the UK and has repeated its pledge to pursue a policy to re-join as soon as the political situation is favourable to do so.

Members at the Party's Spring conference in Birmingham also agreed that the worst problems resulting from Brexit would be eased by re-joining the customs union, a speedy return to free movement of people between the UK and EU and signing up to a comprehensive agreement with the EU covering the protection of human, animal and plant life.

Welcoming the motion, co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“There’s not a single tangible benefit for the UK as a result of Brexit. It has been all pain and no gain. Every household is on average £1000 poorer [1] than they would have been if the UK had remained in the EU. Meanwhile, the EU Retention Bill threatens to make a bonfire of laws agreed in the EU that protect the environment and human and consumer rights [2].

“It is clear that the UK would be in a better position socially, environmentally and economically if we had maintained our place in the EU. That is why the Green Party is pursuing a policy of re-joining as soon as the political situation is favourable to do so.

“In the meantime, we believe that many of the worst problems created by Brexit would be eased by re-joining the customs union, negotiating the return of free movement of people between the UK and EU and signing up to a comprehensive agreement with the EU covering the protection of human, animal and plant life.

“Young people in particular are losing out. They didn’t vote for Brexit and most feel they are at heart European. Yet they are missing out on opportunities to explore, study and live on the continent. It is therefore vital that the UK continues its participation in the Erasmus+ scheme.

“Labour have thrown in the towel on Brexit. Their refusal to challenge in any serious way the extreme Brexit being pushed by Tory hardliners means only the Green Party is prepared to expose Brexit for the disaster it is and support rejoining the EU when the political circumstances are right.”

Notes

1. <https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-11745465/Brexit-cost-1-000-household-lost-productivity-says-BoEs-Haskel.html>

2. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jan/18/brexit-eu-law-democracy-rishi-sunak>

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Issue of desperate refugees should not be used as a political football, say Greens



11 March 2023

The Green Party is standing firmly with Gary Lineker over his suspension from Match of the Day.

At the party's conference in Birmingham this afternoon [1] Co-leader Adrian Ramsay addressed sanctions placed on the football pundit for comments made on social media relating to the latest cruel Conservative asylum policy. He was met with rapturous applause from the conference floor.

Later, a motion in support of Lineker was passed by members.

Jack Lenox, Culture, Media and Sport spokesperson for the party said:

“The BBC’s decision to come down so hard on Gary Lineker over his tweets is indefensible. We wouldn’t have used exactly the same language as he did, but the point Lineker was making around the deliberately inhumane approach of Conservative asylum policy was entirely valid.

“We applaud him and the football community for standing together on this issue, showing teamwork and leadership on such a critical topic. Ironically, that’s something that’s severely lacking from our government.

“The deliberate stoking of this issue as part of an incessant Tory culture war also serves as a distraction from the urgent humanitarian crisis on our doorstep. The issue of desperate refugees should not be used as a political football.”

ENDS

Notes

The Green Party Spring conference is taking place in Birmingham from 11-12 March

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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Greens call for trade deal suspension to protect whales and dolphins



11 March 2023

Green Party conference today in Birmingham (Saturday 11 March) backed calls on the government to suspend a post-Brexit trade deal with the Faroe Islands until whale and dolphin hunts end. [1]

Green Party Natural World spokesperson Jonathan Elmer said:

“This is a real test for post-Brexit Britain. We need the government to recognise that the protection and promotion of nature must be central to bilateral trade deals.

“In the case of the Faroe Islands that has not happened, and the government should suspend the trade agreement until all whale and dolphin hunts end.”

The Free Trade Agreement with the Faroe Islands gives the government significant leverage when it comes to ending the killing of pilot whales and dolphins on the Faroe Islands

In 2019, the UK government finalised a free trade agreement with the Faroe Islands which allows for £100 million of exports of wild caught and farmed fish to Britain each year. That amounts to a significant 20 per cent of the Faroe Islands global trade [2].

Ben Samuel, who proposed the successful motion on behalf of Greens for Animal Protection, said:

“I am pleased that the policy statement on dolphins has been passed by Spring conference, the highest forum of the Green Party of England and Wales.

“Through the pandemic, while local action has been important, liberation groups have gone from strength to strength thanks to good use of technology in a member-led party.

"Animal protection is a hugely popular cause in the British public. We believe it is a vote-winner. Green members of parliament will continue their advocacy on behalf of these much loved animals, and that is why as a member of Greens for Animal Protection I am helping to elect more of them; from Brighton to Bristol."

Notes

1. The full motion can be read here:

<http://greencoordinate.co.uk/agenda/motions/dolphin-hunts/>

2. <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/326/petitions-committee/news/171875/the-hunting-of-dolphins-and-whales-in-the-faroe-islands-to-be-debated-by-mps/>

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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

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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/>

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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