

British Gas profits make the case for a carbon tax, say Greens



27 July 2023

Results for energy supplier British Gas show there are “still massive profits to be made from letting the climate burn,” warns Green Party Co-leader Carla Denyer.

British Gas reported profits of £969m for the first six months of 2023, up nearly 900% from £98m in the same period last year.

Regulator Ofgem allowed the supplier to keep more of its earnings from supplying its 10 million customers during the energy crisis.

Denyer said:

“It’s not acceptable that customers struggling through a cost-of-living crisis are facing higher bills because the regulator and British Gas have done a deal allowing it to rake in a 900 per cent increase in profits.

“If nationalisation wasn’t already one of the most popular Green Party policies there is – these profits very much make the case for the public to take control of this business.

“Making so much profit whilst so many people are struggling to pay their bills, shows our cost of living crisis for what it really is – a greed crisis.

“Fossil fuel companies drive the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, but are still allowed to profit from their damaging activities. A carbon tax would target these big polluters and render coal, oil and gas financially unviable as cheaper renewable energies rise up to take their place.

“These green policies work best when everybody benefits. That is why our policy has always been to use the proceeds of a carbon tax as a social dividend. This will help people to get through this cost of living crisis and make the UK a more equal society. Yields from a carbon tax would provide the money to invest in free home insulation, properly-funded public services and a universal basic income.”

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Greens call for urgent national response to extreme weather events

27 July 2023

Responding to the Met Office State of the UK Climate report [1], Green Party Co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“We are sleep-walking into avoidable disasters. The Met Office report underlines, once again, that the climate is in crisis – and we need to act now to prevent the impacts overwhelming communities and the services we all rely on.

“The wildfires in Europe, and around the world, this summer have shown just how quickly services can strain and buckle.

“We know that this government failed to prepare properly for the Covid 19 pandemic, and it and the Labour leadership have spent the past week running away from the actions needed to both prevent climate-related disasters, and recover from them.

“The tragedy is that we know what needs to be done – but the government and Labour are refusing to show the political leadership we need.

“In 2019, we called for councils to be able to access a £3 billion a year Climate Adaptation Fund, prioritising those areas at highest risk and with the poorest populations.

“If that money had been provided by central government, local communities most at risk from the wildfires and flooding events that are becoming ever more common would be better prepared already.

“We need the government to support local authorities to make changes, but most of all, we need the government to wake up, take responsibility and lead.

“So, today, we’re repeating our call for a £3 billion per year Climate Adaptation Fund that prepares and gives local communities the tools they need to make change happen – from planting more street trees to tackle flooding and overheating in cities, to a public information campaign recognising the effects of heat stroke and what action to take.”

Denyer also outlined other changes necessary, such as:

- A national review of fire service preparedness to deal with the kind of wildfires now sweeping Europe, and a commitment from government to invest in the staffing, protective clothing and resources needed;

- Providing local fire service leads with the freedom to work with local communities to tackle wildfires in a way that best protects people, wildlife, habitats and property;
- Heat stress-testing of all essential infrastructure including railways, pipelines, pylons and roads;
- London Under Water [2], a report from the London Assembly Environment Committee chaired by Green Assembly Member Zack Polanski published in February 2023, found extreme weather events had already led to flooding in hospitals and residential and commercial properties and people trapped in cars. It called for new warnings to be issued to over 200,000 properties most at risk of flooding, including schools, homes and businesses. These recommendations should be followed and other local authorities should be supported to undertake similar studies;
- Populations at high risk from floods – including those living in basements and in high rise buildings – to be supplied with evacuation plans;
- NHS resilience plans dealing with the impact of prolonged heat waves to be regularly tested and the results published to increase public confidence;
- Local councils to be supplied with the resources needed to bring public fountains and safe public drinking water back into use in towns and cities;
- Cafes and restaurants become “heat-safe” spaces offering free water;
- Outdoor working regulations to be reviewed to prevent workers suffering heat stroke, including maximum legal working temperatures to be introduced, as called for by the TUC [3].

NOTES:

[1] <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/news>

[2]

<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/London%20Under%20Water.pdf>

[3] <https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/it-too-hot-work#>

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Homes must be the right homes at the right price, say Greens



24 July 2023

In response to Michael Gove's speech today in which he pledged to build more homes in urban areas rather than in the countryside [1], the Green Party have repeated a call for a [Right Homes, Right Place, Right Price Charter](#).

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer, said:

"Following our excellent showing in some Tory strongholds we are pleased to see that the government plans to prioritise building on brownfield sites. But he's utterly failed to push for the right homes at the right price.

"His speech comes on the same day an investigation reveals that there are now more than 1.2 million families on the waiting list for properties and that the majority of local authorities have failed to build a single council home in the past five years [2].

"Too often speculators and developers are building their profits rather than the houses local people actually need. What is required is a massive increase in local affordable social and council housing built to the highest environmental standards so they cut household energy bills and reduce carbon emissions.

"Our Right Homes, Right Place, Right Price Charter will simultaneously protect valuable green space for communities, provide genuinely affordable housing, tackle fuel poverty and reduce climate emissions."

Notes

1. [Michael Gove relaxes planning rules to create more homes in city centres – BBC News](#)
2. [Revealed: Britain's council housing shame as majority of councils fail to build a single home | The Independent](#)

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Greens only party to increase vote share in all three by-elections

21 July 2023

Responding to the three by-election results, Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“Greens came a credible third in each seat. We were the only party to increase our vote share in all three contests. That’s because we offered a clear alternative, though we were squeezed in the particular circumstances of these by elections.

“These were three Conservative seats with very significant majorities. A competent government that was providing solutions to the real, deep-seated crises facing our country would have held all three of them.

“The fact that they lost two of them underscores just how tired and fed up voters are with them. They have let the country down over the cost of living, over the climate emergency and over standards in public life. Now they are paying the price.

“Labour will make the best of the Selby result, but the truth is that a government in waiting – which is what Labour believe themselves to be – would have done even better against a Conservative Party that has been the most chaotic and damaging in modern history, crashed the economy and repeatedly failed the environment.

“Labour failed to take Boris Johnson’s old seat, vacated because the former Prime Minister was found to be a liar and a disgrace in Parliament. Labour lost Uxbridge because voters are fed up with all their flip-flopping and U-turning, this time over delivering clean air for West Londoners.

“The lesson for Labour is that they need to show clear and unambiguous leadership.

“The clearest message for me coming out of these by-elections is that the country wants solutions to the climate and cost-of-living crises that are ruining people’s lives.”

ENDS

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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Sian Berry selected as candidate to follow Caroline Lucas as next Green MP for Brighton Pavilion



19 July 2023

Brighton and Hove Green Party members today selected Sian Berry to become the next Green MP for Brighton Pavilion.

Berry was selected as the new Brighton Pavilion candidate after winning 71% of first preference votes. [1]

Berry is a former co-leader and principal speaker of the Green Party of England and Wales, and has been their candidate for Mayor of London three times, coming third in both 2016 and 2021. [2]

Berry said:

“It’s an enormous responsibility to continue the work of Caroline Lucas. Brighton Pavilion needs a Green MP in Parliament representing all the people across this wonderful constituency, and I can promise every voter in Brighton Pavilion that I will work every moment between now and the General Election to win their trust and support.”

Zoe John, Deputy Chair of Brighton and Hove Green Party, said:

“I am delighted to announce that Sian Berry won the support of members from a fantastic line up of high-quality candidates. Green Party members have chosen Sian to contest the next General Election and to build on the foundations laid by Caroline Lucas as the first Green MP for Brighton Pavilion.

“Brighton and Hove, like the rest of the country, is faced with the accelerating climate and nature emergencies, a cost of living scandal driven by increasing inequalities, and a broken political system.

“Between now and the General Election, Brighton and Hove Green Party members will be listening to voters and focussing on the issues that matter to them – demonstrating why a Green voice in Brighton Pavilion will not only be a powerful local voice, but will also keep the city on the national political map.”

Caroline Lucas MP said:

“It has been the honour of my life to represent the people of Brighton Pavilion in Parliament for the past 13 years, and to see my majority increase

at each of the past four elections.

"I am delighted that Sian has been elected by party members. There couldn't be a more passionate and committed person to pick up the baton and continue this city's tradition of doing politics differently, and standing up for what matters.

"I am certain that Sian will be a powerful Green voice in Parliament, holding to account whichever party forms the next Government, and championing the concerns of constituents.

"This country desperately needs more Green MPs. This is a critical decade for tackling the climate and nature emergencies, supporting people through a cost of living scandal, and campaigning for social justice and human rights. I can't wait to see what Sian will do!"

NOTES

1

Sian Berry was selected as the candidate for Brighton Pavilion with 71% of first preference votes. Emily O'Brien came second and Dan Rue came third.

2

Berry has been elected to the London Assembly since 2016 and has been a councillor for the Highgate ward in Camden since 2014. In her work she focuses on preserving and securing new council housing and renters' rights, making sure young people can thrive and promoting equality.

Berry worked mainly in the policy area of transport before joining the Assembly. She was a founder of the successful campaign group Alliance against Urban 4x4s in the early 2000s, and worked as a roads and sustainable transport campaigner for the charity Campaign for Better Transport for five years. She is also the author of a number of books on green issues.

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