

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley's speech at Autumn Conference, Newport, 2019



4 October 2019

I want to start by saying thank you.

You know, we don't hear it often enough.

Thank you to all the leaflet deliverers and the door knockers.

The activists and councillors.

The food preparers and the motion writers (well most of them).

The committee members and working groups.

The staff and volunteers.

You are the backbone of our party, and we couldn't do it without each and every one of you.

And I want to say a special thanks to Sian who is giving a speech on Sunday, focusing on getting London's first Green Mayor.

Sian your commitment, your passion, your determination is inspirational and it has been a pleasure to work with you this last year.

What a year it's been!

And what a year it's been!

I was in Brussels three weeks ago meeting with the leaders of other European Green Parties.

A Green Wave is sweeping the continent, and we are surfing it across England and Wales.

Truly, this has been one of the most extraordinary years in our Party's history.

At the beginning of May, we more than doubled our Councillors.

A few weeks later, we more than doubled our MEPs.

And we've increased our presence in Parliament with Natalie joining Jenny in

the House of Lords

(The urge to bow in her presence will be even harder to resist!)

And we've just hit an incredible milestone.

Last week we gained our fifty thousandth member of the Green Party.

And in November, Carla Denyer passed the country's first climate emergency motion.

Now over half of the UK's principal local authorities have done the same. Making it one of the fastest growing environmental movements in history.

From our new Young Green chairs – Rosie and Thomas – to Caroline Lucas holding the Government to account every single day in Parliament, the message is clear.

The oceans are rising but so are we.

The spark of dissent against climate breakdown was lit many years ago.

By activists struggling against oil extraction in the global south

By campaigners here in Britain camping outside power stations.

By Green politicians saying the unsayable – that an economy built on fossil fuels has catastrophic implications.

And that spark has become a wildfire of revolt.

With extinction rebellion taking the streets, youth strikers walking out of school – and yes more Green Politicians being elected than ever before.

Just look at the numbers of people taking climate action and forcing governments to sit up and take notice.

Six Million on the global climate strike.

100,000 on the streets of London.

Over 200 different strikes across the UK.

And the vast, vast majority of people saying our Government isn't doing enough.

We are here to be the megaphone of that movement

To give those people a political voice

And turn those demands into action.

And by making the climate crisis a political imperative, we're defining the issue of our times.

Showing the way ahead for Governments all over the world.

But what of this Government?

While the planet burns, it fans the flames of hatred.

Bile, bitterness and division.

I am ashamed of what our country is becoming.

But this isn't just about Brexit.

This is the death rattle of an old order.

We are seeing the break up of the political system.

The breaking apart of the economic system.

The breakdown of our life support system.

We've been saying it was coming for years. And now it's here.

And the question for us is how we will respond.

The answer to me seems clear.

Now is the time for complete transformation of everything.

You know when I was born – 40 something years ago – we were given a dream.

A vision of the future, where we would create unprecedented wealth.

Technology and automation would mean we could spend more time with our family and friends.

Where we would discover that endless supply of energy that was the stuff of science fiction.

Well fast forward 40 years and we have created untold riches.

Technology has revolutionised everything.

And we have discovered how to harness the wind, the sun and the tides.

But instead of that vision we were promised, we work longer hours, the wealth is held by the super-rich while 14 million live in poverty and climate breakdown threatens our very existence.

No wonder people are angry and want change.

Because it is the same failing system that has shut people out from power that has brought us to the brink of environmental catastrophe.

The same system that has gutted our NHS and polluted our air.

Given us foodbanks while choking our oceans with plastic.

Closed borders while creating climate refugees.

Left people feeling helpless in a world that is out of control.

Everything needs to change.

And only the Green Party acknowledges the scale of the challenge and the magnitude of the action that must be taken.

The imperative to fight not only the threat of Brexit but the conditions that have brought us Brexit.

With a general election looming, a vote for the Green Party is the most powerful vote you can cast.

We will fight to Remain in Europe, yes, but we will also fight to transform Britain

Democracy

But the Prime Minister is still careering us towards a crash out Brexit, and he's willing to tear down democracy to do it.

And when caught manipulating the constitution, what does he do?

He laughs at justice and pretends he is on the side of the people.

Was Cambridge Analytica on the side of the people? (no)

Are Dominic Cummings and Jacob Rees Mogg on the side of the people? (no)

Are politicians who lie about money for the NHS and then pursue a destructive Brexit that would destroy lives on the side of the people? (no)

If they were, they wouldn't try to play people like pawns in a game.

If they were on the side of the people they would trust the people and give them a people's vote.

The New Authoritarianism

But the mask is slipping as these politicians desperately cling onto power.

They know they that the system has had its day.

But their swan song is a nasty tune.

An authoritarian anthem – whose sheet music is the divide and rule script.

And we must resist it with every fibre in our being.

The political classes won't say it. So we will.

Learn the lessons of history.

When you see the scapegoating of disabled people. Of migrants. Of those on benefits.

Injunctions against protesters.

Surveillance deployed against everyone.

Indefinite detention.

The accusation that judges are enemies of the people.

The denial of science.

Racism and sexism not just being normalised, but espoused by leaders.

We cannot stay silent.

We cannot compromise and we must say with one voice, "no more".

And it must also involve action.

The way to take on the new authoritarianism. The path to unite our country. The route to transformation of our economy, must be a radical shift of power.

And we would rebuild a democracy fit for the 21st Century.

Just imagine what 160 local authorities who have passed climate emergency motions could do with real power.

We'd give it to them.

Increasing corporation tax to fair levels to reversing cuts to local authority budgets so they can and become the engines of a Green New Deal.

Real power to ban fracking, issue green investment bonds, renew infrastructure with low carbon alternatives, create renewable energy, build new council housing and insulate old homes, support green local businesses and run local transport.

Participatory democracy, allowing residents to form panels and citizens assemblies to directly input into decision making.

That's what taking back control looks like.

And we'd bring transformation at the national level too.

A fossil-free politics, liberated from vested interests.

A constitutional convention.

A bill of rights and a written constitution

Proportional representation.

An elected second chamber.

And we'd abolish the Home Office.

Because transformation of our country demands a system that is truly representative and fair to everyone.

And that's why we aren't taking a revoke Article 50 position.

We may disagree with those on the other side of the debate over Europe.

We may disagree with the corruption of the referendum.

But that is not a reason to ignore and sideline those who voted to leave.

We have always said that the referendum must be the start, not the end, of a democratic process.

If we want to stay in Europe we must win the argument on Europe.

And we say to Labour this. Yes we are glad that you have, finally, signed up to a People's Vote. We wish you had done it sooner.

But it's not enough.

Don't agree to end free movement. Don't acquiesce to pulling up the drawbridge. Don't accept that we should all be left poorer.

We need a cast iron guarantee that you'd fight for Britain to remain.

Future generations (present generations)

We'll have a better future if we remain in Europe.

Our young people know it.

They know it is only by working together we can address the climate emergency.

While politicians have buried their heads in the sand and denied the truth, they have taken to the streets to call for climate justice.

Young people. The ones truly shut out of politics. The ones having their future stolen from them, are showing what leadership looks like.

Isn't it troubling when a 10-year-old has to take time out of their day to

remind us of our responsibilities?

Young people are informed. Young people are organised. Young people must be heard.

So today I am setting out how the Greens would give young people real power.

Not just votes at 16 for Parliament but the right to stand for Parliament.

A Future Generations Act which would require the needs of young people to be taken into account before every Government decision.

A minister for future generations to represent young people at the heart of Government.

A young person's select committee, made up of representatives from the Youth Parliament, with the power to scrutinise and hold the Government to account.

And until we get reform of our electoral system and the House of Lords, we'd appoint young people to the Second Chamber of Parliament too so they can vote and initiate legislation.

Our future leaders should be given the power to lead right now.

The climate emergency

When a country faces an existential threat it moves onto a war footing.

And that is what we must do.

Hanging above everything else is the climate emergency, threatening our very survival.

The survival of our species.

The greatest challenge in modern history.

Extreme weather events are breaking records. People are dying in floods and heatwaves. Crops are failing, sea levels are rising, the Sixth Extinction is gripping the globe.

And the impacts are not evenly felt. The poorest are hit hardest. Those who contributed least to the climate crisis are suffering already for the gas guzzling governments and corporations who contributed the most.

That's just where we are now. At a point eight degree rise above pre-industrial levels.

Imagine what 3 degrees looks like, or six.

Or runaway climate breakdown.

It is time to stop denying the truth and let the truth have its day.

Business as usual is not an option.

We have just ten years to complete what needs to be done.

And we cannot continue on with the same path and with the same thinking that has brought us to the brink of disaster.

The Green New Deal

We need a ten-year mobilisation to get to net zero by 2030.

So today we are setting out a green vision for wholesale, urgent transformation – of agriculture, of transport, of industry of energy, the very way we live and work.

For too long, Governments have pursued GDP in the mistaken belief that a rising tide floats all boats.

But those without boats have been drowning. Sucked down by a whirlpool of poverty, worsening air quality, chronic mental health and ecological destruction.

And that tide is set to drown us all.

So we'd put the Climate Chancellor into Downing Street.

Make the Treasury a Ministry of Transformation.

Carbon budgets at the top of the agenda. The environment as the bottom line.

All spending and decision-making determined by the health of our natural world and the wellbeing of people.

Green New Deal for Work

And that chancellor would drive forward the Green New Deal.

The biggest release of investment to local communities and local businesses that the country has ever seen.

A massive investment in green technology

Decarbonizing the economy and creating millions of green jobs.

But let me explain what I mean by 'Green Jobs'. Yes it means people in hard hats installing solar.

It means factories manufacturing green tech.

But green jobs also means an army of carers, teachers, artists, nurses, and youth workers. Jobs that are high value and low carbon.

And they must be the backbone of a British economy that prioritises human needs over corporate greed.

Powered by empathy and kindness as much as solar and wind.

So we'd close the Government's arms export agency and end all subsidies for the UK arms industry.

War, misery and suffering would no longer be among Britain's exports to the world.

We'd scrap plans for a new generation of nuclear weapons too and instead put an extra £6bn a year into the NHS.

It would mean the closure of all detention centres, halving our prison population, and the excluded jobs they can build a life on.

Transforming our education system, abolishing SATS and league tables. Young people no longer treated as economic units to compete in a global marketplace. Equipped instead with the confidence, skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing world around them.

Unleashing a new wave of creativity and innovation by giving small businesses access to lending at affordable rates, through Community Banks.

Structuring work to meet the reality of an increasingly automated world. Reducing the working week.

And to give everyone safety and opportunity in the new green economy we'd scrap universal credit, ditch benefit sanctions and enrich everyone with a Universal Basic Income.

Green New Deal for Transport

And conference the Green New Deal means a green transport revolution too.

The slash and burn of HS2 must be halted in its tracks.

We cannot allow this assault and destruction of over 100 ancient woodlands, and the loss of invaluable biodiversity.

We'd spend that £70bn on new local transport infrastructure for every local community. Electrification of rail, new lines and buses.

And we'd scrap the Government's road building programme, and use Vehicle Excise Duty to deliver free bus travel for everyone right across the country.

The biggest travel upgrade this country has ever seen.

Giving people the incentive to get out of their cars and onto affordable, accessible, state of the art transport.

We'd end airport expansion and introduce a progressive frequent flyer levy to end the binge flying of the super-rich.

A Carbon Tax and an end to petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

That's the kind of action we need to transform our transport system for good.

Green New Deal for Agriculture

And our relationship with the land needs to change too.

We must move away from the extraction of resources that enriches a few to a future where everyone benefits from nurturing our environment and the species who rely on it.

So we will transform our land. Restore it to its pre-factory farming state. Reduce the carbon it emits and increase the carbon it absorbs.

When the land flourishes, we will flourish with it.

Rewilded landscapes, a revitalised natural world, planting 700 million trees, a quarter of the UK covered by forest by 2030.

And yes, someone's got to say it so we will.

That means making it cheaper to move away from meat-based, carbon intensive diets to embrace healthier low carbon alternatives.

Green New Deal for Energy

Communities like Newport could once again be at the heart of industry and prosperity.

This country could lead the world in clean technology. Just six tidal lagoons down the west coast could provide as much power as a dirty nuclear plant. Built in a fraction of the time, safer, cleaner, and ready to provide energy on demand.

100,000 new low-carbon council homes a year, 30 million homes insulated to the highest standards, old gas boilers stripped out and every home a powerstation, fueled by decentralised renewable energy.

It's not fanciful thinking. It's practical. It's realistic.

We must do what science demands not what is deemed political possible.

Conclusion

It's easy to fear the future.

Our century is only 19 years old, but already we have seen 17 of the hottest years ever recorded.

Brexit hangs over our heads, fires rage from the Amazon to the Arctic, and democracy is under attack.

But the night is always darkest before the dawn.

Greens don't fear the future.

We welcome the future. Because we have the way and will.

Taking decisive action to address the climate emergency isn't just about averting disaster. It's about creating a brand new Britain.

Forget austerity. Forget worshiping GDP. Forget pointless and bloody foreign wars. Forget fracking, coal, and oil. Forget working longer hours for lower pay. Forget air so toxic it chokes you to death.

This can be a new start.

The best days of Britain can still be ahead of us.

We need a decisive break from business as usual, and we are ready to make the leap.

The Green Party has always been on the right side of history.

The time is now to shape our future.

Thank you.

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**[Green Party chooses Climate Emergency
campaigner Carla Denyer to win Bristol](#)**

West parliamentary seat



16 September 2019

Former wind turbine engineer and current city councillor, Carla Denyer, has been picked to contest the winnable seat of Bristol West for the Green Party at the coming General Election.

The Green Party is now the clear frontrunner in Bristol as the countdown continues to the next elections, after the party saw spectacular results in the 2019 EU election, receiving 35% of the vote across the city. This was 17,606 votes clear of the nearest contender and more than double the Labour vote – a fall in vote share which was widely attributed to Labour's shifting and ambiguous national policy on Brexit [2].

Carla Denyer, who is credited as having started the national movement on Climate Emergencies in the UK by proposing the first one here in Bristol, has been a long-standing activist, and Bristol City Councillor since 2015. She said:

"We're facing a joint crisis for our climate and for our democracy, but the Greens have the ideas and the political will to push for progressive solutions. I'm hopeful and proud to have been chosen to fight this election for the Green Party. We speak with one voice in saying 'Yes to Europe and No to climate chaos.'"

As well as her work on the Climate Emergency, Carla Denyer has a strong track record fighting council cuts and standing up for the vulnerable in Bristol. She worked with ACORN tenants' union to stop cuts to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, resulting in a reluctant U-turn from the Labour Mayor, and proposed and won a budget amendment to save the city's Local Crisis and Prevention Fund which helps prevent homelessness.

Councillor Denyer said: "Bristol already has a strong group of Green councillors who have been holding this Labour-run authority to account. Our city needs people who get things done, and we need them representing us in Westminster. Caroline Lucas has demonstrated what a Green MP can achieve. She was the first MP to propose that Parliament declare a Climate Emergency [3], the first to call for a People's Vote on the Brexit deal, and the first to bring forward an NHS Reinstatement Bill. She also fought against fracking, nuclear power and pollution, and championed clean, renewable energy. Our country needs more Green MPs and Bristol can make that happen."

Former Green Party Bristol West candidate Molly Scott Cato was re-elected as a South West MEP in May 2019 with an hugely increased majority. Molly Scott Cato, now standing as the Green candidate for Stroud, said: "Carla will be an excellent MP for Bristol West and I look forward to supporting her campaign."

The Green Party are the main contenders in Bristol West, which is historically a swing seat. It has been held by Labour and the Lib Dems within

the last five years, and the Greens came a close second in 2015 [4].

The Green Party has chosen candidates for all four seats in Bristol in the event of a snap General Election. Tony Dyer (Bristol South), Conan Connolly (Bristol East) and Heather Mack (Bristol North West) are all also announcing their candidacies today.

ENDS

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[Greens celebrate appointment of Natalie Bennett to House of Lords](#)



Green Party members are this morning celebrating the appointment of former leader Natalie Bennett to the House of Lords.

Green Party co-leader Sian Berry said: "This is recognition of the views of the two million Green voters in this year's European elections, the huge numbers who backed us in the council elections, and the 1.1 million votes we won when Natalie was leader in 2015.

"But still, this 50% increase in the Greens' parliamentary representation is still only 0.2% of the total parliament – a reminder of just how far we have to go to make the UK a democracy.

"However, having worked with Natalie in Camden Green Party over many years, I know that Natalie will be a voice for the many who have not been sufficiently heard in parliament. She will bring into the Lords the voice of the anti-fracking protectors, the supporters of universal basic income and our nation's beleaguered wildlife, disability & refugee rights and Climate Emergency campaigners."

The current Green peer, Jenny Jones, said: "I am delighted to have Natalie joining me in the House, the chance to double our opportunities to hold the government to account and be the advocate for great Green ideas like the Green New Deal and universal basic income."

Sheffield Councillor Alison Teal said: "Natalie's relentless passion is evident at every public event she attends. I have found her to be an

inspiration, and a wonderful mentor.

“Soon after we met she said to me, “If in doubt, be bold.” I have taken her advice to heart, and she helped me find courage. I have no doubt that Natalie will be a brilliant member of the House of Lords, and I am so thrilled that she has made Sheffield her home, and she will represent us in Parliament.”

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[Caroline Lucas: Spending Review totally slapdash on climate](#)



4 September 2019

Responding to Sajid Javid's Spending Review today, Green MP Caroline Lucas said that the Chancellor appeared to be modelling his environmental approach on Jackson Pollock on a very quiet day.

Caroline said: “We're used to official greenwash from government, but what we saw today was a mere slapdash swipe, a few drops of paint, on a canvas that otherwise entirely overlooked our climate emergency.

“Our environment was totally ignored in the overview of the UK economy, and the Chancellor only got around to a specific climate announcement two-thirds of the way into the speech.

“Any Chancellor fit for office would have announced a Green New Deal as an economic cure for the triple crisis of inequality, climate breakdown and failed finance.

“This spending review doubles down on a failed economic model that is trashing our environment, and trashing the prospects for young people.

Caroline added:

“The Chancellor has splashed the cash on health and education, although this money will do little to repair the deep damage he and his party caused with the years of austerity. Voters will see through his attempts to buy their support ahead of an election.

“There is nothing in this spending round which addresses the scale of the climate emergency. No detail on decarbonisation, nothing on renewable

energy, nothing to promote a programme of building millions of zero-carbon homes. Barely anything to transform transport and far too little to reverse the catastrophic decline in our biodiversity and health of our environment.

“This is all achievable and the climate crisis can’t wait. Public demand for climate action is higher than ever. We’re tired of promises unmatched by action. Sajid Javid hasn’t just missed a vital opportunity. He’s betrayed our future.”

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[Green London Assembly member arrested in Trafalgar Square during Defend Our Democracy protest](#)



31 August 2019

Video footage has emerged of Green London Assembly member Caroline Russell being arrested in Trafalgar Square while taking part in a Defend Our Democracy protest (1)

Her fellow Green London Assembly member Sian Berry, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Earlier today, I was speaking at the main rally of the Defend Our Democracy protest. I said then that we were calmly determined not to have our rights chipped away. Protest, and direct action were needed, I said then.

“I’m proud that Caroline has been at the forefront, with others, of showing that determination.

“History tells us that all the rights we have we had to win. No one has ever handed them to us.

“And Caroline and the others on the streets in London today were defending those hard-won rights that are now under attack from Boris Johnson.

“We, the people, will come back on the streets again and again in the coming weeks of national crisis to defend our MPs and win our final say.

“We will keep saying to Boris Johnson, to Jacob Rees-Mogg, to Dominic Raab –

your actions do not represent us

“If you abuse power, we the people will make sure you won’t be in power much longer.”

Notes

1. https://twitter.com/murphy_simon/status/1167818626424025088?s=20

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