

Green Party to end advertising for “high carbon” goods and services



11 October 2020

- **Members back pioneering climate motion at online Party Conference**
- **Advertising for high carbon goods and services like SUVs and long haul flights to be banned as Party brings advertising rules into the 21st century**
- **“This will spark a long overdue conversation about the role of advertising in our lives” says Green Party peer Natalie Bennett**

Members of The Green Party of England and Wales have called for the end of advertising for “high carbon” goods and services, backing a motion which brings it into official Party policy.

The new policy is designed to “bring advertising rules into the 21st century” by phasing out adverts for goods and services which are harmful to the climate, such as SUVs and long haul flights.

The motion noted that there are already many restrictions on advertising on products which are socially and physically harmful, such as tobacco which was banned from being advertised and promoted in the UK since 2003.

A study by BMJ journal Tobacco Control found that the ban “significantly reduced exposure to pro-tobacco marketing influences” and their conclusions were found to “support the effectiveness of comprehensive bans on advertising”. [1]

In August 2020, the ‘Badvertising’ campaign called for adverts for SUVs to face a similar ban, noting that such vehicles make up more than 40% of new cars now sold in the UK, while fully electric vehicles count for less than 2%. [2]

The motion was backed by Bristol City Councillor Carla Denyer [3], who said:

“In a time of climate emergency, how can it be right that we are bombarded by endless adverts demanding we fly more, drive bigger cars and burn more fossil fuels?”

“We need to learn from the campaign against tobacco advertising. It used to be normal for children to see cigarette billboards on their route to school. After decades of campaigning, a new normal has been established and levels of smoking have fallen.”

“We can do the same for products which are trashing our planet. Ending advertising for high carbon goods and services would be a simple and socially beneficial way to reduce UK carbon emissions.”

Green Party peer Natalie Bennett said:

“After the year we’ve had, we’ve learned what matters most to us, and it’s not the things screaming at us from billboards, posters, radio jingles and television trailers.

“This common sense policy to curb the influence of the biggest polluters will spark a long overdue conversation about the role of advertising in our lives.”

ENDS

Notes

1

Source: https://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/15/suppl_3/iii26.full

2

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53607147>

3

Carla Denyer is a Green Party Bristol City councillor, known for proposing and passing the first ever climate emergency motion on any council in Europe.

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[Greens call for windfall tax on tech billionaires to pay for Green Recovery](#)



7 October 2020

Following revelations that billionaires’ wealth rose to \$10.2 trillion amid the coronavirus pandemic, the Green Party are calling for a windfall tax on the digital monopolists.[1]

Deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“It’s shocking to see how, as so many are losing their jobs and children were going hungry, some of the richest men in the world saw their obscene levels of wealth increase even more.

“During the crisis we saw the strength we have when we work together. We must make sure that the cost of the crisis does not fall on the poorest, as happened after the financial crisis a decade ago.

“Introducing a windfall tax on the supernormal profits earned in exceptional circumstances will help to pay for the Green recovery from coronavirus and I am calling on Chancellor Sunak to make good on his ‘sacred duty’ to protect the public finances by making sure that the wealthy pay their fair share.”

The shocking figures on wealth concentration come following a report from the US Congress making clear that the massive profits enriching a tiny number were not made as a result of entrepreneurship or technological skill but through anti-competitive market practices and the use of monopoly power.[2]

ENDS

Notes

1

The report on incomes by UBS found that chief executive of Amazon Jeff Bezos saw his wealth increase by \$74bn while Elon Musk, founder of electric car company Tesla, has made the most money so far this year with his fortune increasing by \$76bn to \$103bn.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/oct/07/covid-19-crisis-boosts-the-fortunes-of-worlds-billionaires>

2

Damning revelations from the Congress report include:

- Attempts to interfere with market competition and abuse of monopoly position, exemplified by a 2012 email in which Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg acknowledged that he planned to acquire photo app Instagram in order to “neutralise” it.
- A litany of anti-competitive practice from Amazon’s Jeff Bezos, Apple’s Tim Cook and Google’s Sundar Pichai, including trying to clone rivals or deny them services.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f3cb3da3-a306-4557-9d6f-ed519230bc81>

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Amelia Womack says artists should be protected with a basic income



6 October 2020

- Green Party deputy leader responds to comments made by chancellor
- Womack: “Whether or not he was trying to make a point about all workers, this Government’s attitude towards the arts has been clear throughout this crisis”

The chancellor Rishi Sunak has today warned workers, including those in the arts, will need to find new opportunities and retrain as the coronavirus pandemic continues.[1]

Reacting to the comments, Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“Today, thousands of musicians and performers, and all those behind the scenes, will have heard the chancellor write their careers off completely. Whether or not he was trying to make a point about all workers, this Government’s attitude towards the arts has been clear throughout this crisis.

“Lockdown has shown us how much we truly value the arts. We’ve tuned into TV, tucked into books and turned up the radio. To say all these people should just seek ‘new opportunities’ is ridiculous, when they bring joy, stimulation and sustenance to people everywhere.

“If we let this sector collapse, it won’t bounce back. The legends of the future will be lost and undiscovered. Imagine if Beyonce, Bowie and The Beatles had been told to seek ‘new opportunities’. Imagine how much poorer we would all have been in every sense of the word.

“Our artists deserve support, they deserve protection, and they deserve to know that they are valued. We need a universal basic income to protect them until we can all enjoy the arts to the fullest, safely, once again.” [2]

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-10-06/rishi-sunak-suggests-musicians-and-others-in-arts-should-retrain-and-find-other-jobs>

2

Earlier this year, Amelia Womack led a call alongside musicians such as The Libertines, The Charlatans and Reverend and the Makers asking the government

to introduce a universal basic income to support artists during the pandemic.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/musicians-union-artist-support-arts-government-universal-basic-income-a9625511.html>

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[Greens welcome Prime Minister's conversion to wind power but warn much more is needed](#)



6 October 2020

- **Green co-leader warns that level of investment must match rhetoric**

Green Co-Leader Jonathan Bartley has welcomed the confirmation that the long-running opposition to wind power by the Conservative Party has finally been reversed.

The Prime Minister is today due to promise to power every home in the UK with offshore wind energy by 2030.[1]

Reacting to the news, Bartley said:

“For decades, Greens have been arguing that the UK is ideally placed to become a world leader in onshore and offshore windpower.

“But we have battled opposition from Conservative MPs locally and nationally as they sheltered their fossil fuel friends. Johnson’s support for wind power suggests that the transition to green energy is now irreversible.

“However, the level of investment proposed by the Prime Minister is nowhere near matching his rhetoric. The £160m for wind power due to be announced today falls far short of the £48bn that analysts say is necessary [2]. The Government needs to set out where this investment will come from.

“Nor will it provide what we need to power every sector of the economy, most notably transport. The Green Party proposes that 70% of the country’s electricity should be provided by wind by 2030. The Government’s proposals fall far short of this.

“And we need to connect the support for wind farms with an industrial strategy that means the jobs making the blades and towers of the wind farms are made in the UK. An economic and industrial conversion on this scale is what Greens mean by building back better.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-54421489>

2

Analysis

source: <https://www.auroraer.com/insight/reaching-40gw-offshore-wind/>

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[AGC Chair Councillor Rosemary Sexton's speech to Autumn Conference 2020](#)



3 October 2020

I never meant to become a politician. That wasn't in my game plan.

I first joined the Green Party, perhaps like many of you, because I saw the urgency of the environmental crisis we were facing, and that this wasn't being prioritised by any of the other parties.

Then a few years ago, a local Green Party councillor knocked on our door.

One thing led to another, I got more involved in the local party, and soon I was persuaded to stand as a target candidate.

I was elected last year as part of the Green Wave that saw us more than double our number of councillors.

When I was first asked to stand, I didn't know much about local politics. Despite growing up in a household where politics was discussed around the

dinner table, I had no real idea what a local councillor did.

To go from there, to here, in the space of two years – it's been a steep learning curve.

What I want to share with you today is why I've become passionate about local politics, and why I think it is at the heart of what we do as a party.

As local councillors, we have the opportunity to do lots of things.

We can bring residents' concerns to meetings, and make sure their voices are considered.

We can scrutinise decision making and hold the establishment to account.

We can challenge unfair systems that aren't working and we can make sure that our priorities of environmental and social justice stay at the top of the agenda.

But what first made me fall in love with local politics was the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of local people.

I remember my first piece of casework as a freshly elected councillor.

An elderly resident called me to tell me that the council's bushes were overhanging her driveway, and making it dangerous for her carers to get in and out.

In previous years, her husband had always cut these bushes, but he'd recently lost his sight and was unable to do it.

They'd tried to contact the council for months, but nothing had happened. Two emails later, and the bushes were cut and the problem solved.

It seems like such a small thing. After all, it's not saving the world or eliminating poverty.

But it made a big difference to that couple.

The woman told me that "this is the first time in my life I've contacted a politician and they've actually done something useful".

We can all see that trust in politics and politicians is at an all time low.

That's hardly surprising, looking at what's going on in the world and what we see on the news.

So when residents tell me "you're the first politician I've met who seems to really care", or "you've restored my faith in politics a little bit", that matters.

We talk in the Green Party about doing politics differently; and this is our opportunity to show people what different looks like.

We can be the human face of our local councils. We have the power to cut through the bureaucracy, to stand up for the people we represent, and to win over hearts and minds one at a time.

As Greens, we believe in the power of local decision making and local democracy.

We know that to tackle the challenge of the climate emergency, and the issues of equality, fairness and social justice that are so important to us, we have to bring people together to create solutions.

None of us can do this alone. We each represent only a small corner of the country; but together we can do amazing things.

Today the Green Party has 354 councillors on 123 district, county, borough and city councils, as well as many more town and parish councillors.

We form part of the ruling administration on 18 of those councils, most recently taking over the running of Brighton and Hove City Council in July this year.

The AGC is here to support all our councillors – whether they are lone Greens, or part of an opposition group, or in administration.

Every Green group faces its own unique challenges and political landscape.

Through the AGC we come together to share ideas, resources and inspiration, and to use our collective voice to lobby for change.

We're also here to shout about the great work that Green councillors are doing. Both to you as members, and to the wider world.

I want everyone to know that there are hundreds of elected Greens who are out there already delivering on our priorities and our values, supporting their communities and showing people what politics can be.

To give you just a few examples.

- It was a Green Councillor in Bristol, Carla Denyer, who proposed the first Climate Emergency motion in the UK. Since then, 69% of councils in the UK have followed.
- But we know that good intentions aren't enough – which is why we have been pushing for councils to adopt carbon management strategies, as Herefordshire council has done, thanks to Ellie Chowns, who is the cabinet member for the environment.
- Work commissioned by Lewes district council, where the Greens share power, has developed a plan to put the whole district on course for zero emissions. Our councillor Matthew Bird is leading on this.
- In Norwich, our councillors in opposition have been pushing the council to use Municipal Investment Bonds to raise money for sustainable energy investments.
- In Peterborough, one of our sole Green Councillors Nicola Day won a motion to create a food strategy to address the causes of food

inequality, and has been working with active travel campaigners to improve cycle infrastructure.

- In Solihull, we have been campaigning for more socially rented housing, and have pushed the council to provide support to social care workers who are struggling financially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Our Green councillors in administration in Brighton and Hove have recently secured funding for their bid to provide housing and additional support to homeless people to help them find permanent accommodation.

At this point, I'm going to give a shout out to our brilliant Climate Change support officer, Julian Dean, who will be running a Fringe on Councils and Climate change later – so do go along to that to find out more.

If you're feeling inspired and want to get involved, there are lots of ways to do that.

Perhaps the easiest to help campaign for your local target candidate.

That can involve anything from stuffing envelopes and delivering leaflets to knocking on doors or helping to design newsletters.

Or you might be thinking about becoming a councillor yourself, and putting yourself forwards as a prospective target candidate.

This can seem daunting, but the AGC along with your local and regional parties can address any questions or concerns you might have and talk you through what's involved step by step.

We need candidates from all different backgrounds and walks of life – so if you don't think you're the kind of person who would fit in as a councillor, that's even more reason why we'd like to support you to stand.

Or if you can't commit to that, there are other opportunities to help with the background work, for example in drafting motions or consultation responses. The AGC can tell you more.

Together we can make a difference, and we can build the foundations for success at a national level.

We must be a party that represents every class, every colour and every community; a party that combines a bold vision of a better future with a clear understanding of what works; and a party that knows how to win elections, not to take power for its own sake, but to deliver the change our country desperately needs.

We will make this happen by engaging with our local communities, by earning their trust, and by proving that better is possible when Greens are elected.

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