

# **Renewed challenge to South West MPs to reject 'folly' of Hinkley, as Commons Committee says deal fails to protect consumers**



22 November 2017

Green MEP, Molly Scott Cato, has accused government ministers of saddling consumers with higher energy bills because they have had their 'heads stuck in the radioactive sand' over Hinkley.

The accusation comes as MPs on the Commons public accounts committee concluded that the government had failed to protect consumers over the price it has promised to pay for electricity from the new nuclear power station and that the subsidy contract would hit poorest households hardest [1]. The latest negative assessment of Hinkley follows news in September that the drop in costs of off-shore wind power has made it much cheaper than nuclear [2].

Hinkley is expected to cost billpayers £30bn over the 35-year contract, adding £10-£15 to the average household energy bill. The government agreed a price of £92.50 per megawatt hour for electricity generated from Hinkley. Meanwhile, two firms confirmed in September that they can build offshore wind farms for a guaranteed price of £57.50 per megawatt hour.

Molly Scott Cato said:

"The economic illiteracy of this government on energy policy is reconfirmed again. They have had their heads stuck in the radioactive sand on Hinkley and this will cost consumers dear; particularly the poorest in society.

"This tragedy is all so unnecessary. The South West and other parts of the UK are richly endowed with a variety of renewable energy resources, chief amongst them off-shore wind. We can cut both energy bills and carbon emissions by going all out for renewables.

"On the back of this new evidence I again challenge MPs in the South West to unite against the folly of Hinkley and back a renewable energy revolution. This would be good for consumers; good for jobs and good for the regional economy."

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# Green councillor found guilty of obstruction after fracking protest



17 November 2017

Green Party councillor Gina Dowding and 11 others have been found guilty of wilful obstruction today following a lock-on at Cuadrilla's Preston New Road fracking site in July [1].

The protesters were found guilty of wilful obstruction of the highway but other charges relating to the Trade Union Act and Labour (Consolidation) Act were dismissed.

Each defendant was each given a 12-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay court costs and victim surcharge totalling £270. There were no fines issued.

Dowding sits on Lancashire County Council. The 12 protesters also included two other independent councillors, Fylde borough councillor Julie Brickles and Kirkham town councillor Miranda Cox.

Dowding said:

“My fellow councillors and I have a mandate to represent the views of our constituents and now we’ve been criminalised for taking part in a peaceful protest against fracking, which residents are overwhelmingly opposed to. Shale gas is neither needed nor wanted in Lancashire.

“If anyone should have been on trial today it’s the Government, for trampling over local democracy and allowing the shale gas industry to impose fracking on our communities.

“In a show of staggering hypocrisy, just this week UK representatives were in Bonn promising to meet our international obligations to prevent climate change, but at the same time offering carte blanche and financial support to the shale gas industry.

“Allowing Cuadrilla to start fracking in Lancashire is opening up a whole new fossil fuel industry when we should be keeping fossil fuels where they belong – in the ground. Fracking is dirty, dangerous and unnecessary and we should never have been dragged through the courts for taking direct action against such a reckless and harmful industry.”

## **Notes:**

1. <https://reclaimthepower.org.uk/press-releases/release-lancashire-councillors-and-residents-lock-down-fracking-site/>

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## **Natalie Bennett to join fracking protest at Kirby Misperton**



17 November 2017

Former Green Party leader Natalie Bennett is returning early from the United Nations COP23 climate talks in Bonn on Friday to support the Kirby Misperton protection camp as the struggle against fracking in Yorkshire continues.

She'll be supporting others taking part in what has become known as 'Green Friday' at the site, after last week Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley was dragged away [1] by police while making a speech to the protectors.

Bennett said:

"The isolation of the English position when it came to fossil fuels was glaringly obvious at the Bonn summit. France, Germany, Bulgaria, and of course Wales and Scotland, have all blocked fracking, but the British pavilion at COP was actually advertising the related extreme energy underground coal gasification.

"It is being left to the people of Yorkshire, and Lancashire, where I earlier this month visited the Preston New Road Protection Camp, to deliver the will of the English people not to have fracking. Opinion polls clearly show that they don't want it, and I know from my past visits to fracking sites just how many passing drivers indicate their support.

"The desperation of the industry to resist the will of the people has been demonstrated by the extreme injunction taken out by the firm Ineos that's now subject to legal appeal. I recently joined a huge gathering in Woodsetts, Rotherham, where the community demonstrated its determination to resist fracking and protect democracy and the right to peaceful protest.

"The Green Party will continue to actively support communities around England who are peacefully rejecting fracking. This is an industry that threatens all of our safety and needs to be stopped."

**Notes:**

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/green-party-joint-leader-jonathan-bartley-blocked-fracking-protest-kirby-misperton-a7913111.html>

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## **Green Party: Report “lays bare the cruelty of Universal Credit”**



16 November 2017

The Green Party says a new report [1] by the Women’s Budget Group and the Runnymede Trust, which shows that women and ethnic minorities will lose out financially under Universal Credit, lays bare the cruelty of the system being imposed by the Government.

The Green Party believes that instead of Universal Credit the Government should be looking at creating a Universal Basic Income.

The analysis was published today and exposes the devastating impact of changes such as the cut to the work allowance and the two-child limit.

Women will face the worst of the cuts, with 2.2 million claimants in employment expected to lose an average of £1,400 a year and 3.6 million claimants not in employment set to lose an average £600 a year. Black employed women will lose the most, an average of £1500 a year.

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, said:

“Universal Credit is nothing more than an attack on Britain’s poorest and most vulnerable and this report lays bare the cruelty of the system. Women are being punished simply for being women, with BME women suffering the most. There is nothing either universal or credit-worthy about Universal Credit.

“The Green Party is calling for the Government to scrap Universal Credit and invest in a Universal Basic Income trial instead, which would make much more of a difference to families living in poverty.”

### **Notes:**

1. <https://wbg.org.uk/news/new-research-shows-universal-credit-failing-just-managing-women-bme-households-hardest-hit/>

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