

Gove must deliver on green promises says Molly Scott Cato MEP



5 January 2018

Responding to statements by the newly formed Nature Friendly Farming Network that Brexit could offer a “once in a generation” opportunity to restore British wildlife [1], Green Party MEP Molly Scott Cato said:

“Farmers committed to working with nature were pleased to hear about Michael Gove’s plans to shift subsidies away from landholding to environmental benefits, but given his past record on environmental matters there is also understandable scepticism. To reassure the doubters Michael Gove could act now and use the flexibility within the CAP system to make some changes immediately I would suggest as a minimum that he introduces a maximum level of land-based payments and increases the proportion of payments that are given in return for wildlife-friendly farming. This would be a clear signal that the Environment Secretary’s commitment to a so-called Green position is more than political positioning.”

Notes

[1] https://www.farminguk.com/news/New-group-formed-to-promote-environment-friendly-farming_48278.html

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Greens respond to SMMT report on diesel cars



5 January 2018

Responding to a report from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders which shows that diesel car sales have fallen 31% and to the SMMT’s assertion that cutting diesel sales will make CO2 emissions worse [1], Co-Leader of the Green Party Jonathan Bartley said:

"It is hardly surprising to see the voice of the motor industry trying to spin a drop in diesel sales as a bad thing. The truth is that diesel vehicles produce dangerous nitrogen dioxide particles which damage our air, environment and health. Fewer dirty diesel engines on our roads is a good thing. If the SMMT really cared about the environment it would focus its efforts on promoting cleaner, cheaper and more sustainable modes of transport, like electric cars powered by renewable energy."

Notes

[1] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/uk-car-sales-forecast-two-year-drop-motor-industry-carmakers-eu-brex-it-a8142236.html>

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Green MEP calls on Gove to look at both subsidies and 'agricultural tax havens' when developing plan for farming



4 January 2018

A Green MEP has accused Environment secretary Michael Gove of taking from wealthy landowners with one hand but giving it back with another through tax advantages. Mr Gove is set to tell agriculturists in Oxford today that "paying landowners for the amount of agricultural land they have is unjust, inefficient and drives perverse outcomes. It gives the most from the public purse to those who have the most private wealth" [1].

However, Molly Scott Cato MEP, a member of the European Parliament's agriculture committee, has said the promise is meaningless without ending the ability of landowners to use agricultural land as a tax haven and tax shelter. She said:

"This is sleight-of-hand politics from Gove. He is giving the appearance of taking from wealthy landowners with one hand while giving it back to them with the other in the form of unjust tax advantages. But taxes and subsidies must be treated as a package; in economic terms they are two sides of the same coin.

“If Gove is serious about the injustices associated with land ownership in this country he would call time on the use of agricultural land to hide and shelter wealth. Agricultural land offers generous tax breaks as it is exempt from inheritance tax after two years if it is actively farmed. The fact that the sale of a farming asset can be rolled over into a new business or acquisition offers further tax relief. That is perverse. Michael Gove needs to consider both taxes and subsidies when developing his new plan for farming.”

Dr Scott Cato also points to the fact Michael Gove is a leading advocate of a hard Brexit.

“Gove is part of the Brextremist set whose agenda has always included creating a low tax economy post-Brexit and protecting the UK’s offshore tax havens. Such an agenda would clearly benefit wealthy landowners”, she added.

Notes

[1]

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jan/04/farmland-could-be-turned-into-meadows-post-brexit-says-michael-gove>

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[Green Party's Larry Sanders: Britain can afford to fund the NHS](#)



4 January 2018

The Green Party has responded to the winter crisis gripping the NHS [1], calling on the Government to reverse cuts, end privatisation and give the NHS the funding it needs.

Larry Sanders, Green Party health spokesperson and brother to US Senator Bernie Sanders, said the hard work of front line staff is being undermined by the Government’s refusal to properly fund the NHS.

Larry Sanders, Green Party health spokesperson, said:

“News this week of thousands of cancelled operations and record numbers of patients waiting in ambulances has confirmed what we already knew – the NHS is on its knees. Front line staff are working incredibly hard to care for

people, but their efforts are being undermined on a daily basis by the Government's refusal to give the NHS the funding it so desperately needs.

"Jeremy Hunt's hollow apology for the cancelled operations fixes nothing. We need him to reverse the cuts, fund our health service properly and end privatisation.

"The UK spends a smaller percentage of its GDP on health than countries like France and Germany. Instead of wasting billions on Trident we could be looking after people who need health and social care. It's time for the Government to acknowledge that we can afford to fund health and social care if it makes the right political choices."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jan/04/16900-people-in-a-week-kept-in-nhs-ambulances-waiting-for-hospital-care>

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[Greens call for sanitary products to be made available to all those in need](#)



4 January 2018

Deputy Leader of the Green Party Amelia Womack has called for sanitary products to be made available free to any vulnerable person who needs them.

Womack's intervention comes after the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) found that police were, in the ICVA's words, "routinely ignoring" the needs of women detainees who are on their periods [1]. She added that the government should work with ethical companies to ensure green sanitary products can be made available.

Womack said:

"I cannot begin to imagine the trauma these women are going through – put away in prison and denied their basic rights to sanitation. And while the ICVA's report is welcome and revelatory, we have to be honest that this is a problem not only found in Britain's prisons. Women struggling on a low income also regularly have to find free alternatives – from paper towels to newspapers – to sanitary products. It cannot go on. That's why the Green

Party is calling for a national fund to be created that gives vulnerable women – those who are homeless, on a low income, or in prison – free access to sanitary products. It's what a decent society would do."

Notes

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42556384>

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