

# Chancellor must guarantee support will continue as long as necessary, say Greens



12 May 2020

The Chancellor has today announced that the government's furlough scheme will be continued for another four months.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said: "We welcome the government's commitment to extending this important scheme, but what we need to see now is a further guarantee that the level of support will not drop and will continue for as long as necessary.

"Nobody should be forced into poverty during a global pandemic yet we already know that the government's job retention scheme does not cover new starters and the self-employed.

"A Universal Basic Income would provide security to all those that need it and ensure workers and employers have greater flexibility in these precarious times."

ENDS

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## Sian Berry responds to Johnson's address



10 May 2020

Responding to Boris Johnson's public address 10 May, Sian Berry said:

"We were told we were going to get a roadmap for the way forward today but the Prime Minister's address was ambiguous and confusing. The shift to 'Stay Alert' from 'Stay Home' as a key message, offers absolutely no clarity and leaves people wondering what exactly it is they're being asked to do.

"We said on Thursday and we maintain this evening, that while we understand and share the anxiety to get the economy moving and for people to see their loved ones, easing lock down too soon, which we strongly believe it still is, could lead to unnecessary deaths, a second peak and the overwhelming of the NHS.

"The 'world beating test, track and trace scheme' which Boris Johnson referred to, must be a community shield which we've been advocating for, for weeks.

"The immediate outcry from key unions in the industries affected demonstrates that the implications for worker safety have not been either consulted or properly thought through.

"We are pleased to see the Government finally acknowledging the severity of the situation in care homes and now have expectations of immediate action to provide a clear plan for quarantining and routine testing of staff and residents.

"Staying at home will continue to save lives and protect the NHS so that's the advice, until there's more clarity on what the Government is actually trying to say, that we should be following."

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## [Green Party calls for emergency fuel duty rise to invest in walking, cycling and public transport](#)



8 May 2020

- Crash in oil prices and concerns over the safety of public transport could see spike in number of people using cars
- Extra revenue from 25p/litre rise to be given to local authorities to spend on, walking, cycling and public transport to enable social distancing
- Caroline Russell: "If we don't act now the fall in global oil prices could mean more driving, traffic jams and filthy air as lockdown is gradually eased and more people begin to travel"

The Green Party has called for an emergency fuel duty rise on petrol and

diesel to allow local authorities to support social distancing by improving conditions for walking and cycling and investing in public transport in response to the coronavirus crisis.

The Greens have warned that a crash in oil prices could undermine moves in towns and cities across the country to enable more people to walk and cycle, if it means the price at the pump continues to fall and encourages people to drive more. [1]

Since 2010, successive governments have frozen fuel duty rises year on year. Fuel duty stands at 57.95p/litre, earning the treasury some £28bn a year in revenue [2]. On this basis an extra 25p/litre could raise in the region of £12bn for public transport and active travel.

Green Party transport spokesperson Caroline Russell said the extra revenue could then be allocated to local authorities to invest in measures needed to support social distancing on public transport and on our streets with street space reallocated from vehicles to people walking and cycling.

Russell said:

“If we don’t act now the fall in global oil prices and concerns about social distancing on public transport could mean more driving, traffic jams and filthy air as lockdown is gradually eased and more people begin to travel.

“It is vital we act to create a healthier future as the ongoing coronavirus crisis makes our lives much more local and the climate emergency needs us to shift to low carbon options.

“An increase in fuel duty after the ten year freeze would generate billions of pounds for local authorities to invest in public transport for essential workers and healthier streets for walking and cycling so people can get to work, take daily exercise and make their local journeys safely while maintaining social distance.”

ENDS

## Notes

### 1

UK petrol prices fell by their largest margin in 12 years in March, triggered by a collapse in the world oil price. In April, the price of Brent Crude dipped below \$20 a barrel and is currently trading at around \$25 a barrel.

<https://www.oilcrudeprice.com/brent-oil-price/>

As the price of crude oil has slumped, the price paid at the pumps has declined drastically and has fallen since early March from around £1.23/litre to £1.05/litre for petrol and from around £1.26p/litre to £1.15/litre for diesel.

<https://media.rac.co.uk/pressreleases/low-oil-price-leads-to-sharpest-drop-in-petrol-and-diesel-prices-in-12-years-2988585>

<https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/tax-by-tax-spend-by-spend/fuel-duties/>

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## **“Still too soon” to lift lockdown – Sian Berry urges government not to ease measures before it is safe**



7 May 2020

Responding to coverage suggesting measures may soon be put in place to ease lockdown, Green Party co-leader Sian Berry said:

“We know people are anxious to get the country moving. Businesses are losing out, families and friends are missing each other and there are very real challenges being faced daily. But easing this lockdown too soon could have really serious consequences, and it is still too soon.

“Government policy is not yet in line with the World Health Organisation’s guidelines on tracing and tracking. The Government has so far ignored calls for a ‘Community Shields’ approach, a network of community-based protection schemes which can respond quickly to any re-emergence of Covid-19. Instead it favours a centralised app which is the subject of concern to monitor infection rates and even that isn’t properly up and running yet.

“It just isn’t fair on the public to give the impression this crisis is over when it’s not. Dealing with it requires everyone to do their bit and that the Government recognises those efforts by making sure everyone has the financial support they need.

“We’d much rather see the Government standing firm on its lockdown decision until there is certainty a second peak is not being risked, one of the Government’s own five tests, and that there is a trace and track system in place that actually works.”

ENDS

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## **Councils must be compelled to meet online to avoid Covid-19 power grab, say Greens**



7 May 2020

The Green Party is calling on the Government to ensure local democracy is not further disrupted by the Covid-19 crisis by compelling local councils to meet virtually.

A petition launched this morning [1] – on what would have been election day in thousands of local communities – calls for online meetings to be mandatory for Parish, Town and District Councils to avoid decisions being pushed through without proper discussion and scrutiny.

Green Party Co-leader Jonathan Bartley said: “Today would have been the opportunity for people across England to exercise their democratic choice – the chance for them to have their voices heard about what happens on their doorstep.

“But instead what they’re experiencing is decisions made under the radar, more power being put into the hands of a few people and the representatives they voted for being shut out of debate.

“That might mean a massive shopping centre gets the go ahead, or the demolition of a whole estate, it might mean cuts to services.

“We’ve been calling out the cases from individual councils for weeks and examples continue to flood in from our Councillors but the Government is doing nothing.

“That’s why we’re making this specific call today, that councils must be compelled to meet online during this crisis period and stop being given free-reign to hide behind a lack of technical skills.”

ENDS

**Notes**

The Green Party petition calls for all councils to be compelled to hold virtual meetings.

There are serious concerns over scrutiny and decision making in Lambeth where Jonathan Bartley is co-leader of the opposition. [See release for details.](#)

Notable examples of councils resisting virtual meetings have been received from Green Party Councillors in Oxford City Council and Norwich City Council.

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