

# Green Party announces details of independent investigation

1 September 2018

The Green Party has announced the details of an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding Aimee Challenor's father being able to act as her election agent while facing charges for serious sexual assault against a minor.

The party has instructed Verita to lead the investigation, and has published the terms of reference [1].

**A Green Party spokesperson said:**

“The Green Party of England and Wales has today formally instructed Verita to lead the independent investigation into the circumstances which allowed David Challenor to act as an election agent for his daughter while facing serious sexual assault charges against a minor.

“Verita are one of the country’s leading independent consultancies, specialising in carrying out objective investigations of complex and often sensitive issues in a thorough and progressive manner. We are confident they are the right choice to help us ask the difficult questions needed.

“The investigation – which is entirely independent – will start immediately and is expected to conclude in November.

“The Green Party takes its safeguarding responsibilities and duties of care extremely seriously. The investigation will identify the facts as well as where failures occurred so that the party can learn any lessons needed and take the appropriate and necessary action.

“The terms of reference for the investigation are publicly available. The Green Party will not be commenting any further on the investigation while it is active.”

**Notes:**

1.

**Independent investigation into the Green Party’s actions following the allegations and charges brought against David Challenor: Terms of reference**

**The client**

This investigation has been commissioned by the Acting Chair of the Green Party Executive (GPEX), the co-chairs of the Green Party Regional Council (GPRC), and the leadership team of GPEW.

## **Purpose of the investigation**

David Challenor was charged by Police with serious sexual offences in November 2016. He was convicted in August 2018. In May 2017 and in May 2018 he acted as election agent for his daughter Aimee Challenor.

The purpose of the investigation is to examine the Party's response to the allegations and charges brought against David Challenor. The investigation will be completed in two stages. The aims of the inquiry are to:

### **Stage one**

1. Establish a chronology of events from November 2016
2. Establish what actions, if any, were taken by members of the Party or staff to ensure that David Challenor's appointment as election agent was made in accordance with Party policy and procedures
3. Establish what actions, if any, were taken by members of the Party or staff to make colleagues aware of the substance of the allegations and/or charges against David Challenor
4. Establish which members of the Party or staff, if any, were made aware of these allegations and/or charges
5. Establish what actions, if any, were taken by members of the Party- voluntary officers or staff- after they became aware of this information
6. Establish to what extent action, if any, was taken to ensure appropriate safeguarding was maintained in the light of this information
7. Report on any other issues that arise that are relevant to the terms of reference

### **Stage two**

8. Consider whether any form of disciplinary action should be considered against any member of the Party or staff
9. Consider whether any changes should be made to Party policies and procedures to strengthen them in the light of these events, and make any relevant recommendations
10. Consider whether any new policies or procedures need to be developed and implemented by the Party, and make any relevant recommendations
11. Summary report

## **Approach**

The investigation will not form part of any disciplinary process that the Party may undertake, but the contents of the report may be used by the Party to inform any such process. The investigation team will carry out its work by reviewing relevant documents and, where the team considers it necessary,

interviewing relevant Party staff, members, and voluntary officers in private. All the interviews will remain confidential, and the content of the transcripts will not be available to the client. The team will follow established good practice in the conduct of the work, for example by offering interviewees the opportunity to be accompanied and to comment on and amend the transcript of their interview.

### **Timetable**

The inquiry will get underway immediately. The aim is to deliver the final report by mid-November and the date will be agreed once the scope and timetabling of the work are clear.

### **The report**

The inquiry team will produce, for the client, a written report on its findings and recommendations for further action.

### **Publication**

It is expected that the recommendations of the report will be published in some form. The client will decide (in consultation with Verita) the precise form of publication.

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## **Green Party announces independent investigation and no-fault suspension of Aimee Challenor**



31 August 2018

Aimee Challenor has today been suspended on a no fault basis from the Green Party of England and Wales, following consideration by the relevant internal bodies of a number of complaints that have been made against her. In line with our procedures, the suspension will remain in place until the next meeting of the Green Party Regional Council, when it will be reviewed. An investigation will be conducted by an external agency into the circumstances and disclosures surrounding Aimee's father being able to act as her election agent, while facing charges for serious sexual assault against a minor.

The 'no fault' basis means that, at the time of suspension, no fault is assumed or should be inferred. Any assertion of fault or otherwise could be prejudicial to due process.

The Green Party takes its safeguarding responsibilities and duties of care extremely seriously and is committed to learning any difficult lessons needed. As soon as the Terms of Reference for the independent investigation are agreed and the investigator appointed we will announce both publicly. Once the investigation is complete we will announce its conclusions and recommendations. Other than this, no further comment on the investigation will be made while it is active.

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## **Green Party statement: Aimee Challenor stands down in Green Party Deputy Leadership race**



26 August 2018

Aimee Challenor has today stepped aside in the Green Party leadership elections, following the conviction of her father, David Challenor, for abhorrent sexual crimes involving a minor which include him committing some of the gravest human rights violations that face women and girls across the world

No disclosure was made of Mr Challenor's arrest or any of the charges against him as part of formal nomination or selection processes. The party is urgently reviewing its disclosure and safeguarding policies and procedures and will learn from any lessons that process reveals.

We apologise unreservedly that Mr Challenor was able to act as an election agent for Aimee Challenor in the 2017 General Election and the local elections in May this year despite the nature of the charges brought against him. A full investigation into how this was able to happen is taking place. His membership was terminated with immediate effect as soon as the information was brought to the attention of decision makers.

Aimee will not be undertaking any official Green Party roles while the party urgently looks into the circumstances which allowed this situation to arise.

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## **Greens: No deal Brexit will be “catastrophic” for British agriculture**



23 August 2018

Reacting to Dominic Raab's statement that a no-deal Brexit wouldn't trigger a battle with Brussels [1], Molly Scott Cato MEP, the Green Party's Spokesperson on Brexit and a member of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee said:

“It is deeply worrying that leaving the EU without a deal is being discussed as a plausible outcome. Let's be absolutely clear, there is no conceivable way that a no-deal Brexit can be acceptable. End of story. It ultimately doesn't matter if there is a battle with Brussels or not. If we leave with no deal, the damage will have been done.

“The effect it would have on Britain's agriculture would be catastrophic. If farmers can't export to the continent, it will still severely threaten their incomes. Even if short term measures are implemented, they will not address the immediate problem of deciding what to plant next spring.

“If there's even the slightest threat of no deal, the Government must do the responsible thing and put the final deal to a People's Vote. Nobody voted to crash out of Europe and we can't risk people's livelihoods just to appease the extreme fringes of the Conservative Party.”

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/aug/22/dominic-raab-uk-wont-trigger-no-deal-battle-with-brussels>

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# **Green Party: Government wilfully blind to scale of prisons crisis**



20 August 2018

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, has criticised privatisation and Government cuts for contributing to the failure of Birmingham Prison.

Bartley called on ministers to take steps to reduce prison numbers, following news the Government has taken over Birmingham Prison from G4S after inspectors found it to be in a “state of crisis” [1].

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“The Government is wilfully blind to the scale of crisis facing our prisons. This report lays bare the inadequacy and squalor of a system which is failing everyone. From riots and deaths to take overs, it is clear the privatisation experiment hasn’t worked. Meanwhile cuts have left prisons unable to meet inmates’ basic needs – let alone rehabilitate them.

“The Government should set our prisons on a new path towards a more successful, humane and common sense justice system. Britain has the highest imprisonment rates in Western Europe – but it doesn’t have to be like this. It should start with reducing prison numbers and a programme of prison closures, exploring alternatives to incarceration. It should also overhaul our failing drug laws.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-45240742>

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