

Greens warn Agricultural Transition Plan is a wasted opportunity and betrayal of farmers

30 November 2020

- **Natalie Bennett:** “We need to see the same kind of urgency that we saw a decade ago to rescue the banks but this time to rescue the natural world.”

Green peer Natalie Bennett has responded to the government’s Agricultural Transition Plan, intended to support the farming sector and replace the CAP payments on which so many farmers depend. [1]

Baroness Bennett said:

“Although limiting payments for the wealthiest farmers makes sense, the proposal to cut agricultural subsidies in half as EU support disappears is a betrayal of our farmers and the rural communities they are at the heart of. Coming together with the pressure on exports from post-Brexit tariffs this will be a body-blow to an industry that is of vital importance to our very survival.

“This government likes to portray the UK as ‘world-leading’ and this is sadly true when it comes to the destruction of nature. The 70% of our land that is agricultural must be used to maximize carbon capture and restore our depleted wildlife as a matter of urgency. This plan for a leisurely process of trials and gradual implementation over a decade is grossly negligent against the backdrop of nature and climate emergencies.

“We also need our farmers to respond to changing consumer tastes as a growing number of people adopt plant-based diets. Government should support training and offer transition grants to promote a shift towards vegetable growing, something that would reduce the climate impact of our diets and improve public health.

“We need to see the same kind of urgency that we saw a decade ago to rescue the banks but this time to rescue the natural world. Issues such as protecting and restoring peatlands, slashing the use of pesticides, enhancing habitats for farmland birds, and of course planting trees and supporting natural regeneration should be a matter of priority.”

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Notes

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-path-to-sustainable-farming-from-2021>

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Greens call for plan to ensure no cross-infection between schools and family gatherings



27 November 2020

The Green Party has called on Education Secretary Gavin Williamson to provide a plan for closing schools this Christmas that will ensure the spread of the coronavirus infection is kept to a minimum.

The latest figures from the Office of National Statistics suggest over the most recent week, the only group that has seen positive tests for coronavirus was secondary school-age children. [1]

Green Party Education Spokesperson Vix Lowthion has now called on the UK government to outline what its plans are to ensure there is as little risk of spreading the infection as possible once schools close for Christmas.

Lowthion, a secondary school teacher on the Isle of Wight, said:

“Families are desperate to see one another this Christmas and it is a tragic consequence of the pandemic that this brings with it an inevitable risk.

“However Gavin Williamson has so far not laid out any plans for protecting families this Christmas as they relax restrictions and schools close for the holiday.

“School-age children remain the only group that are still seeing a rise in infections, despite nearly four weeks of national lockdown. It was wrong to put children and their families in this position in the first place, but the government now has a duty of care to the country to ensure that it does all it can to mitigate the spread of infection over the Christmas period.”

In Wales, the UCAC teaching union has called on the Welsh Government to close schools early so pupils and teachers would not have to self-isolate on Christmas Day. [2]

Lowthion said:

“Closing schools early would allow staff and students to self-isolate before Christmas so they can feel more confident that they do not have coronavirus when they meet the rest of their family over the five days that restrictions have been relaxed.

“It is extremely worrying, yet no great surprise, that this education secretary appears to have done nothing to plan for this situation yet.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionssurveypilot/26november2020#age-analysis-of-the-number-of-people-in-england-who-had-covid-19>

2

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55095175>

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Greens welcome EU ban on lead shot



27 November 2020

- **Amelia Womack:** “We are determined to ensure that we offer wetland birds the same protections that other EU countries do after Brexit”

The Green Party has joined conservation groups across Europe in welcoming the passage of legislation to ban the use of lead shot in wetlands [1], something the party has long campaigned for. [2]

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“We are delighted that European wetland birds will now be protected from a slow and painful death from lead poisoning. We see this as a first step towards a total ban on lead ammunition.

“As much as 21 to 27,000 tonnes of highly toxic lead is dispersed into the EU

environment per year by game shooters but much of it is swallowed by birds like ducks and swans that were not their original targets leading to the deaths of more than a million birds a year.” [2]

Since lead in petrol was banned, lead in shot is now the single biggest source of emission of lead to the environment every year.

Before the ban comes into force, the two motions will now need to be passed by the Council of the EU, a process which should only be a formality.

Womack said:

“Although the agreement of the EU Council is only a formality, if it does not occur before 31 December then this law will not automatically become UK law. We are determined to ensure that we offer wetland birds the same protections that other EU countries do after Brexit, especially when these birds are migratory and so not permanently resident in any particular European country.”

The Green Party is fundamentally opposed to all blood-sports. It opposes the killing of, or infliction of pain or suffering upon, animals in the name of sport or leisure, and will work to end all such practices.

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.birdlife.org/europe-and-central-asia/news/press-release-european-parliament-ban-lead-ammunition-25Nov2020>

2

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas sponsored an EDM to ban the sale, possession and use of all lead ammunition across the UK in January 2019

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/52444/ban-on-the-sale-possession-and-use-of-lead-ammunition>

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Sian Berry celebrates step towards “right to repair”

26 November 2020

The European Parliament has voted in favour of a report by Greens/EFA MEP David Cormand which calls for better “repairability of products” [1]

Green Party of England and Wales co-leader and candidate for London Mayor Sian Berry welcomes this vote, and has long championed a right to repair here in the UK.

In 2019, Sian signed the Manchester Declaration with co-leader Jonathan Bartley, a declaration published in 2018 by repair organisations calling on policymakers, manufacturers and designers to make it easier to repair consumer goods. [2] [3]

During the last General Election, Sian pledged to put a repair cafe in every community – a place where local experts can help anyone mend or upcycle an old item, with the help of specialist tools and equipment available for free use. [4]

Today, the Environmental Audit Committee has published a report on electronic waste and the circular economy, setting out a number of recommendations including a call for a right to repair and repairability scores on new products. [5] Caroline Lucas MP is a member of the EAC.

Sian said:

“I’m delighted to see the European Parliament championing the right to repair and proposals from a Green MEP. For a Green recovery and a more resilient future, our own Government must adopt these ideas and support the spaces and new businesses that we need to make repairs possible in every community.

“We’ve all experienced the frustration of having to throw away an expensive appliance for want of a small part or a glitch we can’t fix. When things last a few years when they should be lasting for decades, the inevitable result is soaring levels of waste and pollution.

“Nobody wants to add to the mountain of junk choking our natural world. A right to repair would create real green jobs and help stop this treadmill of needless consumption and environmental destruction. This is the future, and Greens are leading the way.”

ENDS

Notes

<https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/press/towards-a-sustainable-single-market-focused-on-consumers/>

2

<https://greenworld.org.uk/article/greens-support-right-repair-movement>

3

<https://manchesterdeclaration.org/>

4

[Green Party announces end to “throwaway economy” and create a “Repair Cafe” in every community](#)

5

https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5801/cmselect/cmenvaud/220/22003.htm#_idTextAnchor000

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Chancellor has let down local communities by not backing councils, Greens warn



25 November 2020

The Chancellor Rishi Sunak has failed to support local communities in his spending review today by refusing to announce proper funding for local authorities, the Green Party has said.

Responding to the spending review, Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted just how destructive this government has been in undermining local authorities.

“This spending review was an opportunity to rectify this costly mistake, yet once again we have seen nowhere near enough help for councils to take

effective action on the ground.

“Local authorities must have control of their own finances, not have to take the begging bowl to Westminster.

“We don’t want a national fund to allow Conservative MPs in marginal seats to fund their favourite local bypass. What we need is a national strategy for low carbon transport and active travel.

“This sort of Green New Deal investment would mean hundreds of thousands of jobs in all our communities.

“The Chancellor’s wilful disregard of the essential work councils do means this government has once again let down communities up and down the country.

“For real change, the Chancellor should have restored council funding to sustainable levels, fulfilled the government’s guarantee to reimburse all Covid-related spending and announced a review into the balance of taxation between national and local government.”

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